Prejudice Against Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Coaches: The Influence of Race, Religious Fundamentalism, Modern Sexism, and Contact with Sexual Minorities

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In drawing from Herek’s (2007, 2009) sexual stigma and prejudice theory, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship among prejudice toward sexual minority coaches, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and sexual prejudice and to determine whether race affected these relationships. The authors collected data from 238 parents. Results indicated that Asians expressed greater sexual prejudice than Latinos and Whites, while African Americans expressed more religious fundamentalism than did Whites. There were also differences in the associations among the variables. For African Americans, sexism held the strongest association with prejudice toward sexual minority coaches. While for Asians and Whites, religious fundamentalism held the strongest association, contact with lesbian and gay friends was a significant predictor of prejudice for Asians, but not for the other groups. For Latinos, both religious fundamentalism and sexism were associated with sexual prejudice. The authors discuss the results in terms of theoretical and practical implications.

En empruntant à Herek’s (2007, 2009) la théorie de la stigmatisation sexuelle et du préjugé, le but de cette étude était d’examiner les relations entre les préjugés envers les entraîneurs appartenant aux minorités sexuelles, le fondamentalisme religieux, le sexisme et les préjugés sexuels ainsi que de déterminer si la race affecte de telles relations. Les auteurs ont recueilli des données auprès de 238 parents. Les résultats sont à l’effet que les Asiatiques ont exprimé plus de préjugés sexuels que les Latinos et les Blancs, tandis que les Afro-Américains ont exprimé plus de fondamentalisme religieux que les Blancs. Il y avait aussi des différences dans les
associations entre les variables. Pour les Afro-Américains, le sexisme était le plus fortement associé avec les préjugés envers les entraîneurs des minorités sexuelles. Pour les Asiatiques et les Blancs, le fondamentalisme religieux avait la plus forte association. Le contact avec des amis gais et lesbiennes prédisait significativement les préjugés sexuels chez les Asiatiques, mais pas chez les autres groupes. Pour les Latinos, l’intégrisme religieux et le sexisme étaient associés aux préjugés sexuels. Les auteurs discutent les résultats en termes d’implications théoriques et pratiques.

By some accounts, attitudes toward some lesbians, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals have improved (for an overview of national polls, see Herek, 2009; for research among gay men in sport, see Anderson, 2009, 2011), and sexual prejudice and heterosexism are frequently contested (Ravel & Rail, 2007). Despite these advances, sexual minorities in sport still routinely face prejudice and discrimination. For instance, Krane and Barber (2005) reported that lesbian college coaches experienced considerable prejudice, felt reluctant to disclose their sexual identity to others in the workplace, and observed a culture of heterosexism within college sports (see also Griffin, 1998). These findings parallel examinations of gay male professionals working in sport (Cavalier, 2011) and lesbians (and women presumed to be lesbian) working in academia (Sartore & Cunningham, 2010). Indeed, researchers have illustrated that a wide variety of people in sport express sexual prejudice, including current athletes (Anderson, 2002; Plummer, 2006), former athletes (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007, 2009), parents of players (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009), and aspiring sport managers (Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey & Schultz, 2006).

While there is considerable evidence of sexual prejudice in sport, researchers have devoted relatively little attention to identifying antecedents of this bias. A notable exception is the analysis of gender, where researchers have shown that men express more negative attitudes toward LGB individuals than do women (Cunningham, Sartore & McCullough, 2010; Gill et al., 2006) and gay men are evaluated more negatively than are lesbians (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). Interestingly, though, researchers have largely overlooked the influence of other demographic characteristics, psychological elements, and behaviors, and how these factors might influence the manifestation of sexual prejudice. This is an unfortunate omission because identification of key antecedent variables can help in efforts to curb sexual prejudice and heterosexism in sport. Furthermore, much of the extant literature is located within social psychology, and thus, researchers potentially take for-granted the structural and ideological formations of prejudice, sexuality, and gender.

The purpose of this study was to address these potential shortcomings by examining antecedents of sexual prejudice among parents. We focus on parents’ reactions because they are influential in children’s ideas about diversity and inclusion (Powell & Graves, 2003), as well as their sport participation patterns (Greendorfer, Lewko & Rosengren, 1996). Thus, parents who express sexual prejudice or are reluctant to allow their children play for a coach who is LGB are likely to pass along these ideas to their children, thereby perpetuating the cycle of heterosexism in sport. Interestingly, though, little research has focused on parents’ sexual prejudice and how this influences decisions related to their children’s sport participation (for an exception, see Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). In this analysis, we draw from Herek’s (2007, 2009) sexual stigma and sexual prejudice theory to
investigate the degree to which religious fundamentalism, modern sexism, and contact with sexual minorities affect prejudice directed toward LGB coaches. We also examine the presence of racial differences, with a particular focus on race within the US context. We further investigate potential variations among African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Whites, both in the degree to which prejudice is expressed and in the association among the antecedents and sexual prejudice. The latter is an important addition because LGB “research has focused largely on White samples and has failed to carefully investigate the complexity” of race and sexual prejudice (Szymanski & Sung, 2010, p. 849). We outline the theoretical framework and present specific hypotheses in the following sections.

