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Kaid M. Marek
Texas Tech University

Amanda Watson Joyce
Murray State University

Tracey A. Garcia McCue
University of Washington - Seattle Campus

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Increased Feminine Self-Concept in Men Corresponds With Less Homonegativity: Exploring Gender Role Expression Relative to Homonegativity Across Genders

Cover Page Footnote

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**Increased Feminine Self-Concept in Men Corresponds With Less Homonegativity:
Exploring Gender Role Expression Relative to Homonegativity Across Genders**

Kaid Marek¹, Dr. Amanda W. Joyce², and Dr. Tracey A. Garcia McCue³

¹Psychological Sciences Department, Texas Tech University

²Psychology Department, Murray State University

³Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of Washington

Author Note

Kaid Marek: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1374-0131>

Dr. Amanda W. Joyce: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5915-3931>

Dr. Tracey A. Garcia McCue: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1650-0926>

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Correspondence concerning this academic article should be addressed to Dr. Amanda W. Joyce,

Wells Hall, N 16th St., Murray, KY 42071. Email: ajoyce4@murraystate.edu

Abstract

Homonegativity (i.e., prejudiced attitudes towards sexual minorities, Morrison et al., 1999) is associated with stricter gender roles (Basow & Johnson, 2000; Tornello & Matsick, 2020) mainly in men, and is less understood in women (Bosson et al., 2009; Vandello et al., 2008). This study investigates how cisgender individuals' self-perceptions and self-concepts of gender roles relate to homonegativity. We hypothesized that men would have greater homonegativity than women, and that greater socially-expected gender role expression would predict homonegativity in both genders. Two-hundred-eighty-eight participants, predominantly white (84.7%), women ($n = 227$), freshman (58.7%) college students ($M_{age} = 19.33$, $SD = 2.9$), completed the Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (Kachel et al., 2016), Gender Role Inventory (Weaver & Sargent, 2007), Modern Homonegativity (Morrison & Morrison, 2002), and "Old-Fashioned" Homonegativity (Morrison et al., 1999) scales during the 2023 semesters. Independent t -tests showed that women had greater feminine expression and lower masculine expression compared to men (all t 's < 4.223 , all p 's $< .001$), with one exception in masculine self-perceptions ($t = 1.213$, $p = .113$). Men were higher than women in homonegativity (all t 's > 3.764 , all p 's $< .001$). Among women, only masculine expression through self-perceptions related to homonegativity ($r = .13$, $p = .045$), with no other associations to gender roles found (all r 's $< .121$, all p 's $> .069$). Among men, increased feminine self-perceptions and self-concepts negatively related to homonegativity (all r 's $> -.346$, all p 's $< .01$). Men's increased masculine self-concepts and self-perceptions positively related to homonegativity (all r 's $> .407$, all p 's $< .001$), with two exceptions in masculine self-perceptions (all r 's $< .202$, all p 's $> .118$). These findings suggest that gender roles may play an important role in the development of homonegativity through gendered attitudes. Further analyzing men's expression of femininity

and its relation to homonegativity could be key to developing interventions for less socially-mediated gender role expression to improve men's health and tolerance to sexual minorities.

Keywords: homonegativity, gender roles, gender, sexual orientation, prejudice

Increased Feminine Self-Concept in Men Corresponds With Less Homonegativity:**Exploring Gender Role Expression Relative to Homonegativity Across Genders**

Homonegativity encompasses any prejudice-based attitude or response towards sexual minorities (e.g. lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals), or anyone perceived to be one of these sexual minorities (Cerny & Polyson, 1984; Morrison et al., 1999). Its expression can be categorized as more overt, traditional, and old-fashioned, shunning the mere existence of sexual minorities as immoral, discouraging their presence in public spaces, and disapproving of sexual minorities working with children (Morrison et al., 1999). Sexually prejudiced attitudes can also be expressed in more covert and modern manners, exemplified by the study and archival of sexual minority history, as well as the existence of sexual minorities in media, being politicized (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Homonegativity produces strong negative outcomes, increasing suicidal ideation in sexual and gender minorities (SGM; The Trevor Project, 2023), greater bias-based hate crimes in comparison to non-SGM individuals (Flores et al., 2022), and greater stigma distress, as well as minority stress, instigating a plethora of other negative mental health effects (Pellicane and Cielsa, 2022; Singh et al., 2023). In attempts to prevent this myriad of negative outcomes, social psychologists and human sexuality researchers have explored various relations and potential mechanisms for homonegativity, including its connections to gender, greater endorsement of traditional gender roles, and various attitudes towards sexual minorities (Kroeper et al., 2014; Basow & Johnson, 2000; Tornello & Matsick, 2020). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how gender, traditional gender role expression through gender self-perception and gender self-concept, and expressions of homonegativity could be related.

