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Intragroup Attitudes of the LGBT Community:

Assessment and Correlates

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Abstract

The intragroup attitudes of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community are examined. A general overview of heterosexuals' views about LGBT persons is considered before reviewing past research on intragroup attitudes that may exist within the LGBT community. Since little work has been done in this area, to fill gaps in the literature a study of 533 self-identified LGBT individuals was conducted to assess attitudes towards each specific subgroup (lesbian, gay male, bisexual male, bisexual female, male-to-female transgender, and female-to-male transgender) of the LGBT community. Several variables, including group identification, perceived stigma, outness, and contact, were examined as predictors intragroup attitudes. Results indicated that predictors of attitudes differed by subgroup. Implications of the results are discussed, including limitations and directions for future work.

Keywords: LGBT, attitudes, intragroup

Intragroup Attitudes of the LGBT Community: Assessment and Correlates

Past research concerning lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals has focused on a wide array of issues, such as rates of mental illness (Warner, McKeown, Griffin, Johnson, Ramsay, Cort, & King, 2004), effects of stress (Cox, Dewaele, van Houtte, & Vincke, 2011), and the prevalence of discrimination (Otis & Skinner, 1996). Previous research has also examined the public's attitudes about those who are LGBT (Herek, 2002b; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999; Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001). Studies have primarily focused on heterosexuals' attitudes toward individual subgroups of the LGBT community, with the most common emphasis looking at attitudes about gay men and lesbians (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001; Herek, 1984; Herek & Glunt, 1993). However, few studies have examined the attitudes that members of the LGBT community have about others in the LGBT community (intragroup attitudes; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999; Mulick & Wright, 2002). This paper introduces and discusses past work that involves both general and intragroup attitudes about members of the LGBT community, highlighting the current study's contributions to the literature. Theories and predictors are offered that may explain differing intragroup attitudes. And, the current study investigated the intragroup attitudes of the LGBT community, specifically focusing on attitudes toward lesbians, gay males, bisexual males, bisexual females, male-to-female & female-to-male transgender persons.

General Attitudes about the LGBT Community

Prevalence. While attitudes about homosexuality and the LGBT community have shown signs of shifting to more positive levels (Gallup, 2011), prejudice and discrimination are still an issue for those who are non-heterosexual or non-cisgender. This system of individual, societal, and institutional prejudice and discrimination can be defined as heterosexism (commonly referred to as 'homophobia'; Herek, 2010). Heterosexism can manifest in overt ways, such as

state or federal governments restricting marriage to heterosexuals (Herek, 2009). It can also be expressed in covert ways, such as an individual implicitly equating bisexuality to immorality (Weiss, 2003).

Past research on discrimination in general has shown that it has links with negative emotional reactions and psychosomatic symptoms for its victims (Adams, 1965). Further research has indicated that correlates of discrimination are similar to those of other psychosocial stressors (Dion, 2001). Focusing directly on the LGBT community, the effects of heterosexism have been linked to decreased seeking of LGBT-related health concerns (e.g. HIV/AIDS; Fassinger & Arseneau, 2007), higher rates of depression (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009), and increased risks for suicides (Gilman, Cochran, Mays, Hughes, Ostrow, & Kessler, 2001), as well as other outcomes. These deleterious effects can contribute to an overall negative well-being for LGBT persons.

While heterosexuals' negative attitudes about homosexuals have been well-documented (Eliason, 1995; Herek, 1984, 2002b, 2009; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Hudson & Ricketts, 1980; Malcomson, Christopher, Franzen, & Keyes, 2006; Raja & Stokes, 1998), anti-bisexual attitudes have also been shown among heterosexual samples (Eliason, 2000; Herek, 2002a; Mulick & Wright, 2002). In a study using heterosexual college students, Eliason (2000) noted that both males and females exhibited negative attitudes about bisexuals; males however had the least favorable views. In addition, bisexual males were rated least favorably amongst other sexual minorities (i.e. lesbians, gay males, and bisexual females). One interesting item had participants indicate how likely they would be to enter into a sexual relationship with someone who was bisexual. Over half (52%) reported that it would be "very unlikely" and 25% said that it would be "somewhat unlikely" (Eliason, 2000).

A non-heterosexual sexual orientation is not the only stigmatized identity in the LGBT community; identifying as transgender also exposes individuals to prejudice and discrimination. As opposed to heterosexism, recent literature has used the term ‘transprejudice’ to describe the phenomenon that the cisgender (or non-transgender) majority group internalizes stigma about those who challenge gender conformity (King, Winter, & Webster, 2009). Not surprisingly, the concept of transprejudice has been expressed through negative attitudes among heterosexual samples (Harvey, 2002; Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Tee & Hegarty, 2006). More overt examples can be seen in news stories of tragic hate crimes against transgender people that can sometimes result in murder (Conneen, 2012; Najafi, 2011).

Factors. While knowing the prevalence of specific attitudes about the LGBT community is important, knowing factors that may predict these attitudes is of equal concern. With a growing amount of literature, many different variables have been found to be indicative of positive and negative attitudes about the LGBT community. Contact, gender, religiosity, and the geographic region are examples of some of these factors.

Contact. The amount of contact with various groups has been extensively examined to gauge its effects on attitudes after being started by Allport’s contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954). Allport argues that while working for a common goal, equal status contact with a negatively stereotyped group decreases the negative attitudes associated with the group. To aid in contact’s effects, more favorable attitudes may be cultivated quicker if there is more institutional sanctioning (e.g. government laws). However he also postulated that attitudes may be resistant to change regardless of contact depending on how intrinsic or central to one’s identity (Allport, 1954). While Allport was initially focused on intergroup racial relations, more recent research

has applied contact theory to attitudes toward the LGBT community (Herek & Glunt, 1993; Herek & Capitanio, 1996; King et al., 2009; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999; Overby & Barth, 2002).

Many studies have found significant correlations between heterosexuals' amount of contact with various subgroups of the LGBT community and more supportive or favorable views toward them. While the most focus has been examining contact with homosexuals (Herek, 1984, 1988; Herek & Capitanio, 1996), both bisexuality (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999) and transgenderity (Harvey, 2002; King et al., 2009) have also been assessed. However it is important to note a common criticism of these studies, in that they are all correlation in design. This brings into question the validity of the results, given that causality cannot be established. Is contact with the LGBT community fostering more favorable attitudes? Or is it that people who have more favorable attitudes tend to associate more with the community and inherently have more contact? Regardless of lack of causality, contact's relation to more positive attitudes should not be dismissed.

Gender. Anti-homosexual attitudes have been shown to be stronger in heterosexual males as compared to females (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Raja & Stokes, 1998). Males have generally been shown to have the highest levels of anti-homosexual beliefs toward gay males rather than lesbians. Conversely, heterosexual females are known to have more balanced attitudes about homosexuality, where they have relatively equal levels of anti-homosexual attitudes toward both lesbians and gay males. When females do have differences in attitudes, they tend to have more positive attitudes about gay males (Raja & Stokes, 1998). Similar gender effects have been found when examining both anti-bisexual attitudes (Eliason, 2000) and anti-transgender attitudes (Harvey, 2002; Tee & Hegarty, 2006), as heterosexual males were the most likely to hold negative views.

Religiosity and Geographic Region. One of the strongest predictors of attitudes about homosexuality is a person's religiosity, especially if a person is fundamentalist or conservative (Eliason, 1995; Whitehead, 2010; Wilkinson, 2004). Religion's effects on heterosexuals' attitudes have also been shown to be consistent with attitudes about bisexuality (Herek, 2002a) and transgenderality (Tee & Hegarty, 2006). A factor that may be linked to religiosity is the geographic region where a person is raised. Particularly, being raised in the rural South and Midwest has been noted to generally indicate increased anti-homosexual attitudes (Eliason, 1995). This can have negative consequences for adolescents attempting to "come out" in these areas (Yarbrough, 2003).

LGBT Intragroup Attitudes

In comparison to heterosexuals' attitudes about the LGBT community, the intragroup attitudes of LGBT people have received scarce attention. This may be because some people believe that examining the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes seems unwarranted, as it is often assumed that the LGBT community is a cohesive, driven force that is composed of like-minded individuals who band together to counter discrimination (Weiss, 2003). This rationale can be summarized by Simmel (1955), who noted that an external threat (such as heterosexism) often forces those who are the target of attacks to band together as a group. Yet when history or current events are examined, similar prejudice and discrimination can be seen within the ranks of the community, even from high-profile LGBT organizations like the Human Rights Campaign (HRC; Schindler, 2007). This assumption about the LGBT community has likely contributed to little efforts to explore the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes. However, continuing further, Simmel also said that once a group begins to come together to face attacks, if there are differences present among a minority group they may become divisive and harm the created

cohesion. With this in mind, the intragroup attitudes of the LGBT community may require more focus than currently given.