Theoretical Framework

We ground our work in Herek’s (2007, 2009) sexual stigma and prejudice theory. Sexual stigma represents the core of the framework, where Herek (2007) defined the construct as “the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively affords to any nonheterosexual behavior, identity, relationship, or community” (pp. 906–907). As stigmas are socially constructed within particular contexts and times (Paetzold, Dipboye & Elsbach, 2008), they operate independently of any one person’s attitudes or beliefs. Rather, sexual stigma represents a socially shared understanding of LGB individual’s devalued status, has evolved over time, and represents the foundation through which attitudes and behaviors are developed, expressed, and maintained (Herek, 2007).

Sexual stigma is expressed through structural and individual manifestations (Herek, 2007, 2009). The structural expression of sexual stigma is seen in heterosexism, or the “cultural ideology that is embodied in institutional practices that work to the disadvantage of sexual minority groups even in the absence of individual prejudice or discrimination” (p. 442). Within most US institutions, according to Herek, LGB individuals are either rendered invisible (because people are assumed to be heterosexual), or devalued, such that they are seen as outside the norm, inferior, or as a threat to society. For example, within the US, the majority of states allow LGB individuals to be legally terminated from work because of their sexual orientation (Human Rights Campaign, 2009), LGB persons cannot legally wed in 4 out of 5 states, homosexuality was considered a mental illness as recently as 1973, and many major religions consider homosexuality as wrong (Whitley, 2009). These examples all point to the institutionalized nature of sexual stigma.

Sexual stigma is manifested at the individual level in three ways: enacted stigma, felt stigma, and internalized stigma. Enacted stigma refers to the explicit behavioral expressions of sexual stigma, such as negative recruiting directed toward LGB coaches (Krane & Barber, 2005), physical violence against sexual minority players (Anderson, 2002), and discrimination in the hiring process (Cunningham et al., 2010). Felt stigma refers to “an individual’s expectations about the probability that sexual stigma will be enacted in different situations and under various circumstances” (Herek, 2007, p. 909). Because people do not wish to experience stigmatization, heterosexuals will frequently explicitly demonstrate their heterosexuality, just as sexual minorities will oftentimes conceal their sexual orientation when felt stigma is expected (Ragins, Singh & Cornwell, 2007). Finally, internalized
stigma occurs when individuals adopt sexual stigma into their own value systems and self-concepts (Herek, 2007, 2009). While this can occur in LGB individuals (e.g., internalized homonegativity; Mayfield, 2001), it is most frequently observed among heterosexuals in the form of sexual prejudice. As previously noted, researchers have demonstrated the existence and consequences of sexual prejudice among current and former athletes (Anderson, 2002; Plummer, 2006; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007, 2009), parents of players (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009), and persons training to enter the sport industry (Gill et al., 2006).

Sexual Prejudice and Race

Research focusing on racial differences in sexual prejudice has produced equivocal results. There is some evidence, for instance, that racial minority and White students do not differ in their attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (Schulte & Battle, 2004) or bisexuals (de Bruin & Arndt, 2010). Other authors, though, have found evidence of racial differences in quantitative assessments of college women and men (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Whitley, Childs & Collins, 2011) and undergraduate women (Vincent, Peterson & Parrott, 2009) and in qualitative inquiries of gay men (Goode-Cross & Good, 2009; Poon & Ho, 2002). In the one sport-focused analysis we were able to identify, Southall, Anderson, Nagel, Polite, and Southall (2011) also observed racial differences in the expression of sexual prejudice. Relative to Whites, African American men were more likely to self-identify as homophobic, were less likely to believe that LGB individuals should be allowed to coach, and indicated that they would be intolerant toward a gay teammate.

Sexual stigma and prejudice theory helps explain these differences, as people are likely to express prejudice toward an individual when that person is perceived as an outsider or “other” (Herek, 2009). Indeed, researchers have shown that many people presume an association between homosexuality and Whiteness (Han, 2007), or conversely, that being LGB “is incompatible” with being a racial minority (Goode-Cross & Cross, 2009, p. 104). Illustrative of these effects, Herek and Capitanio (1995) asked African American adults what race first came to mind when conceptualizing a gay man. Only 7.9% of the respondents named African Americans first. Whitley et al.’s (2011) research sheds further light on this issue. They asked college students to identify the social categories that came to mind when they heard the term “homosexual.” Most participants thought of a man (83.2%) and of a White individual (76.3%); furthermore, only 1.7% of the participants thought of African Americans. This pattern was consistent for both African Americans and Whites in their sample.