Conceptualizing Gender and Gender Roles

As a social category, gender is constructed through perceived behavioral stereotypes used to describe the self and other individuals (Burn, 1996; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Athenstaedt, 2003). Traditional gender roles can be described as the bipolar categorization of appearances, interests, traits, occupations, and role behaviors by which a typical man or woman is expected to abide (Constantinople, 1973; Kachel et al., 2016; Weaver & Sargent, 2007).

Traditional femininity is a dimension of categorized gender roles that grant socialized expectations for women. Traits expected of women that are considered feminine involve being selfless, kind, affectionate and submissive, while feminine role behaviors include caring for others, especially children, keeping unity among groups, and even putting flowers on desks (Kachel et al., 2016; Weaver & Sargent, 2007; Athenstaedt, 2003). Soft voices, small stature, and gracefulness are physical characteristics expected within women, and are dubbed as traditionally feminine. Traditionally feminine occupational interests include fine arts, careers involving children, housework, hairdressing, teaching, nursing, and fashion. (Kolarikova, 1974; Deaux & Lewis, 1984)

In contrast, traditional masculinity is the other dimension of categorized gender roles that grant the socialized expectations for men. Traditionally masculine traits include being tough, competitive, dominant, independent, assertive, individualistic, goal-oriented, and protective, while masculine role behaviors might look like being a financial provider, often being in opposition with others, head of the household, and even putting meat on the barbeque (Kachel et al., 2016; Weaver & Sargent, 2007; Athenstaedt, 2003; Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Physical characteristics of tall stature, broad-shoulders, body hair, and visible strength are expected within men, and are deemed traditionally masculine. Occupational interests expected of men include

technology fields, police officers, mechanics, and construction workers (Kolarikova, 1974; Deaux & Lewis, 1984).

Any individual can exhibit traditionally feminine or masculine appearances, interests, traits, and role behaviors no matter their gender or sex. These perceived gender characteristics make up one's own gender self-concept and construe how feminine or masculine one may be (Kachel et al., 2016; Athenstaedt, 2003). When women express femininity, and when men express masculinity, they are abiding by their stereotypical and traditional expectations (Kachel et al., 2016; Weaver & Sargent, 2007). However, if one's gender role expression is not in line with their gender's respective traditional expectations, they could be deemed "atypical" by others, with a slew of social consequences such as social stigma, receiving homonegative slurs (Burn, 2000), homonegativity-based allegations of homosexuality (Krane, 2001; Rieger et al., 2010; Levant et al., 2010; Levant et al., 2013), perceived sexual minority behavior that leads to socially-desired distance (Tornello & Matsick, 2020), and ostracization from traditionally gendered in-groups (Burn, 2000). To explore outcomes of these attitudes by those who abide by traditional gender roles, this study will measure individuals' self-concept of femininity and masculinity, as well as self-perceptions of stereotypically gendered traits of masculinity/agency and femininity/communalism, to understand how their sexual orientation attitudes could be influenced by their traditional gender role expression. Understanding interdependencies between gender role perceptions and sexual orientation attitudes could be significant in interventions for homonegative outcomes.

Gender Role Perceptions and Sexual Orientation Attitudes

Binary gender roles of masculinity and femininity are often found to have interdependent relations on one another (Kite & Deaux, 1987). Other interdependent interrelations between

perceptions of gender and sexual orientation exist in literature as well, (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Haines et al., 2016; Rieger et al., 2010; Valentova et al., 2011) revealing that gender roles and sexual minority attitudes could be intertwined.