Prevalence. Given that the LGBT community is made up of a diverse group of individuals, Simmel's (1995) thoughts about intragroup attitudes are not farfetched. With many expressions and definitions of gender and sexual orientation, the ability to create a community that encompasses all of these identities has the potential to fail or at the very least create tensions between groups. Some may be skeptical of other subgroups' validity or right to be included in the LGBT community (McLean, 2008; Weiss, 2003). Yet keeping this diversity in mind, there has been little empirical work done to examine any rifts between potentially dissimilar groups. The scant amount of work currently available has demonstrated that negative intragroup attitudes can exist, in spite of assumptions about the LGBT community.

Attitudes about homosexuals. When the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes have been examined in past work, the least amount of focus has been applied to intragroup attitudes about homosexuals. Instead, the majority of work has explored what homosexuals think about the other subgroups of the LGBT community. This is not too surprising given that the modern "gay-rights movement" is typically thought of to be started by homosexuals (particularly gay males; Weiss, 2003). By initially forming what is now known as the LGBT community, homosexuals have achieved a place of power within the community, as they have been in it the longest. This may explain why most of the intragroup research has focused on what homosexuals think about the rest of the group members, rather than the inverse.

Some of the work that has been done can be exemplified by Kristiansen's (1990) work with examining lesbian and gay males' views about each other. Her sample consisted of three groups of participants: lesbians who identified primarily with the feminist movement, lesbians

who identified with the “gay movement,” and gay males. When intragroup attitudes were examined, feminist lesbians had more negative views about gay males than their gay movement lesbian counterparts. These feminist lesbians had less association with gay males and believed that their lives as lesbians were not reliant or related to those of gay males. Conversely, gay movement lesbians viewed gay males more positively and expressed more intragroup similarities rather than intergroup differences (Kristiansen, 1990). This study demonstrated that there can be attitudinal differences even within subgroups of the LGBT community, highlighting the importance of a feminist identity.

Attitudes about lesbians. The most notable work for intragroup attitudes about lesbians has come from exploring lesbians’ views about themselves. In particular, internalized heterosexism has been of interest to some researchers. This concept is thought to occur when stigmatized homosexual and bisexual individuals “take-in” and internalized negative societal attitudes about homosexuality and/or same-sex attraction. This in turn may lead to some non-heterosexuals to have a form of self-hatred (Sophie, 1987). Internalized heterosexism is thought to affect most people who are non-heterosexual to varying degrees (Malyon, 1982). However, when higher levels of internalized heterosexism manifest, this may lead to not only having negative feelings about oneself but also about others who are non-heterosexual (Pearlman, 1987; Pharr, 1988).

For instance, one study to test this link between internalized heterosexism and negative attitudes about other non-heterosexuals was performed when Szymanski and Chung (2001) created their Lesbian Internalized Heterosexism Scale (LIHS). Designed specifically for lesbians, one of the five subscales was the “Attitudes Toward Other Lesbians Scale.” This subscale was positively correlated with the overall score of the LIHS, showing that lesbians who

had higher levels of internalized heterosexism had more negative attitudes toward other lesbians (Szymanski & Chung, 2001). This important finding added to intragroup attitudes about lesbians. Therefore, while there has been limited overall work on intragroup attitudes about lesbians, it is important to stress that lesbians themselves can have negative attitudes about others who share their sexual orientation.

Attitudes about gay males. Similar to intragroup attitudes about lesbians, it has been suggested that gay males themselves have been thought to have negative attitudes towards other gay males. Hajek and Giles (2002) argue that this is due to an intergenerational effect, where older and younger generations of gay males have negative attitudes toward each other. Some validation of this has been seen when older gay males have reported feelings of discrimination by their younger counterparts (Grube, 1990). This is thought to occur partly because of the appearance-driven culture of gay males, where younger generations may fear growing older and becoming less youthful or “less attractive.” Concurrently, older gay males may hold negative feelings toward younger persons because they may disagree with their more liberal, open views about sexuality, culture, dress, etc. These modern ideals can be seen as an affront to more traditional views held by older generations that demanded secrecy and lower levels of outness (Lee, 1989). In addition to this, older generations of LGBT individuals have may have higher levels of internalized heterosexism as compared to younger generations (Barón & Cramer, 2000; Reid, 1995).

Attitudes about bisexuals. Bisexuals in the LGBT community face the awkward position of being in a state of “double discrimination” as noted by Ochs (1996). Instances of prejudice and discrimination can be adequately described as anti-bisexual attitudes, which McLean (2008) defines as: “attitudes that are particularly negative or judgmental about bisexuals, their lifestyles,

and their relationships” (p. 66). Like other attitudes, anti-bisexual attitudes are likely derivative of heterosexual/societal attitudes and mirrored in intragroup attitudes. McLean (2008) highlights an example of bisexuals being excluded from participating in a “pride parade” in Australia because they were not homosexual or transgender (e.g. not a member of the “gay” community). Beyond looking at overt examples or historical references from an outside perspective, bisexuals themselves have confirmed that they face discrimination from both heterosexuals and homosexuals (Brewster & Moradi, 2010).

Part of the reason bisexuals face prejudice from within the LGBT community is due to others maintaining erroneous belief systems. One common set of anti-bisexual attitudes is comprised of questioning whether or not bisexuality is a stable, valid sexual orientation (Israel & Mohr, 2004; Macdonald, 1981; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). Indeed this may be the main issue facing bisexuals, as both heterosexuals and LGBT individuals question whether or not bisexuality actually “exists.” The focus, as summarized by McLean (2008), is focused on distinct facets that are often thought of as stereotypes. One belief is that bisexuals are in denial of their sexual orientation, whether it be heterosexual or homosexual. This may often coincide with thoughts that bisexuality may be a transitioning stage for one to go from a heterosexual to homosexual identity (Rust, 1995). A similar belief sometimes expressed is that bisexuals simply cannot decide if they want to be heterosexual or homosexual and therefore remain “on the fence” (Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994). Rather than being “indecisive,” bisexuals are also sometimes categorized as lacking the bravery to embrace a homosexual identity (Israel & Mohr, 2004). Perhaps the most negative generalization is that they are maintaining their heterosexual attractions or bisexual identity in order to still receive the privileges of belonging to the heterosexual majority (Israel & Mohr, 2004; Rust, 1995).

One of the prominent researchers regarding bisexual attitudes, Mohr, helped develop a reliable scale to measure attitudes about bisexuality, the Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality Scale (ARBS; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). In the initial study of the ARBS, Mohr and Rochlen used a sample of heterosexual, lesbian, and gay male, participants to validate the scale. By including lesbians and gay males, the study helped explore part of the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes. The results showed the mean scores from each sample were above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that attitudes toward bisexuality were generally positive overall (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999).

In spite of the encouraging positive overall mean scores, other findings indicated that more negative attitudes may still exist within the LGBT community. The most overt examples were informal responses written by participants. Mohr and Rochlen included quotes by two gay male participants that showed questioning of bisexuals' fidelity in relationships, as well as beliefs that bisexuals hurt "the cause" (presumably the "gay-rights movement"/LGBT-rights movement). Further evidence resulted from gender differences when gay males and lesbians were compared on their attitudes. Lesbians had more positive attitudes toward bisexual males than females, with the opposite occurring with gay males' attitudes. In addition, both lesbians and gay males found that the opposite gender's bisexuality was more stable than the other. These results suggest that lesbians and gay male's biggest issues with bisexuals are potentially judgments of their stability of a sexual orientation and trustworthiness as a romantic partner (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999).

Attitudes about bisexual females. Some scholars point to intragroup biphobia aimed at bisexual females coming from lesbians who have internalized feminist ideologies (Israel & Mohr, 2004; Ochs, 1996; Rust, 1993, 1995; Weiss, 2003). Rust (1993) and Weiss (2003) have

noted that there had been tense relations between some lesbians and bisexual females since the early 1970s. This tension became noticeably overt as the lesbian feminist movement split from the feminist movement. These negative attitudes have been thought to result partly from the belief that bisexual women have betrayed their fellow women by “sleeping with the enemy [men].” Thus, by being attracted to or having sexual relations with men, bisexual females may be thought of as traitors to womanhood and lesbian ideals (Rust, 1993).