These findings suggest that the merging of two identities—racial minority and LGB—are incompatible in people’s minds, and as such, when those identities merge, prejudice is likely to manifest. In fact, Han illustrated that there is no term for “gay” in some Asian languages, thereby further illustrating the cognitive dissonance that takes place for some groups. While most of the extant literature has focused on differences between African Americans and Whites, there is evidence that Asians and Latinos hold similar views as African Americans and express more prejudice than do Whites (Bonilla & Porter, 1990; Han, 2007). Given this collective evidence, we hypothesized:
Hypothesis 1: Racial minority (African Americans, Asians, and Latinos) parents will express more prejudice toward sexual minority coaches than will Whites.

Of course, racial differences in sexual prejudice are not biologically determined. Instead, these attitudes are socially constructed and shaped by a confluence of personal and cultural factors. Indeed, sexual stigma and prejudice theory suggests that institutionalized practices influence the sexual prejudice people express (Herek, 2007, 2009). Unfortunately, few researchers have examined the linkages among race, sexual prejudice, and other antecedents. Thus, for instance, while Southall et al. (2011) demonstrated the presence of racial differences in sexual prejudice, the underlying reasons for those differences remained unexplored. Drawing from Herek (2009) and the existing sociological literature, we examine three such factors: religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities.

According to Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992, p. 118), religious fundamentalism refers to:

The belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity.

People who hold fundamentalist beliefs also generally hold conservative mindsets toward other issues, express prejudice toward dissimilar others, and maintain authoritarian beliefs (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Cohen, Malka, Hill, Thoemmes, Hill & Sundie, 2009). Perhaps not surprisingly then, researchers have also shown that religious fundamentalism is positively associated with sexual prejudice (Herek, 2000, 2009). Indeed, this is consistent with the teachings of some conservative religious groups (e.g., Focus on the Family), who hold that homosexuality is a sin, that LGB individuals are deviant and harmful to children, and that one’s sexual orientation can be changed (see also Schulte & Battle, 2004). This pattern helps explain why LGB individuals report high levels of self stigma if they belong to a religious denomination or regularly attend religious services (Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 2009).

We also expected to observe differences in religious fundamentalism among African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Whites. There are large datasets examining the intersection of race and religion, such as national polling data from the Pew Research Center. However, these reports focus on religious affiliation and religiosity, not religious fundamentalism—the focus of our investigation. Thus, we drew from the existing peer-reviewed literature, which largely suggests that racial minorities are more likely to express fundamentalist beliefs than are Whites (Ahrold & Meston, 2010; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Bonilla & Porter, 1990; Domanico & Crawford, 2000; Schulte & Battle, 2004). We argue here that these differences are a function of one’s religious affiliation, as the churches racial minorities predominantly attend (e.g., the Black church, the Catholic Church) are more likely to hold conservative and fundamentalist viewpoints pertaining to sexual orientation than those Whites frequently attend. For instance, while the Catholic Church is
mostly White, most Whites are not Catholic, but most Latinos are (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). These sorts of differences are important considering the meaningful influence religious institutions have on shaping people’s attitudes and beliefs. That is, if the doctrines of one’s religion condemn homosexuality, the people who follow that belief system are likely to follow suit (Whitley, 2009). This literature points to the potential for racial differences in parents’ religious fundamentalist beliefs. Therefore, we hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: Racial minority (African Americans, Asians, and Latinos) parents will express greater religious fundamentalism than will Whites.

Sexism might also influence the level of sexual prejudice one exhibits. People who maintain sexist attitudes are also likely to associate men with masculinity and women with femininity (Whitley, 2001). However, people frequently associate gay men with femininity and lesbians with masculinity (Sandfort, 2005). This cognitive crossing of sexual orientation and gender roles can then potentially result in bias. Whitley’s (2001) meta-analysis offers empirical support for this linkage, as he found that sexism held a moderate to strong positive association with attitudes toward sexual minorities (see also Herek, 2009). The association between gender beliefs and sexual prejudice is likely to be particularly strong within the sport context—a setting where men and dominant forms of masculinity are valued and promoted (Connell, 1995).