Supporting these connections, Tornello & Matsick (2020) found that male characters in vignettes that did not have a sexual minority identity, but previously engaged in homosexual intimate behaviors, are likely to be judged by participants as more feminine and less masculine than men who have only engaged in heterosexual intimate relations; likewise, female characters in vignettes that did not have a sexual minority identity, but previously engaged in homosexual intimate behaviors, are judged as more masculine and less feminine than women who have only engaged in heterosexual intimate relations. This inversion of gender roles has been found in other sexual orientation perception studies, such that homosexual men are believed to be similar to heterosexual women, and homosexual women are believed to be similar to heterosexual men (Kite et al., 1987). These assumptions that individuals make are derived from perceiving a variety of gender atypical traits within perceived sexual minorities (Rieger et al., 2010; Kachel et al., 2016), indicating a gender belief system in which men should be masculine and women feminine, masculinity and femininity should be opposite of one another, and gay individuals should be similar to their opposite gender counterparts (Kite & Deaux, 1987).

Influenced perceptions about femininity, masculinity, and sexual orientation also relate to homonegativity itself. Within Tornello & Matsick (2020)'s sample reporting attitudes on homosexually-behaving individuals, regardless of what gender someone is, if an individual endorses stricter gender roles placed upon the self or others, they are more likely to desire greater social distance from perceived sexual minorities, particularly from homosexually-identifying and homosexually-behaving men.

An outcome of these gender-homonegativity interdependencies is heterosexism, in which masculine and heterosexual behavior and expression is socially advocated norm, while feminine and homosexual behavior and expression is discriminated against (Szymanski & Moffitt, 2012). Heterosexist belief systems allow homonegativity to be the norm, such that heterosexual individuals, a majority who are men, make these values known among their peers by accusing them of committing homosexual behavior or calling one another slurs reserved for sexual minorities; this anti-gay language could even have a value-expressive or defensive function meant to gain favorability from the desired in-group of other heterosexuals, and further ostracize the unacceptable out-group of sexual minorities deviating from these values (Herek, 1990; Burn, 2000). To further scientific understanding of these interdependencies and heterosexism, this study will analyze how cisgender men and women report how they identify with specific gender roles, and how strong their homonegative attitudes may be, related or unrelated to gender roles.

Homonegativity in Men

Numerous studies find that men, in comparison to women, often have greater prejudicial attitudes and homonegative behaviors towards sexual minorities in comparison to women. (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Glotfelter, 2012). Additionally, men are much more likely to express anti-gay attitudes towards gay men than towards lesbians (Glotfelter, 2012). Indeed, men are also more likely to endorse heterosexist belief systems in social settings for heterosexual in-group favorability as well (Burn, 2000). Male gender roles create social norms for both sexual majority and sexual minority men, in which traditionally feminine behavior or the behavior of sexual minorities is socially stigmatized and should be avoided (Levant et al., 2010; Levant et al., 2013). These male role “norms” are often internalized, with outcomes of a precarious manhood that men must be socially validated by others that they are successfully fulfilling male roles

(Kroeper et al., 2014; Vandello et al., 2008). If the man is not socially validated, there can be consequences of aggression towards others (Bosson et al., 2009), especially anti-gay aggression towards sexual minorities (Konopka, 2021). This link to anti-gay aggression explains why men are more likely to commit forms of homonegative violence in comparison to women (Lantz, 2022). Given these contexts, understanding how strongly a man identifies with traditional masculinity within his gender self-concept could be indicative of stronger homonegativity.

Homonegativity in Women

The pressure that cisgender men face to abide by male gender roles does not explain why cisgender women commit bias-based hate crimes, as both women and men are responsible for these violent acts (Lantz, 2022). Even when men are primarily responsible for sexual minority bias-based crimes, women are still able to express homonegative attitudes towards others. In contrast to a great majority of masculinity literature, little is known about correlations between gender roles and general homonegativity among women. However, there is some indication that women who value the importance of feminine attributes to their own gender identity are more likely to express prejudice towards lesbians (Basow & Johnson, 2000).