A study of lesbians by Rust (1993) explored attitudes they held about bisexual women and was one of the first empirical investigations going beyond anecdotal evidence about these historically negative attitudes. The results of the study affirmed beliefs that have been hypothesized to feed anti-bisexual attitudes. Of the 346 self-identified lesbians, 40% indicated that they had identified as bisexual in the past. Of that 40%, over half (54%) came out as bisexual before taking the identity of lesbian and never subsequently identified as bisexual. The remaining 46% came out as bisexual after identifying as a lesbian, however they later returned to their lesbian identity. This breakdown of lesbians’ shifting identities potentially helps fuel stereotypes of bisexuality as an unstable sexual orientation (Rust, 1993). Those who came out as bisexual first may have used it as a transitional stage before fully embracing a lesbian identity. Others may have experienced bisexuality as a temporary identity after first viewing themselves as lesbians. Either of these experiences may be used as “proof” that bisexuality is not a person’s true sexual orientation, among other anti-bisexual stereotypes.

In regards to having a shift in identities from bisexual to lesbian (or vice versa), Rust (1993) noted that participants endorsed the idea that anyone could mislabel sexuality, yet lesbians were not as likely to do this as bisexual women. Furthermore, 67% of lesbians seemed to believe that bisexuality was a transitional stage in that most bisexuals would eventually realize

that they are lesbian. Conversely, the vast majority of participants (91%) believed that few lesbians will come out as bisexual or heterosexual. A final stereotype of bisexuality was reinforced when 89% of participants indicated that they believed bisexuals are too afraid to identify as lesbian. These results give firm backing to conceptualized claims that some lesbians can hold negative attitudes toward bisexual females.

Attitudes about bisexual males. Compared to their female counterparts, less research has focused on intragroup attitudes about bisexual males. Ochs (1996) pointed out that some gay males may be uncomfortable with bisexual men because it creates the possibility of a second “coming out.” Whereas the first coming out process is the transition from a heterosexual to homosexual identity, this second coming out is thought to be from homosexual to bisexual. The threat of this second coming out event is seen as an affront to all the progress made in solidifying a homosexual identity. Ochs noted that after potentially struggling for many years to finally conclude one is homosexual, the thought of having to repeat this process for bisexuality would likely seem terrifying. Furthermore, if this second process were to occur and acknowledged, it would require another round of having to inform acquaintances, friends, family, etc., creating further distress. Due to this, negative attitudes may manifest in gay males towards their bisexual counterparts in the community. This can be illustrated by the results from Mohr and Rochlen (1999) that indicate gay males having more positive attitudes toward bisexual females than towards bisexual males.

Attitudes about transgender individuals. In comparison to intragroup attitudes about bisexuals, studies examining attitudes about those who identify as transgender have received less attention. The literature available mirrors other attitude measurements where the majority of samples are heterosexual (Hill & Willoughby, 2005; Nagoshi, Adams, Terrell, Hill, Brzuzy, &

Nagoshi, 2008). A scant amount of research exists on what others in the LGBT community think about the 'T' in the LGBT acronym (Morrison, 2010; Stone, 2009). This lack of focus is surprising given that anecdotal evidence suggests that transgender individuals receive a great deal of prejudice and discrimination as they live out their lives (Weiss, 2008).

Anti-transgender attitudes have been defined by Hill and Willoughby (2005) as having three components. The first is transphobia, which can be described as disgust towards masculine women, feminine men, cross-dressers, and/or transsexuals. This feeling of disgust may manifest when a person is fearful that a friend, family member, co-worker, etc. may be transgender or if a transgender individual is met. The second component is genderism, which is perceiving those who do not conform to stereotypical gender roles are deviants and pathological. The final aspect is gender-bashing which is the direct manifestation of prejudice in the form of physical and/or verbal assaults against those who fail to meet cultural gender expectations (Hill & Willoughby, 2005).

A factor that may contribute to intragroup attitudes about transgender persons is a subtle divide that can be overlooked without close inspection. When looking at the LGBT acronym, some people likely do not realize the fact that the letters LGB are referring to sexual orientations and T is about gender identity, making them separate constructs (APA, 2006; Diamond, 2002). Whereas sexual orientation refers to the emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction that is felt from one person towards others, gender identity involves a person's view of what his/her socially and psychologically constructed gender is. One's gender may or may not be congruent with their biological or physical sex, which is typically viewed as being determined by chromosomes and gonads. When gender and sex do not align, a person may identify as transgender. For those that believe they are experiencing non-congruence, they may then choose to undergo medical

treatment, such as hormones or surgeries as a remedy, however not all choose this route (APA, 2006).

Additionally, the word 'transgender' is more complex than a simple definition and thereby often misunderstood, as it is often used as an umbrella term for a wide array of individuals. Such diversity makes it difficult to effectively study; however, some scholars like Beemyn (2003) have classified some of the common identities: transgender, transsexuals, cross-dressers, and drag kings and queens. Each of these are used to describe one's self-expression in regards to challenging the culturally accepted gender categories of male and female. Some involve temporarily dressing in the opposite gender's clothing (e.g. cross-dressers, drag queens and kings) or as already stated, potentially include those who have taken a medical approach to align one's gender and sex (Beemyn, 2003). In culmination, this diversity of who may identify with the term 'transgender' may lead some LGBT group members to find the complexity too extreme. Due to this, it took many years to formally include transgender people into the LGBT community. In fact, this process of inclusion did not occur until the last decade of the twentieth-century, even though they had been involved with the modern gay-rights movement since its inception (Stone, 2009). Some homosexual activists were displeased with this expansion of the social movement to include gender identity, believing that it would be a hindrance to achieving equality (by violating "just like you" strategies; Weiss, 2003). These negative attitudes may still persist to reflect in current intragroup attitudes.

Attitudes about male-to-female transgender. In addition to higher incidences of biphobia toward females, there is also the possibility that some intragroup transphobic attitudes may originate from lesbians who have a strong feminist identity (Weiss, 2003). This was noted to start occurring in the 1970s as radical feminist lesbians broke away from the feminist movement.

While not all feminist lesbians espouse negative attitudes about male-to-female transgender individuals, it is important to note that there has been tension between the two groups that has been documented. For instance, Weiss (2003) recalls that in 1973, transgender activist was speaking at a gay-pride rally and was publicly accused of “impersonating women” by a lesbian. This example captures one of the key arguments from some feminist lesbians, whereas male-to-female transgender individuals are bringing in a “male influence” or masculinity into the female sphere or what it means to be female. Therefore, it does not matter that a transgender female identifies as female. Instead, since she would have formerly been male, it is seen as males trying to yet again invade females’ lives and dominate them. This may also bring up a question of “are transgender females ‘real’ women?”

Attitudes about female-to-male transgender. In comparison to transgender females, research focusing on intragroup attitudes about female-to-male transgender individuals has been lacking. Even Weiss (2003) who compiled an extensive amount of information about negative intragroup attitudes about transgender people fails to mention information about transgender males. One reason this may occur is that male-to-female transgender people have a harder time “passing” as female than cisgender females, which allows more opportunity to observe negative attitudes (Lev, 2004). This may have stronger allure for researchers, given that it might be easier to conduct research concerning transgender females.

Additionally, gender roles may provide a barrier from anti-transgender attitudes for transgender males. Society has greater tolerance for female children and adolescents performing opposite-gender behavior. These young females may be thought of as “tom boys” and allowed to continue engaging in such behavior (although there generally is a point where this behavior is discouraged). However, for young males, if opposite-gender behaviors are displayed they are

more likely to be thought of as deviant and have higher incidences of being referred to mental health professionals for gender identity concerns (Möller, Schreier, Li, & Romer, 2009). Do these two factors allow for greater acceptance of transgender males in the LGBT community?

Factors. Similar to research on heterosexuals' attitudes about the LGBT community, several variables have been found to relate to more negative or positive intragroup attitudes for LGBT people. As expected, few factors have been identified as compared to ones for heterosexuals given that there has been sparse quantitative research in this area. However, contact, outness, perceived stigma, and group identification are highlighted for their contributions to these attitudes that have already been explored or may prove beneficial.

Contact. As noted previously, the amount of contact with a stigmatized group can reduce negative attitudes (Allport, 1954). Mohr and Rochlen (1999) found this to be true when lesbians and gay males exhibited more positive attitudes about bisexuals when they reported having more contact with bisexuals in the past. With the growing availability of LGBT-oriented groups in schools and local communities, more organizations may allow for more access/contact to various subgroups of the LGBT community, potentially fostering more positive attitudes about them. However, an important limitation to the usefulness of contact is that even if groups continue to become available, stigmatized subgroups may not attend, perhaps out of fear of prejudice or discrimination (McLean, 2008). With these fears of exclusion, individuals that may benefit most from contact may not participate, therefore denying the chance for contact.