Cultural patterns and norms also influence the association between race and sexism. Nierman, Thompson, Bryan, and Mahaffey (2007), for instance, suggested that differences between Latinos’ and Whites’ sexist attitudes were a function of patriarchal norms defining both cultures. This is perhaps best illustrated by machismo, which can be conceived of as “the celebration of male dominance, sexuality, aggression, honor, and possessiveness and control of women” (Nierman et al., 2007, p. 61) and is more prevalent among Latinos than with Whites (Domanico & Crawford, 2000; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006). Similarly, researchers have argued that slavery and racial segregation served to undermine African American men’s masculinity and limit their success (Greene, 2007; Lamelle & Battle, 2004). In line with this position, Dalton (1989) suggested that “openly gay men and lesbians [in the Black community] evoke hostility in part because they have come to symbolize the strong female and weak male that slavery and Jim Crow produced” (p. 217). Finally, Chung and Katayama (1998) argued that, in many Asian cultures, there is an emphasis on traditional gender roles and norms—something related to sexism. While limited, there is some empirical support for notion of racial differences in the expression of sexism, as researchers have observed that both African Americans (Whitley et al., 2011) and Latinos (Nierman et al., 2007) express more sexist attitudes than do Whites (see also Brown & Henriquez, 2008). Thus, we predicted that:

Hypothesis 3: Racial minority (African Americans, Asians, and Latinos) parents will express greater sexism than will Whites.

In addition to religious fundamentalism and sexism, contact with sexual minorities is also likely to hold an association with sexual prejudice, albeit in a different
direction. According to Allport’s (1954) contact hypothesis, contact with out-group members should reduce prejudice because it allows people to learn about the other, to dispell myths and stereotypes, to represent a behavioral change, to decrease anxieties people have around dissimilar others, and to reappraise evaluations of out-group members. A number of researchers have demonstrated that intergroup contact can reduce sexual prejudice (de Bruin & Arndt, 2010; Herek, 1988; Herek & Capitanio, 1996). Pettigrew and Tropp’s (2006) meta-analysis offered robust support for this relationship: their analysis of 42 studies, which included over 12,000 participants, showed that intergroup contact held a moderate, negative association with sexual prejudice.

Few researchers have examined racial differences in contact with sexual minorities. Brown and Henriquez (2008) found that Whites and African Americans were equally likely to have a friend or family member who was LGB. However, Herek and Capitanio (1995) reported that 2 out of 3 African Americans did not have contact with sexual minorities. Furthermore, others have found that racial minorities are unlikely to disclose their sexual orientation at work (Ragins, Cornwell & Miller, 2003), to their family members (Grov et al., 2006; Moradi et al., 2010; Szymanski & Sung, 2010), friends (Choi, Han, Paul & Ayala, 2011), or to their religious community (Moradi et al., 2010). For instance, Poon and Ho (2002) highlighted how, for many Asians, disclosing one’s sexual orientation to her or his family also meant having to disclose the information to the extended family and social groups, and consequently, disclosure was rare for LGB Asians. The differences in disclosure, particularly to persons close to the self, might correspond with decreased intergroup contact among persons in the African American, Asian, and Latino communities (see also Goode-Cross & Good, 2009). As such, we hypothesized:

Hypothesis 4: Racial minorities (African Americans, Asians, and Latinos) will have less contact with sexual minorities than will Whites.

Thus far, we have hypothesized that, because of a bevy of sociocultural influences, African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Whites will differ in their sexual prejudice directed toward coaches, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities. In all of these hypotheses, we suspect that one group will have a higher mean score than another. It is also possible, though, that the relationships among variables might also vary by race. For instance, the association between religious fundamentalism and sexual prejudice might be stronger for one race than it is for others. This is an important consideration for several reasons. From a theoretical perspective, specification of moderators and boundary conditions are key elements of theory building (Bacharach, 1989; Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007). From an applied perspective, it is important to understand what factors are associated with sexual prejudice and how these factors might vary based on race, as this can inform effective interventions. Rather than specifying formal hypotheses, we offered the following research question:

Research Question: Does race moderate relationships among prejudice toward sexual minority coaches, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities?
Method

Participants

Employees \((N = 360)\) from four universities took part in the study. The sample consisted of 187 women (51.9%), 158 men (43.9%), and 15 persons who did not provide their gender. In terms of race, the sample consisted of 50 African Americans (13.9%), 37 Asians (10.3%), 86 Latinos (23.9%), 6 Native Americans (1.7%), 160 Whites (44.4%), 4 persons who listed “other” (1.1%), and 17 individuals who did not divulge their race (4.7%). There were 187 staff members (51.9%), 158 faculty members (43.9%), 15 persons who listed “other” (4.2%), and 15 people who did not provide their job background (4.2%). The mean age was 44.56 years \((SD = 12.83)\).

As the purpose of the study was to examine sexual prejudice among African American, Asian, Latino, and White parents, we trimmed the data to include only these persons \((n = 238)\). The final sample was comprised of 117 women (49.2%), 119 men (50.0%), and 2 individuals (.8%) who did not provide the information. The racial composition included 37 African Americans (15.5%), 27 Asians (11.3%), 54 Latinos (22.7%), and 120 Whites (50.4%). Staff members comprised most of the sample \((n = 145, 60.9\%\) ), followed by faculty members \((n = 83, 34.9\%\) ), and 9 persons who listed “other” (3.7%). The mean age was 48.94 years \((SD = 10.91)\).

Measures

Participants completed a questionnaire that requested them to provide their demographic information (race, gender, age, parental status, and current position) and to respond to items measuring their sexual prejudice toward coaches, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities. The item mean represented the final score for each variable.

**Prejudice Toward Sexual Minority Coaches.** We developed three items to measure prejudice toward sexual minority coaches. After we developed the instrument, two academics confirmed the content validity evidence of the items. The questions read: “gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals should not be allowed to coach youth sport teams,” “children are not safe playing on teams coached by gay, lesbian, or bisexual coaches,” and “gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons should have the same opportunities to coach youth sport teams as anyone else” (reverse scored). Responses were made on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The reliability for the scale was high \((\alpha = .89)\).

**Religious Fundamentalism.** Religious fundamentalism was measured using six items from Altemeyer and Hunsberger’s (1992) scale. We used a brief version of the scale as a way to reduce the overall questionnaire length and reduce rater fatigue—factors that can reduce the quality of participant responses (Dillman, 2000). Others have also effectively used shortened versions of the scale (Ahrold & Meston, 2010). We chose items that were among the highest rated in Altemeyer and Hunsberger’s original research. Sample items include “God has given mankind a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed” and “all of the religions in the world have flaws and wrong teachings” (reverse scored). Responses were made on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated good reliability \((\alpha = .87)\).
Sexism. We measured sexism using Swim, Aikin, Hall and Hunter’s (1995) modern sexism scale. This measure has sound reliability, and a number of researchers have demonstrated its validity evidence (see Swim & Hyers, 2009). Sample items include “discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States” and “it is easy to understand the anger of women’s groups in America” (reverse scored). A 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), anchored each item. The reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .75$).

Contact with Sexual Minorities. Finally, we measured contact with sexual minorities by adapting items from Binder et al.’s (2009) scale. Their original work focused on out-group friendships with people ethnically different from the self, while we adapted the measure to focus on friendships with lesbians and gay men. Specifically, we asked “how many of your friends are lesbians?” and “how many of your friends are gay men?” Response options included “none,” “1-3,” “4-6,” “7-9,” and “10 or more.” Rather than analyzing each item individually, we took the mean score of both items ($\alpha = .87$) to represent overall contact with sexual minorities.

Procedures

We first identified four public universities located in the Southwest United States that we believed, based on their location, would allow for a diverse sample. We then employed systematic random sampling to identify 300 persons from each university employee directory, for a total sampling frame of 1200 persons. Following Dillman’s (2000) recommendation of making multiple contacts with potential participants, we sent the following materials to each person in the sampling frame, with one week separating each contact: (a) a prenotification questionnaire alerting the individual to the study and indicating that she or he would be receiving a questionnaire in the coming week; (b) a questionnaire packet, including a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, a questionnaire, and a postage paid return envelope; (c) another postcard encouraging participation; and (d) a second questionnaire packet, which included a letter thanking those who had participated and encouraging nonrespondents to complete the questionnaire, a questionnaire, and a postage paid return envelope. A total of 178 returned the first questionnaire, and another 182 participated after round 2, for a total sample of 360, or a 30.00% response rate.

The 30.00% response rate is low for survey data, though some have suggested that response rates such as this are “good” when dealing with sensitive issues (Berdahl & Aquino, 2009, p. 37 and p. 41). Indeed, some of the responses from the participants point to the volatile nature of the research. For instance, one person returned the envelope with a note that read, “I wouldn’t waste 30 seconds with a questionnaire of this nature. The real problem is that these small minority groups want special privileges. The reason my child wouldn’t be on their team is because they were trying to make an issue of their sexual nature. If gay people would just be normal and not try to intrude their life style onto the world, I don’t think there would be near an issue.” Another person returned the envelope with the questionnaire torn into pieces. Actions by the research compliance board at our university also pointed to the sensitive nature of the study. For instance, while other diversity studies go through an expedited review process, we had to present our protocol to the entire review board for full review. The board also prohibited us from using
university letterhead for fear that people would associate the topic of investigation (i.e., homosexuality) with the university. Dillman (2000) has noted that not using official letterhead will decrease the response rate.

Nevertheless, we can take some steps to assess nonresponse bias. First, we compared the demographics of our sample to the known demographics of the state. According to the US Census Bureau, the state is comprised of 45.3% Whites, 37.6% Latinos, 11.8% African Americans, and 3.8% Asians. While proportion of African Americans and Whites in the sample mirrored these figures, our sample consisted of slightly more Asians and slightly fewer Latinos. These differences correspond to high number of Asians working in academia. Thus, our sample is largely representative of the state’s racial diversity.