Outness. Another potential predictor of intragroup attitudes is an individual's level of outness, which is the amount a person has disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity to others (or the amount that others know about it) and it is discussed (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). There is a need to measure multiple targets of disclosure, as there are a plethora of different

groups and individuals to divulge this information to. A person may be out to some people and not others, such as being out to friends and not family. Higher levels of outness have been thought to be seen as having reached a more stable, advanced stage of identity (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). Outness has also been linked to lower levels of psychological distress (Jordan & Deluty, 1998; Morris, Waldo, & Rothblum, 2001; Schmitt & Kurdek, 1987).

Mohr and Fassinger (2000) developed a measure to empirically test levels of outness in sexual minorities called the 'Outness Inventory.' The initial study to validate its use found that based on mean scores, the sample of lesbians and gay males, most of the participants were noted to be "generally out." On closer inspection, those who were more out had more community identity and were similar to other sexual minorities who were in the final stages of developing their LGBT identity (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000).

Other studies have focused on examining levels of outness of different groups of the LGBT community besides homosexuals. Bisexuals have been shown to exhibit lower levels of outness as compared to gay males and lesbians (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). This may be due to the stigma surrounding bisexuals, including the aforementioned stereotypes of the bisexual community. For example, given that there is a belief that bisexuality does not even exist (Herek, 2002a), a person who identifies as bisexual may keep his/her identity concealed in order to avoid stigmatizing questions or negative consequences (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). Additionally, negative intragroup attitudes among the LGBT community may also influence bisexuals' levels of outness (Ochs, 1996).

Factor and Rothblum (2008) examined the transgender community by breaking it down into three subgroups: male-to-female, female-to-male, and genderqueer (not identifying as strictly male or female). Part of their analysis explored levels of disclosure of gender identity

among each subgroup. As compared to male-to-female or female-to-male participants, genderqueers were less out than their counterparts. More importantly for the current study, female-to-male persons were the most out to mothers and fathers than the other groups (Factor and Rothblum, 2008). This may be due to families being more accepting of younger females challenging gender norms (e.g. girls being called “tomboys”). These more flexible views toward gender in children may carry over into late adolescence or adulthood if females wish to identify as transgender.

Higher levels of outness have been correlated with lower levels of internalized homonegativity [heterosexism] (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). This supports literature review findings by Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, and Meyer (2008) which noted many occurrences of the negative relationship between outness and internalized heterosexism. This link between internalized heterosexism and level of outness is important because internalized heterosexism has been theorized to have an impact on intragroup attitudes. As noted earlier, in particular it is thought that internalized heterosexism relates to more negative attitudes about other non-heterosexuals (Pearlman, 1987; Pharr, 1988; Szymanski & Chung, 2001). Additionally, those who are less out may have less contact with other LGBT people, potentially contributing to negative attitudes. In culmination, past results indicate that outness can potentially be an important variable to consider when examining the experiences of the LGBT community and conceivably could be used to predict intragroup attitudes.

Perceived stigma. Perceived stigma has been defined by Mickelson & Williams (2008) as “one’s personal feelings about their stigmatized condition and one’s perceived experience of being stigmatized by others” (pp. 904). Perceived stigma has been observed in many groups, including lesbians and gay males (Lewis, Derlega, Griffin, & Kuang, 2006; Mays & Cochran,

2001) and more recently in bisexuals (Brewster & Moradi, 2010). Perceived stigma has also been found to be positively related to levels of outness (Brewster & Moradi, 2010). Higher levels of outness may possibly allow individuals to be exposed to more sources of stigmatization (whether real or perceived). Internalized heterosexism is thought to be related to perceived stigma as well (Brewster & Moradi, 2010); however it has received mixed support (Lewis et al., 2006; Rowen & Malcolm, 2003). Similar to outness, this link with internalized heterosexism is thought to be indicative of negative attitudes.

Group identification. The previous predictors may only account for more pliable or changeable attitudes (e.g. having more contact indicating more positive attitudes). Firm or intrinsically held beliefs may be best explored by examining one's group identification (e.g. lesbian). For instance, looking back at the amount of exclusion of bisexuals in gay pride events or activities (McLean, 2008; Weiss, 2003), it is possible that group identification is a key component in predicting anti-bisexual attitudes. Since homosexuals have historically been at the forefront of the modern gay-rights movement, they are often the "leaders" of the LGBT community or group organizers (Weiss, 2003). Acts of exclusion potentially signify that group identification may be strongest for homosexuals.

Theories. Beyond individual factors that may help predict intragroup attitudes for the LGBT community, several theories (social identity theory, black sheep effect, and self-categorization theory) can be applied to help explain potential intragroup attitudinal differences. Additionally, these theories may be best used to describe how negative attitudes may arise.

Social identity theory. First proposed by Tajfel (1978), social identity theory is based on ingroup favoritism, where one's ingroup (or group membership) is seen as a core to one's identity. In this way, group membership results in favoring one's ingroup in a variety of ways,

including attitudinally (Turner, 1981). It was further conceptualized to be a method to increase self-enhancement through the social component of one's view of their self-concept, otherwise known as social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identity has been thought of as the self-concept that is reliant on one's group membership and gives a sense of belonging in the world (Tajfel, 1982). In culmination, these factors give rise to ingroup favoritism, as group membership becomes a key component to maintaining self-esteem. By comparing a group's status to other groups, positive distinctiveness is found, thereby boosting self-esteem. Yet even if large negative traits are not available for comparison this process may still occur, as ingroup favoritism has been found to occur even if outgroups are perceived to be similar (Allen & Wilder, 1975).

Finally, when one's group is threatened, members may seek ways to combat attacks on their social identity by using one (or more) of three strategies. The first method, individual mobility, is used by members who feel that the best way to manage a discredited group identity is to either escape their current group or make it more positively distinct. A second strategy, social creativity, has been thought to occur when a group decides to change the target of the group comparison. This new targeted group would ideally be of lower-status than the previous one. Social creativity may also involve simply reshaping how the comparison to the outgroup is viewed, such as focusing on a different set of traits or characteristics to give the ingroup the advantage. Finally, group members may employ social competition, which seeks to foster positive distinctiveness via direct competition with the outgroup. This method is easily the most risky, as it would create mutual negative attitudes between the two groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Each of these three strategies can be exhibited in the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes. For instance, individual mobility could be exemplified by radical feminist lesbians breaking away from the feminist movement (and the growing LGBT community) to establish their own ideals separate group. In this case, these lesbians found it more beneficial to their own needs to separate from the ingroup of the gay community. Additionally, individual mobility may be seen by some identified LGBT group members who chose to simply blend-in and "pass" as heterosexual, rather than keeping their identity tied to being LGBT. Social creativity can be seen by some homosexuals potentially changing their target comparison group from heterosexuals to bisexuals. This is aided by stereotypes perpetuated by both heterosexuals and homosexuals that lead some to believe that bisexuals are of a lower status than homosexuals (Weiss, 2003). Rather than facing the risk of losing their positive distinctiveness, homosexuals may choose to have to ease this maintenance may comparing themselves to bisexuals. Finally, social competition has been shown in the exclusion of bisexual and transgender persons from LGBT pride parades and other events. By not allowing their participation, negative attitudes take the form of direct discrimination, an open signal of the hostility between the groups.

Black sheep effect. Building upon social identity theory, Marques, Yzerbyt, and Leyens (1988) proposed their black sheep effect. In it, Marques et al. said that judgments about ingroup members can be more extreme than judgments about similar outgroup members. In other words, the black sheep effect examines how ingroup members judge another ingroup member (when he/she transgresses or displays negative characteristics) more harshly than outgroup members (when they perform similar behaviors). The function of the black sheep effect is for ingroup members to try and distance themselves from the deviant group member in order to maintain a

positive social identity. This may result in making the dislike group member(s) a new outgroup (Marques & Paez, 1994).

In support of the Black Sheep Effect, Marques et al. (1988) pointed to a study by Jones and DeCharms (1957) that focused on group interdependency to meet a goal. Participants were split into small groups and told to complete a task. One member was a confederate and instructed to display a lack of interest in helping. Groups were in one of two experimental conditions while performing the task. The conditions stated that groups would be evaluated either on individual or overall group performance. After completing the task, participants in the individual evaluation condition rated the confederate more positively than those in the group performance condition. Therefore, due to the confederate's display of lack of interest in completing the task, he/she was seen to be a negative ingroup member and judged accordingly (Jones & DeCharms, 1957). When a participant's group identification was made more intrinsic or core to their identity, the threat of a deviant ingroup member triggered negative reactions.

Turning to LGBT intragroup attitudes, the Black Sheep Effect can be seen in the divide between homosexuals and those who are bisexual and transgender. As noted, there has been a historical tension between homosexuals and bisexual and transgender persons (Weiss, 2003). Applying the Black Sheep Effect to this phenomenon, it could be conceptualized that among the ingroup of the LGBT community, bisexual and transgender persons are devalued and viewed negatively by homosexuals because of beliefs that they hinder the "gay-rights" movement. By "hindering" their goals, they may be judged more harshly than heterosexuals (outgroup) and subsequently the target of prejudice or exclusion.