As another check, some have suggested that late responders have similar characteristics to nonrespondents; thus, researchers can compare the scores of early and late responders to examine the possibility that those who did not participate are substantially different than those who did (Rogelberg & Luong, 1998). Analysis of variance indicates that early and late responders did not differ on any of the study variables. Furthermore, chi-square analyses indicate that differences did not exist based on race or gender. While we recognize that late respondents “are not ‘pure’ nonrespondents” (Rogelberg & Luong, 1998, p. 63), this pattern of findings does suggest that nonresponse bias might not be a substantial concern and that the participants are representative from the broader population (for more information, see Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007).

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Our first step was to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the factor structure of the instruments. Given the large number of items measured, we formed three parcels for both the religious fundamentalism and sexism latent variables. Little, Cunningham, Shahar and Widaman (2002) explain that a parcel represents “an aggregate-level indicator comprised of the sum (or average) of two or more items, responses or behaviors” (Little et al., 2002, p. 152). The use of parcels is ideal in studies with smaller samples and reduces the complexity of the CFA (Alhija & Wisenbaker, 2006). Finally, as contact with sexual minorities and prejudice toward sexual minority coaches have two and three items, respectively, we did not form parcels for these factor, and each item represented an item indicator.

Results indicate that the model was a close fit to the data: $\chi^2 (n = 238, df = 38) = 60.04, p = .01; \chi^2 / df = 1.58$; confirmatory fit index (CFI) = .98; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (90% CI: .02, .07) = .05, $p_{close} = .49$. All items significantly loaded to their respective factors. We also tested a single-factor model in which all items loaded on one latent factor. This model was a poor fit to the data: $\chi^2 (n = 238, df = 44) = 616.40, p < .001; \chi^2 / df = 14.01; $CFI = .56; $RMSEA (90% CI: .22, .25) = .23, p_{close} < .001. The single-factor model was also a significantly poorer fit to the data than the hypothesized model: $\Delta \chi^2 (n = 136, \Delta df = 6) = 556.36, p < .001. These findings offer further validity evidence for the measures used in the study.
Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 1. We offer means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for the entire sample and for each race separately. Results for the entire sample indicate that mean scores for all variables were low, and a one sample *t* test indicated that they were all significantly lower than the midpoint of the scale: prejudice against sexual minority coaches, $t(231) = -14.52, p < .001$; religious fundamentalism, $t(230) = -3.16, p = .002$; sexism, $t(237) = -18.15, p < .001$; and contact with sexual minorities, $t(223) = -20.25, p < .001$. As expected, all the antecedents held moderate to large associations with prejudice toward sexual minority coaches.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses 1–4 predicted that African American, Asian, and Latino parents would express greater prejudice toward sexual minority coaches, more religious fundamentalism, more sexism, and have less contact with sexual minorities than would White parents, respectively. We tested these hypotheses by way of a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). Race served as the independent variable, prejudice toward sexual minority coaches, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities served as the dependent variables, and gender served as the control. We included gender as a covariate because of the considerable evidence showing that women and men potentially vary in their sexual prejudice (Cunningham et al., 2010; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007, 2009; Gill et al., 2006). Results indicate that the multivariate effects were significant, $F(12, 542.67) = 2.77$, Wilks’s Lambda = .86, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. The effects of the covariate (gender) were also significant, $F(4, 205) = 2.74$, Wilks’s Lambda = .95, $p = .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. We present the estimated marginal means (controlling for gender) in Figure 1.

Examination of the univariate effects indicated racial differences for prejudice toward a sexual minority coach, $F(3, 208) = 2.71, p = .04$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Sidak post hoc analysis indicated that Asians expressed more prejudice than did Latinos and Whites, but the scores did not differ from those of African Americans. The estimated marginal mean scores did not differ for Whites, African Americans, or Latinos. Thus, Hypothesis 1 received partial support.

Univariate analysis also indicated racial differences in religious fundamentalism, $F(3, 208) = 5.71, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. Sidak post hoc analysis indicated that African Americans expressed greater fundamentalism than did Whites, but no other differences were present. Thus, Hypothesis 2 received partial support.

Finally, univariate analyses indicated race was not associated with modern sexism, $F(3, 208) = 2.36, p = .07$, nor with having lesbian and gay friends, $F(3, 208) = 1.64, p = .18$. Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were not supported.

Research Question

With our research question, we examined whether the relationships among sexual prejudice toward a coach, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities varied by race. We examined this question by running multiple hierarchical regression analyses, one for the entire sample and then one for each
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**Whites (n = 120)**

*Notes. Percentage of men in the sample provided.*
racial group examined. In each analysis, gender served as the control and was entered in the first step, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities were entered in the second step, and prejudice toward sexual minority coaches served as the dependent variable. In all analyses, the variance inflation factors were less than 10 and the condition index was less than 30, indicating a lack of multicollinearity (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006). In presenting the results (see Table 2), we also highlight the squared part correlation. As Hair et al. (2006) explained, researchers can use the part correlation “in apportioning variance among the independent variables. Squaring the part correlation gives the unique variance explained by the independent variable” (p. 231). We also increased the alpha to .10 as a way of increasing the power of the analyses due to the small sample size for some groups.

For the entire sample (see Table 2), the model explained 38% of the variance in prejudice toward sexual minority coaches. All three independent variables were significantly associated with prejudice, with religious fundamentalism explaining the most unique variance (15%).

As seen in Table 2, there were differences based on race. For instance, we observed differences in the variance explained in prejudice toward sexual minority coaches: African Americans $R^2 = .41$, Asians $R^2 = .61$, Latinos $R^2 = .38$, and Whites $R^2 = .42$. There were also differences in the association among the independent variables. For African Americans, sexism explained the most unique variance
Table 2  Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Prejudice toward Sexual Minority Coaches

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*Notes. $\dagger p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.  

Table 2 (continued)
(18%), but for both Asians and Whites, religious fundamentalism had the most unique variance (31% and 20%, respectively). Contact with lesbian and gay friends explained 12% unique variance among Asians, the most for any group. Finally, for Latinos, both religious fundamentalism and sexism explained similar portions of unique variance (12% and 10%, respectively).

**Discussion and Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship among parents’ prejudice toward sexual minority coaches, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and sexual prejudice, and to determine whether these relationships varied by race. We extended past research—which has primarily adopted a social psychological lens—by considering the structural and ideological factors influencing the formation of prejudice and were able to realize a more encompassing view of sexual prejudice and its antecedents.

Results indicate that the mean score for prejudice was low, and this was the case for the entire sample and each racial group. From one perspective, these results lend credence to Anderson’s (2009, 2011) contention that sexual prejudice in sport is on the decline, at least among gay men. National polls in the United States point to a similar pattern (Herek, 2009). However, a different perspective is that expressing a little sexual prejudice is akin to being a little bit pregnant—it cannot happen. That is, just as one is either pregnant or not, people either hold prejudicial views toward sexual minorities, or they do not. Indeed, the hint of sexual prejudice among parents in this sample is likely to affect their decision of whether to allow their children to play for a LGB coach (see Sartore & Cunningham, 2009), and parents potentially pass these attitudes down to their children (Powell & Graves, 2003). Thus, while the mean scores might be low and even on the decline, the impact of even low levels of sexual prejudice can still be meaningful.

Our hypotheses focused on racial differences in the study variables. In drawing from Herek’s (2007, 2009) work, we argued that differences among racial groups were not biologically determined but, instead, socially constructed and shaped by a confluence of personal and cultural factors. We observed two differences. First, Asians expressed more prejudice toward sexual minority coaches than did Latinos and Whites. These findings are consistent with research in other contexts (Ahrold & Meston, 2010) and suggest that the structural manifestations of sexual stigma vary among Asians and Whites. Illustrative of these effects, Dang and Hu (2005) found that 96% of LGB Asians believed that sexual prejudice was a problem in Asian communities. Second, African Americans expressed greater religious fundamentalism than did Whites. These results are consistent with other research documenting differences between African Americans and Whites in religiosity (Schulte & Battle, 2004; Whitley et al., 2011) and commitment to their church’s teachings (Jagers & Smith, 1996)—again, differences that emerge due to macro-level influences.

Notwithstanding these two differences, we largely failed to observe racial differences in any of the study variables. While there is certainly considerable literature pointing to racial differences—literature we outlined in the Introduction and upon which we based our hypotheses—some authors have also found no racial differences in sexual prejudice (de Bruin & Arndt, 2010; Schulte & Battle, 2004). For example, Schulte and Battle suggested that racial differences are more
a function of other, underlying mechanisms, such as people’s religious beliefs or sexism. However, we also failed to observe differences in those variables. Thus, as a possible alternative explanation to that offered by Schulte and Battle, we suggest that the characteristics of the state from which the data were drawn might have influenced the results. As noted in the Methods, the state is racially heterogeneous and one of four in the United States where racial minorities outnumber Whites. It is possible that, given this diversity, people might interact with racially dissimilar others to such a degree that racial differences in attitudes and beliefs become minimized. Thus, people from different races might come to share common attitudes and beliefs toward homosexuality, religion, and gender. The notable exceptions are with Asians’ sexual prejudice and African Americans’ religious fundamentalism. Some authors, indeed, have argued that Asians are unlikely to go through the acculturation process (Ahrold & Meston, 2010), and therefore maintain their conservative beliefs toward sexuality (see also Poon & Ho, 2002). Others have pointed to the centrality of religion to African Americans (Cohen et al., 2009). Our explanations are speculative, though, and future research is needed to further explore these possibilities.