Self-categorization theory. An evolved approach that also built upon social identity theory is Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell's (1987) self-categorization theory. In it,

Turner et al. formulated that one's conceptualization of identity can occur on differing levels: subordinate (personal identity), intermediate (group identity), and superordinate (human identity). By having these multiple levels, attitudes (or comparisons) may fluctuate based on the given context. For instance, it may be advantageous to identify oneself based on membership in the LGBT community (intermediate) in one situation, yet better to identify with one's level of education (subordinate) in another. One factor that influences when one would identify with a group is the meta-contrast ratio, which relies on the perceived intragroup similarities and intergroup differences. Ideally, when a group identity is salient the meta-contrast ratio is high. In turn, the perceived intragroup similarities are correspondingly high, along with the intergroup differences (Oakes, 1987; Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991).

When the categorical level is increased from subordinate to intermediate or superordinate, a process termed 'depersonalization' occurs (Turner et al., 1987). With depersonalization, an individual begins to see him/herself based on group membership through the use of prototypes (a rough sense of what it means to be a member of a group) rather than as an individual. By using these prototypes, individual differences among members can be accounted and still keep the appearance of a coherent group of people with a singular identity. This is accomplished through the vagueness of prototype definitions. Additionally, these prototypes aid in comparisons if an outgroup is found to be similar to an ingroup. Upon discovery of this, the ingroup members will attempt to accentuate themselves by highlighting negative attributes of the outgroup or finding more positive attributes of the ingroup. This process in turn leads to ingroup favoritism. One method to highlight ingroup similarities is to use prototypes to form stereotypes that all members must adhere to. This process of self-stereotyping helps members reinforce intragroup similarities and maintain distinctness, thereby

aiding times when they perform intergroup comparisons. By doing so, this further enhances the effects of depersonalization, and maintains coherence. More importantly, these self-stereotypes form the basis of what it means to be a group member, potentially dictating members' attitudes and behaviors (Turner et al., 1987).

Looking back at the varying levels of self-categorization, identifying as a member of the LGBT community would fall under the intermediate level. As noted, when the intermediate level is salient depersonalization can occur, leading to a temporary loss of personal (subordinate) identity. Ideally, this would lead to ingroup favoritism towards other group members. As previously described however, negative intragroup attitudes have been shown to exist. By applying self-categorization theory, these attitudes may be explained by how one views the LGBT community. Is it comprised of the entire LGBT acronym? Or is it not as inclusive as it has been conceptualized to be, where it is more accurate to say that it is strictly made up of only homosexuals? Again, as Weiss (2003) describes, historically the latter may be the most accurate. This could be due to homosexuals perceiving that bisexual and transgender group members do not adhere to the group prototype and having a low meta-contrast ratio. By violating the prototype of group membership in the LGBT community, homosexuals may seek a higher status by disassociating from bisexual and transgender group members. Similarly, when the prototype is broken, the meta-contrast ratio would be thought to be low. Intragroup similarities between homosexuals and the rest of the community may be lower, with intergroup differences being higher.

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to understand the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes by examining the predictors of group identification, level of outness, level of contact,

and perceived stigma, as they relate to attitudes about lesbians, gay males, bisexual males and females, and transgender individuals (male-to-female; female-to-male). The predictor variables chosen have been indicated as potential explanatory factors of attitudes in prior research, but have not been examined extensively with intragroup attitudes. Specific study hypotheses included:

(H1) Group identification (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender) would be significantly related to less positive attitudes about other LGBT subgroups (lesbian, gay, bisexual male, bisexual female, male-to-female transgender, and female-to-male transgender).

(H2) Outness would be significantly related to more positive attitudes about each LGBT subgroup.

(H3) Contact would be significantly related to more positive attitudes about each LGBT subgroup.

(H4) Perceived stigma would be significantly related to less positive attitudes about each LGBT subgroup.

Methods

Participants

At the end of data collection, there were a total of 599 participants. However, of this overall sample, some were not included in analyses. First, four potential participants were disqualified for identifying as both heterosexual and cisgender. Next, forty-four participants did not readily self-identify as LGBT and instead chose 'other' (they were then given the option to clarify their response with a free-response item). Since this study was concerned with the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes, only those that identified as belonging to the main LGBT subgroups were included. Lastly, thirteen additional participants were omitted from analyses as

well. This was partly due to ten transgender participants inadvertently taking the wrong survey version because of an error in the conditioning. Similarly, one participant identified as male but was taken to the female gender sexual orientation item due to an unknown survey error. One participant identified as female, but when prompted to indicate her sexual orientation, she did not use the conditioning item. Instead, she used a free-response item to respond that she was pansexual. Due to not using the conditioning item however, she was advanced to the gay male survey.

A total of 533 participants who self-identified as LGBT comprised the final sample. See Table 1 for descriptive information about the sample. Considering gender, 262 (49.2%) identified as male, 232 (43.5%) as female, 22 (4.1%) as male-to-female transgender, 17 (3.2%) as female-to-male transgender. Breaking down the subgroups of the LGBT community, 233 (43.7%) identified as a gay male, 131 (24.6%) as bisexual, 130 (24.4%) were lesbian, and 39 (7.3%) as transgender. Overall, 383 participants completed the full battery of items, which gave a 71.85% completion rate. Ages ranged from 18 to 83 years ($M=34.10$, $SD=14.72$). The majority of the sample (55.4%) had obtained their bachelor's degree or higher, including 49 participants (9.3%) who had earned their doctoral degree. Most participants were white/Caucasian (84.8%) and had been raised in a suburban setting (51.6%). Of the total sample, 70.3% reported that they had been raised with a Christian or Catholic religious affiliation; however, that percentage reduced to 23% when asked for their current religious identification.

Measures

Outness. Mohr and Fassinger's (2000) Outness Inventory (OI) was used to measure outness. The OI was modified from its original form to assess gender identity for transgender participants, instead of sexual orientation. Items measured the level that eleven various

individuals (e.g. father, work supervisor, religious leader) knew about one's applicable identity and the amount of discussion about it (e.g. never, sometimes). Responses ranged from 1-7, with 1 being "person definitely does NOT know about your sexual orientation (gender identity) status" with 7 being "person definitely knows about your sexual orientation (gender identity) status, and it is OPENLY talked about." If an individual or situation was not present in the participant's life, he/she indicated 0 which meant "not applicable to your situation; there is no such person or group of people in your life." Mean scores were calculated to determine a participant's level of outness; higher mean scores showed greater levels of outness. Items have been shown to have Cronbach's alphas of .87 in samples of LGB people (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). This study found similarly strong internal consistency for the scale ($\alpha = .94$). For validity, LGB people's OI scores were found to correlate positively with involvement in LGB communities (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000).

Attitudes about lesbians and gay males. The Modern Homophobia Scale (MHS; Raja & Stokes, 1998) functioned to assess attitudes about homosexuals. It contains 24 questions relating to lesbians and 22 about gay males, with responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Some items were used for both subscales (with different statement targets), such as "I wouldn't mind going to a party that included lesbians/gay men." However some questions were tailored specifically for one group such as, "I won't associate with a gay man for fear of catching AIDS." Mean scores were found for each subscale rather than using a combined score. The scale was shown to have three factors for both the male and female subscales respectively: institutional homophobia toward lesbians/gay men ($\alpha = .89$; $\alpha = .90$), personal discomfort when associating with lesbians/gay men ($\alpha = .92$; $\alpha = .91$), belief that male/female homosexuality is deviant and changeable ($\alpha = .90$; $\alpha = .85$). This study's results

indicated that both the lesbian ($\alpha = .79$) and gay male ($\alpha = .82$) subscales possessed good internal consistency. Validity was established by correlating the MHS with the Index of Homophobia (Hudson & Ricketts, 1989) and the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence & Helmreich, 1978).

Attitudes about male and female bisexuals. Mohr and Rochlen's (1999) Attitudes Regarding Bisexuality Scale (ARBS) was used for examining attitudes about bisexuals. Similar to other scales, the ARBS contains two subscales to measure attitudes about both male and female bisexuality, each with 9 items. Response choices range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items focused on tolerance of bisexuality ("I would not be upset if my sister were bisexual.") as well as general attitudes toward bisexual people, including the endorsement of stereotypes ("Male bisexuality is not usually a phase, but rather a stable sexual orientation."). Initial reliability and validity were established by utilizing college students for a five-phase development. The bisexual male (.78) and the bisexual female subscale (.80) showed good internal consistency. Variable such as political ideology, contact, and attitudes toward homosexuals were found to be related to results from the ARBS (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999).