In addition, we examined how fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities influenced prejudice toward sexual minority coaches, as well as racial differences in these effects. Consistent with the extant literature (e.g., Herek, 2009; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Whitley, 2001), we found that all three antecedents significantly predicted sexual prejudice. Importantly, we also extended this literature by examining how these effects varied by race. These efforts proved fruitful: although race did not influence the mean scores of the variables, it did influence the association among them. For instance, for African Americans, sexism held the strongest association with prejudice toward sexual minority coaches, while for Asians and Whites, religious fundamentalism held the strongest association. Contact with lesbian and gay friends was a significant predictor of prejudice for Asians, but not for the other groups. Finally, for Latinos, both religious fundamentalism and sexism were associated with sexual prejudice.

While we are mindful that these are results from a single study, these findings do have potential implications. First, from a practical perspective, it is important to remain cognizant that the antecedents of prejudice vary among racial groups. Thus, for instance, efforts to reduce prejudice among Asians (at least from this sample) might focus on creating opportunities for contact with LGB individuals. The contact would potentially allow for stereotype disconfirmation and a reduction in intergroup anxiety, both of which should ultimately reduce prejudice (see Allport, 1954; Binder et al., 2009). Targeting fundamentalist beliefs can be complicated, to say the least, but one possibility is to share information that offers alternative views, such as Daniel Karslake’s award winning documentary, *For the Bible Tells Me So*—a film that offers a counter to the Biblically-based opposition to homosexuality. Showing this documentary or others like it would allow people to be exposed to and ponder different ways of thinking about their religious beliefs.

Second, from a theoretical perspective, our results suggest that race acts as a moderator in the relationship among the variables we studied. What is less clear, however, is why this is the case. Why, for instance, was contact with sexual minorities a significant predictor of sexual prejudice for Asians but not for Latinos? Or, why was religious fundamentalism more salient than the other variables for
Whites? These are questions for which we do not have immediate answers, but understanding the “why” behind these findings is a critical element of theory and theory building (Bacharach, 1989; Locke, 2007). Future qualitative assessments might shed light on these dynamics.

Contributions, Limitations, and Future Directions

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, we add to the limited body of research examining racial differences in sexual prejudice. Our study is unique, though, in that we collected data from a representative sample of adults rather than a convenience sample of college students, the latter of which characterized most analyses of race and sexual prejudice. Second, we also demonstrated that the association between religious fundamentalism, sexism, and contact with sexual minorities, and prejudice toward sexual minority coaches varies among African American, Asian, Latino, and White parents. As previously noted, these findings are unique to the literature.

Although this study makes several contributions to the literature, there are potential limitations. First, our response rate (30%) might signal nonresponse bias, though we previously provided data showing this is likely not the case. Second, we collected data from adults in university settings (sometimes described as a liberal context) from a single state. Future researches should seek to expand the breadth of the data collection. Third, while study participants all had children, we did not ask if the children had played or were currently participating in organized sport. The parents were, nevertheless, able to articulate their attitudes toward sexual minority coaches, and these attitudes are likely to influence their decisions related to their children’s sport participation (Sartore & Cunningham, 2009). Finally, we collected data on a single questionnaire which opened the possibility for method variance. The reverse coding of many questionnaires items helps to buttress these effects. Further, that the one-factor CFA was a poor fit to the data suggests that common method variance is not a substantial concern (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995).

Finally, we see several avenues for future research. Perhaps the most pressing need is to understand why the associations among the study variables differed by race, a point to which we previously alluded. In addition, we examined an overt measure of sexual prejudice, but implicit sexual prejudice can also influence people’s behaviors and outcomes (Hebl, Foster, Mannix & Dovidio, 2002; see also Snowden, Wichter & Gray, 2008). Future researchers should consider examining this possibility within the sport context, as well as racial differences in the expression of implicit sexual prejudice. Furthermore, we touched on several possibilities for reducing sexual prejudice, but the efficacy of these interventions is not immediately known. Indeed, most interventions have targeted racial prejudice (for a review, see Paluck & Green, 2009), but given the nature and extent of sexual prejudice, interventions are needed also in this context.

References


Han, C-S. (2007). They don’t want to cruise your type: Gay men of color and the racial politics of exclusion. *Social Identities, 13*, 51–67. doi:10.1080/13504630601163379