Attitudes toward male-to-female and female-to-male transgender persons. An adapted version of Herek's (1984) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale (ATLG) examined attitudes about transgender individuals. Since the scale was initially used for attitudes about homosexuals, the differences between the scales reflected an adaptation of items from a focus on sexual orientation to one of gender identity. Like the original measure, the modified version had 20 items divided evenly for each subscale; responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Male-to-female focused subscale included items such as: "The growing number of transgender women indicates a decline in American morals." Similar items existed for female-to-male: "Transgendered men are a perversion." Alpha levels for the original

scale have been shown to be higher for this longer version of the ATLG, with consistent findings of being above $\alpha=.80$. This study's adaptation of Herek's original scale showed mixed results. The alpha of the male-to-female transgender subscale was weak ($\alpha=.59$), but the female-to-male subscale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha=.79$). Additionally, the original ATLG has been used extensively in research since its inception and remains a popular attitude measures.

Contact. A group of items in a matrix labeled "Contact with the LGBT Community" assessed participants' amount of contact with the subgroups of the LGBT community. The directions indicated for participants to classify their amount of contact with each subgroup (lesbian, gay male, bisexual male, bisexual female, male-to-female transgender, female-to-male transgender) based on interactions with family, friends, acquaintances, and the media. Four responses were available to describe the amount of contact: none, limited, moderate, and frequently. To calculate a participant's degree of contact with each subgroup, a mean score was found using all four separate interactions. While the overall internal consistency of this scale was strong ($\alpha=.88$), the reliability was weaker for individual subgroups (contact with gay males ($\alpha=.59$), lesbians ($\alpha=.61$), transgender females ($\alpha=.64$), transgender males ($\alpha=.67$), bisexual females ($\alpha=.70$), and bisexual males ($\alpha=.70$)).

Perceived stigma. An adapted version of the Perceived Stigma Scale (Mickelson, 2001) functioned to find one's degree of perceived stigma. The items were modified from their original form to focus on stigma of either sexual orientation (for sexual minorities) or gender identity (for transgender persons). The scale contains 8 items which measures both public stigma (the perception of stigma from others) and self-stigma (the process of stigmatizing oneself). Examples of public stigma items include: "I have never felt self-conscious when I am in public" and "I feel others have looked down on me because of my sexual orientation."

Examples of self-stigma items include: “I have felt odd/abnormal because of my sexual orientation” and “There have been times when I have felt ashamed because of my sexual orientation.” Responses ranged from 1 (Definitely Disagree) to 5 (Definitely Agree) and an overall mean score was found with all 8 items. Initial testing of the scale indicated that it showed moderate internal consistency ($\alpha = .76$) along with test-retest reliability (Mickelson, 2001). This study found similar internal consistency ($\alpha=.80$).

Procedure

Participants were recruited by using a variety of advertising methods. The most focus was placed on emailing LGBT-oriented college organizations, support groups, or resource centers. Groups were emailed a letter (see Appendix) that explained why they were being contacted, the study’s goals, participant requirements, how to access the survey, and researchers’ contact information. In total, 686 groups were identified to be contacted through email and 650 were contacted without an automatic error reply.

Beyond emails, participants were also recruited by posting information about the study to groups on Facebook. These groups were selected because other contact information (such as an email address) could be not found. Additionally, flyers were also hung around the campus of a regional university in the southeast region of the United States. With each method, it was stressed that each potential participant should tell his/her friends in order to obtain more responses.

The study was conducted using the online survey website, Survey Monkey. After learning of the study, participants accessed the survey by navigating to its website address. Once the survey was opened, participants began by reading an informed consent page. If they agreed and met the study’s requirements, they clicked a button to advance the page. From there, the

following page had a list of demographic items, with the first question being a page condition: “Which gender best describes you?” The response options included: male; female; male-to-female transgender; male-to-female transgender. Based on the response to this question and after completing the demographics page, participants saw one of three pages that asked them to indicate their sexual orientation. Homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, and other were available for selection. With this item acting as a final page conditioning, participants continued to one of seven survey versions that was tailored to their gender and/or sexual orientation. The final measure was universal for all survey versions and was used to merge the multiple paths back into one.

Page conditioning not only allowed for the branching of versions, but it also acted as a tool to screen unqualified participants out. In particular, since this study was focused on the attitudes of the LGBT community, those who identified as heterosexual were disqualified. However, heterosexuals were only disqualified if they initially indicated that their gender was male or female, and not transgender. Upon disqualification, the participant would be directed to a page thanking him/her for their interest in participating and a website address for a similar study being conducted focusing on the public’s attitudes about sexual orientation that did not disqualify based on sexual orientation.

Due to the diversity and complexity of the LGBT community, some terms used by its members may be unknown or vague to others. Since interactions with transgender individuals can be less frequent than with sexual minorities, a “helpful definitions” page was included after the demographics section to clarify three gender identity-related terms. The differences between a ‘transgender man’ (“A person who was assigned a female sex at birth, but who feels that this is not an accurate or complete description of themselves and consequently identifies as male.”) and

a 'transgender woman' ("A person who was assigned a male sex at birth, but who feels that this is not an accurate or complete description of themselves and consequently identifies as female.") were highlighted. The additional definition was for 'cisgender' ("A person whose biological sex assigned at birth matches their self-identified gender."). All seven survey versions had this page displayed before proceeding to the main battery of measures.

Results

The mean scores and standard deviations for the Outness Inventory, Perceived Stigma Scale, Contact, and attitude scales are listed in Table 2. Most notably, results show that intragroup attitudes of the LGBT community are mostly positive, with all attitude scales recording mean scores well below scale midpoints. Unfortunately, due to using three separate measures, these mean scores cannot be directly compared to one another for an overall ranking of most positive to most negative attitudes.

Side-by-side comparisons can be accomplished with the amount of contact with each subgroup however. Not surprisingly, the most amount of contact was gay males ($M=1.89$, $SD=.60$), with lesbians second ($M=1.64$, $SD=.62$). Contact with female and male bisexuals followed next ($M=1.11$, $SD=.64$; $M=.80$, $SD=.56$ respectively). The least amount of contact was reported with transgender persons. Male-to-female transgender contact ($M=.70$, $SD=.55$) was slightly higher than contact with female-to-male transgender individuals ($M=.64$, $SD=.51$).

Participants were above the midpoint for levels of outness about their sexual orientation or gender identity ($M=4.65$, $SD=1.68$). With a score of 5 indicating that "person definitely knows about your sexual orientation [gender identity], but it is RARELY talked about," participants were somewhat out. Similarly to the results of outness, perceived stigma was also found to be above the scale's midpoint ($M=3.43$, $SD=.92$).

To determine what factors contributed to negative attitudes about each subgroup of the LGBT community, a series of multiple linear regressions were used. The self-identified reference group (lesbian, gay male, bisexual, transgender) for each regression was the subgroup being rated by the other subgroups.

In predicting attitudes about lesbians, Table 4 shows that increased outness ($b = -.04$, $\beta = -.22$, $p < .001$) and increased contact with lesbians ($b = -.08$, $\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$) were significantly related to more positive attitudes about lesbians. The variables of group identification (gay male, bisexual, and transgender), outness, contact, and perceived stigma explained 10.1% of the variance in attitudes about lesbians ($R^2 = .10$), and the overall regression equation was statistically significant ($F[6, 362] = 6.79$, $p < .001$).

For attitudes about gay males, Table 5 shows that only increased outness ($b = -.04$, $\beta = -.28$, $p < .001$) was related to more positive attitudes. The included variables of group identification (lesbian, bisexual, and transgender), outness, contact, and perceived stigma explained 7.9% of the variance in attitudes about gay males ($R^2 = .08$), and the overall regression equation was statistically significant ($F[6, 368] = 5.25$, $p < .001$).

For attitudes about bisexual males, Table 6 shows that group identification of either gay male ($b = .43$, $\beta = .40$, $p < .001$) or lesbian ($b = .35$, $\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) was significantly related to less positive attitudes about bisexual males (as compared to bisexuals). The variables of group identification (lesbian, gay male, and transgender), outness, contact, and perceived stigma explained 10.8% of the variance in attitudes about bisexuals ($R^2 = .11$), and the overall regression equation was statistically significant ($F[6, 362] = 7.34$, $p < .001$).

For attitudes about bisexual females, Table 7 shows that increased levels of outness ($b = -.04$, $\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$) was significantly related to more positive attitudes, and similar to

attitudes about bisexual males, identification of gay male ($b = .32, \beta = .30, p < .001$) or lesbian ($b = .40, \beta = .33, p < .001$) indicated less positive attitudes as compared to bisexuals. The variables of group identification (lesbian, gay male, and transgender), outness, contact, and perceived stigma explained 10.8% of the variance in attitudes about bisexual females ($R^2 = .11$), and the overall regression equation showed significance ($F[6, 362] = 7.29, p < .001$).

For attitudes about male-to-female transgender persons, Table 8 shows that increased level of outness ($b = -.02, \beta = -.12, p < .05$) was significantly related to more positive attitudes. The variables of group identification (lesbian, gay male, and transgender), outness, contact, and perceived stigma explained 3.2% of the variance in attitudes about male-to-female transgender persons ($R^2 = .03$). The overall regression equation did not show statistical significance ($F[6, 363] = 2.00, p = .06$).

For attitudes about female-to-male transgender persons, Table 9 shows both outness ($b = -.05, \beta = -.18, p < .05$) and contact ($b = -.13, \beta = -.14, p < .05$) were significantly related to more positive attitudes. Additionally, group identification of gay male ($b = .28, \beta = .28, p < .05$) was significantly related to less positive attitudes as compared to transgender persons. Group identification (lesbian, gay male, and bisexual), outness, contact, and perceived stigma explained approximately 8.5% of the variance in attitudes ($R^2 = .08$). The overall regression equation was statistically significant ($F[6, 362] = 5.58, p < .001$).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the intragroup attitudes of the LGBT community, along with exploring whether or not group identification, perceived stigma, outness, and contact predicted attitudes. This was the first study to quantitatively assess intragroup attitudes about all four major subgroups of the LGBT community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

transgender) at one time, thereby expanding previous work that only tested a limited focus.

Support for hypotheses was mixed, with factors related to attitudes based on subgroup targeted.

Contrary to literature on historical tensions between varying subgroups of the LGBT community (McLean, 2008; Ochs, 1996; Stone, 2009; Weiss, 2003), the overall attitudes about each subgroup found in this study were positive. Mean scores for each measure and corresponding subscale were close to the minimum scores, indicating most participants “strongly disagreed” with negative outlooks about LGBT subgroups. Additionally, participants reported moderate levels of outness, with mean scores slightly above midpoint, whereas past research using the Outness Inventory found even higher levels of outness (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). One potential reason for this difference is that this sample was composed of the entire LGBT community, rather than homosexuals alone. Societal stigma of bisexual and transgender people especially may lower levels of outness, thereby impacting the overall sample’s outness score.

Indeed, mean scores of perceived stigma were above the midpoint, indicating that participants believed that they were subject to prejudice and discrimination for their sexual orientation or gender identity. This supports previous data that suggests nearly 75% of sexual minorities experience some form of discrimination in their lifetime (Mays & Cochran, 2001). Finally, levels of contact were the highest with gay males ($M=1.839$, $SD=.598$). Conversely, the least amount of contact was reported for female-to-male transgender persons and fell far below the midpoint ($M=.642$, $SD=.514$). These results would be expected given that homosexuals have been seen as the leaders of the LGBT community, while transgender individuals have only recently been formally included into the LGBT community (Stone, 2009).

Outness was found to be a significant variable in predicting positive intragroup attitudes for most subgroups. Given that past research has shown a relationship between higher levels of

outness and more advanced stages of identity (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000), and outness has been linked with internalized heterosexism, with more outness corresponding to lower levels of internalized heterosexism (Szymanski et al., 2008), this finding is in line with prior research.. However, it was intriguing that outness was related to positive attitudes about every LGBT subgroup except bisexual males. This may suggest that intragroup attitudes about bisexual males are deeply rooted in stereotypes and are resistant to change. As noted earlier, gay males may be especially prone to hold these negative attitudes out of fear that they too could be bisexual after establishing themselves as homosexual (Ochs, 1996).

In looking at intragroup attitudes about homosexuals, contact also was found to predict more positive attitudes, but only for attitudes about lesbians. Why contact served to predict more positive attitudes only about lesbians is unclear. As a possible explanation, it may be important to look at comparisons with gay male counterparts. For example, participants had slightly more favorable attitudes overall for gay males and had more contact with gay males than lesbians. Given that gay males have historically functioned as leaders of the LGBT community (Weiss, 2003), this may explain the higher amounts of contact and therefore more favorable attitudes.

Yet, predictors of attitudes about bisexual and transgender subgroups differed than those for homosexuals. Aside from the relation between outness and attitudes about all subgroups (except bisexual males), contact was found to predict more positive attitudes about female-to-male transgender persons. Moreover, self-identification as homosexual was related to more negative attitudes. Specifically, lesbians and gay males held negative attitudes about both bisexual males and females and gay males held more negative attitudes about female-to-male transgender persons. These findings may suggest that negative attitudes and stereotypes about bisexuals and transgender males are more prevalent in the LGBT community among those who

do not identify as bisexual or transgender. These findings for the role of self-identification lend support to the theories proposed to explain negative intragroup attitudes (social identity theory, black sheep effect, and self-categorization). Lesbians and gay males may endorse negative attitudes about these subgroups after believing them to violate the “just like you” beliefs and subsequently that they hinder the LGBT community.

Limitations and Future Research

Findings of this study should be considered in context of limitations as well. First, there were a limited number of bisexual and transgender participants. The majority of the sample (68.1%) identified as homosexual, while only 24.6% were bisexual and 7.3% as transgender. This disproportion in the sample may not capture the amount of diversity within bisexual and transgender populations. This is particularly true with bisexual participants, as 102 of 131 were female (77.9%). It was also discouraging to find such a meager number of transgender persons in the sample, as research focusing on this group is still scarce. In light of these observations, future research needs to continue to develop sampling methods to capture of the diversity within the LGBT community by having an adequate amount of participants representing groups. Future research should incorporate larger, more diverse samples that include as many subgroups of the LGBT community as possible. Not gauging attitudes within the full spectrum of the community hinders comprehension of knowing the state of its intragroup attitudes.

A factor that contributed to the disproportion of the sample may have been the methods by which the study was advertised. As noted, the primary method of recruitment of the survey was contacting a large number of LGBT-focused organizations and college groups. The individuals associated with these groups may differ from those not affiliated with such groups. Specifically, it may be that those not in such organizations may be less “out” about their sexual

orientation or gender identity, and have more limited contact with other members of the LGBT community. This assumed lack of contact could have an impact on one's intragroup attitudes.

One way to circumvent relying on LGBT groups to advertise studies is to use a multi-dimensional approach in recruitment methods. For instance, community flyers and other conventional styles of advertising may attract different types of people who are not connected to online LGBT-related groups. Yet considering that nearly 80% of North America uses the internet (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2011b) and 50% uses Facebook (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2011a), internet advertising is warranted. One online recruitment method that may become increasingly more useful is utilizing social media websites. While controversial, many of these websites, such as Facebook, employ targeted advertisements to support themselves. Whereas traditional advertisements are static and seen by everyone (similar to television commercials or billboards), contemporary targeted advertisements keep record of a user's interests, pages viewed, and external sites visited in order to keep a tailored mix of advertisements available. Ideally these new advertisements would stand out more than their counterparts and have more success. Therefore, by utilizing these targeted advertisements, a study may be displayed to people who frequent anonymous LGBT social media pages or groups. In doing so, these advertisements may recruit people who may be less "out," are not members of LGBT groups, or may even be unsure of their sexual orientation.

A second limitation that hinders (and may discourage) work on intragroup attitudes among the LGBT community lies in the difficulty of trying to classify one's label or sexual orientation/diversity of the community. This is a particular disadvantage to online survey research, which is generally quantitative in nature and requires participants to fit within strict parameters in order to gather data. In regards to the present study, participants were required to

navigate (via demographic items) into survey versions tailored to their subgroup; however, the diversity of the community and the flexibility of terms made it difficult to categorize participants. This in turn it was hard for them to see the correct version of the survey that was intended. Future research needs to be mindful of these difficulties and attempt to design all-inclusive studies when using the LGBT community. Researchers may also specify in advertisements that only certain categories of the community are desired, thereby eliminating the need to require all-inclusiveness.

Finally, because this study was cross-sectional in design, understanding of causality is limited. This study design is characterized by using data from one point in time (as opposed to longitudinally) and does not use experimentally manipulated variables. Future work would benefit from observing trends in intragroup attitudes by following participants for many years and tracking changes in variables such as attitudes, contact, and outness.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide more understanding on the complex intragroup attitudes of the LGBT community. Overall findings of positive attitudes may indicate that the LGBT community is more cohesive than historic tensions between LGBT subgroups would assume. This is important, as only a tightly woven group can withstand the negative effects of heterosexism, promote equality, and experience lasting change. Yet, while overall attitudes were positive, the existence of negative attitudes is still a reality even within the LGBT community (particularly for bisexual and transgender individuals). In addition, gay males and lesbians appear to hold more negative attitudes toward bisexual and transgender individuals. Noting the existence of these negative attitudes should be a priority for the LGBT community, as well as efforts to overcome within-group prejudices and discrimination. Given that individuals of the

LGBT community who are out have more positive attitudes toward LGBT subgroups, perhaps future interventions should include assisting individuals with their coming out processes, to lead to positive attitude change within the community and a more cohesive group. Given that the LGBT community's intragroup attitudes have received little attention, to date, this topic deserves much more focus in future research including testing additional predictors of attitudes.

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Table 1

Characteristics of the Sample (N = 533)

	N	%	M	SD	Min	Max
Gender						
Male	262	49.2				
Female	232	43.5				
Male-to-Female Transgender	22	4.1				
Female-to-Male Transgender	17	3.2				
Group Identification						
Gay	233	43.7				
Bisexual	131	24.6				
Lesbian	130	24.4				
Transgender	39	7.3				
Highest Degree Completed						
Junior High School	1	.2				
High School/GED	169	32.1				
Trade/Vocational School	17	3.2				
Associate's Degree	48	9.1				
Bachelor's Degree	117	22.2				
Master's Degree	126	23.9				
Doctoral Degree	49	9.3				
Region Raised In						
Suburban	273	51.6				
Rural	139	26.3				
Urban	117	22.1				
Age			34.10	14.72	18	83

Table 2

Descriptives of Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	Range
Outness	4.65	1.68	1-7
Perceived Stigma	3.43	.92	1-5
Contact – Lesbian	1.64	.62	0-3
Contact – Gay Male	1.84	.60	0-3
Contact – Bisexual Male	.80	.56	0-3
Contact – Bisexual Female	1.11	.64	0-3
Contact – Male-to-Female Transgender	.70	.55	0-3
Contact – Female-to-Male Transgender	.64	.51	0-3
Attitudes – Lesbian	1.24	.28	1-5
Attitudes – Gay Male	1.17	.26	1-5
Attitudes – Bisexual Male	1.56	.54	1-5
Attitudes – Bisexual Female	1.58	.54	1-5
Attitudes – Male-to-Female Transgender	1.58	.31	1-5
Attitudes – Female-to-Male Transgender	1.43	.50	1-5

Table 3

Intercorrelations of Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Out	--													
2. PS	.03	--												
3. C - L	.30**	.08	--											
4. C - GM	.30**	.03	.655**	--										
5. C - BM	.09	-.01	.39**	.40**	--									
6. C - BF	.04	.06	.50**	.34**	.53**	--								
7. C - MfF	.22**	-.03	.41**	.32**	.45**	.40**	--							
8. C - FmM	.18**	-.03	.40**	.36**	.49**	.47**	.75**	--						
9. A - L	-.29**	-.06	-.24**	-.15**	.03	-.12*	-.08	-.08	--					
10. A - GM	-.25**	-.02	-.17**	-.12*	.05	-.06	-.03	-.07	.72**	--				
11. A - BM	.00	.05	-.09	.05	.05	-.13*	-.04	-.09	.41**	.31**	--			
12. A - BF	-.04	.03	-.10*	-.03	-.02	-.14**	-.13*	-.17**	.42**	.37**	.78**	--		
13. A - MTF	-.15*	-.02	-.13*	-.02	.03	-.07	-.11*	-.10	.54**	.44**	.43**	.41**	--	
14. A - FmM	-.21**	-.01	-.17**	-.05	.04	-.14**	-.18**	-.21**	.58**	.50**	.51**	.48**	.68**	--

Note. PS = Perceived Stigma Scale; C - L = Contact with Lesbian; C - GM = Contact with Gay Male; C - BM = Contact with Bisexual Male; C - BF = Contact with Bisexual Female; C - MfF = Contact with Male-to-Female Transgender; C - FmM = Contact with Female-to-Male Transgender; A - L = Attitudes about Lesbian; A - GM = Attitudes about Gay Male; A - BM = Attitudes about Bisexual Male; A - BF = Attitudes about Bisexual Female; A - MTF = Attitudes about Male-to-Female Transgender; A - FmM = Attitudes about Female-to-Male Transgender.

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 4

Regression Analyses Summary for Attitudes about Lesbians

Variable	<u>b</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>β</u>
Gay Male Participants	-.001	.035	-.002
Bisexual Participants	-.046	.041	-.073
Transgender Participants	-.025	.055	-.025
Outness	-.037	.009	-.223**
Contact	-.078	.024	-.175*
Perceived Stigma	-.018	.015	-.060

Note. $R^2 = .101$ ($N = 369$, $p < .001$)

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 5

Regression Analyses Summary for Attitudes about Gay Males

Variable	<u>b</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>B</u>
Lesbian Participants	.012	.033	.019
Bisexual Participants	-.007	.035	-.011
Transgender Participants	-.001	.050	-.001
Outness	-.044	.009	-.280**
Contact	-.007	.023	-.022
Perceived Stigma	-.006	.014	-.017

Note. $R^2 = .079$ ($N = 375$, $p < .001$)

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 6

Regression Analyses Summary for Attitudes about Bisexual Males

Variable	<u>b</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>β</u>
Gay Male Participants	.429	.071	.402**
Lesbian Participants	.347	.078	.288**
Transgender Participants	.086	.106	.046
Outness	-.031	.017	-.096
Contact	.043	.048	.046
Perceived Stigma	-.006	.029	-.011

Note. $R^2 = .108$ ($N = 369$, $p < .001$)

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 7

Regression Analyses Summary for Attitudes about Bisexual Females

Variable	<u>b</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>β</u>
Gay Male Participants	.321	.073	.301**
Lesbian Participants	.403	.078	.334**
Transgender Participants	.044	.107	.023
Outness	-.036	.017	-.113*
Contact	-.083	.043	-.100
Perceived Stigma	-.001	.029	-.001

Note. $R^2 = .108$ ($N = 369$, $p < .001$)

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 8

Regression Analyses Summary for Attitudes about Male-to-Female Transgender Persons

Variable	<u>b</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>β</u>
Gay Male Participants	.076	.064	.121
Lesbian Participants	.124	.066	.174
Bisexual Participants	.041	.066	.058
Outness	-.023	.011	-.124*
Contact	-.031	.031	-.057
Perceived Stigma	-.007	.018	-.021

Note. $R^2 = .032$ ($N = 370$, $p = .064$)

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Table 9

Regression Analyses Summary for Attitudes about Female-to-Male Transgender Persons

Variable	<u>b</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>β</u>
Gay Male Participants	.284	.099	.283*
Lesbian Participants	.197	.101	.174
Bisexual Participants	.128	.103	.113
Outness	-.053	.017	-.176*
Contact	-.129	.051	-.135*
Perceived Stigma	-.006	.028	-.011

Note. $R^2 = .085$ ($N = 369$, $p < .001$)

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Appendix

Hello!

My name is David Hutsell, and I am in the process of completing my undergraduate honors thesis. To do so, I am requesting participants for an online research survey titled: The Study of LGBT Intragroup Attitudes. I was hoping you and your organization, resource center, or campus group could help advertise my study. Briefly, the study's goals are to gain a better understanding of the attitudes of LGBT individuals about the LGBT community, and their personal experiences with those attitudes.

I am contacting you in hopes that you can help me advertise. Since I am interested in the attitudes of the LGBT community, I am contacting groups such as yours that serve the LGBT community or focus on it in order to help recruit participants. If you have the capability, I would appreciate any efforts to let others know about the study such as postings to listservs, mailing lists, Facebook groups, announcements at meetings, word-of-mouth, etc. I have also attached a flyer that can be printed-out and posted on bulletin boards.

The only requirements to participate are to self-identify as LGBT and be at least 18 years of age. The survey may be accessed from: www.lgbtintragroup.com. It takes approximately 30 minutes, and all responses are anonymous and confidential. My intent is to use this information to gain a better understanding of the attitudes of the LGBT community and how its members interact.

If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact myself (hutsell@goldmail.etsu.edu) or Dr. Stacey Williams (williasl@mail.etsu.edu).

This study has been reviewed by the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (IRB Approval #: c1011.7e-ETSU). If this email has reached you by mistake or you are no longer affiliated with the group your contact information was found with, I apologize in advance. If you have ideas about other groups I could contact or other methods I can use to potentially advertise this study or future endeavors, suggestions are gladly accepted. Again, I appreciate your time. If you or your organization can help us advertise the study, I would be very grateful.

Thank you!
David Hutsell
Social Issues and Relations Laboratory
Honors-in-Discipline Scholar
East Tennessee State University