Internalized Homonegativity in Women

Despite this paucity in women's expression of homonegativity towards others, there is an abundance of literature investigating the internalization of homonegativity within sexual minority women and its associated health outcomes, such as coping with alcohol (Matsuzaka et al., 2023), binge-eating (Bayer et al., 2017), suicidal risk (Terry et al., 2024), and HIV risk behavior (Glick et al., 2020). Feminine gender roles and internalized homonegativity also seem to be related, specific to the submissive trait aspect of traditional femininity. This hegemonic femininity encourages women to be gentle, passive, fragile, and dependent on men to sustain

their own oppression, with negative social consequences for expressing traditionally masculine traits; engaging in this heterosexist behavior allows cisgender women to be accepted by others and avoid stigmatization of gender atypical traits and allegations of lesbianism (Krane, 2001). For example, within women's sports research, referees' discrimination of masculine-presenting female athletes and favorability of feminine-presenting athletes has been seen to impact these athletes' outward gender expression, in which they must modify their appearances to abide by traditional gender expression, appease a heterosexist audience, and avoid sexual-identity discrimination (Kavasoglu, 2021). This is even evidenced by some heterosexual women feeling as if they must acquire permission from their male sexual partners to "masculinize" themselves through body hair, and facing hostile behavior from others for not abiding by traditional femininity expectations of softness and hairlessness (Fahs, 2011). Some sexual minority women are even hesitant to express traditional masculinity through more body hair, as if they were afraid of outing themselves as sexual minorities and facing sexual identity discrimination (Fahs, 2011). However, successfully feminizing oneself for social acceptance is also seen to have negative social consequences, as women must navigate over-sexualization and trivialization by male social groups (Krane, 2001), while heterosexism greatly restricts cisgender women's gender expression within both gender roles.

Compulsive Heterosexuality, Heterosexism, and Hegemonization

Usually focused around women, this socialized gender role phenomenon is dubbed as "compulsive heterosexuality," in which a woman's masculinity is stigmatized, similarly to men's femininity being stigmatized, and her outward gender expression and behavior must be purposed for heterosexual men's desires. However, it seems that compulsive heterosexuality impacts everyone, whereas both genders must abide by the traditional gendered expectations placed upon

them (e.g. women being subservient to men, and men in command of women), or they face stigmatized sexual identity accusations and heterosexist discrimination from individuals with whom they socially interact (Krane, 2001).

This hegemonization of men and women's gender expression seems to stigmatize any sort of deviation from heterosexist attitudes, including when individuals don't identify as a heterosexual individual or by traditional gender roles. Through these socialized gender and sexuality attitude interdependencies, one's gender self-concept of traditional masculinity and traditional femininity could be related to their expression of homonegativity.

Hypotheses

Due to previous indicators that perceptions of gender roles and perceptions of sexual orientations are relationally intertwined (Tornello & Matsick, 2020; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Haines et al., 2016), and the lack of clarification of cisgender versus transgender sample demographics in previous studies, this study aims to evaluate how cisgender men's and women's traditional and gender typical gender role expression could be potential mechanisms for homonegative expression. Data were collected to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1

Foregoing studies have found that men can stigmatize homosexuality through male gender roles (Levant et al., 2013) and internalized masculinity via precarious manhood (Vandello et al., 2008; Kroeper et al., 2014; Konopka et al., 2021). Due to the numerous correlations to man-centered gender roles and homonegativity in comparison to woman-centered gender roles and homonegativity, it is predicted that cisgender men will have greater homonegativity than cisgender women.

Hypothesis 2

Due to this societal pressure of male role norms and precarious manhood (Levant et al., 2013; Vandello et al., 2008), it is predicted that men will be more masculine than women via two masculinity dimensions of gender role self-concept and gender role self-perceptions.

Hypothesis 3

Due to the societal pressure of hegemonic femininity (Krane, 2001), it is predicted that women will be more feminine than men via two measured femininity dimensions of gender role self-concept and gender role self-perceptions.

Hypothesis 4

In both men and women, there will be negative correlations between self-concepts of traditional femininity and traditional masculinity, as well as self-perceptions of femininity/communalism and masculinity/agency.

Hypothesis 5

Finally, in accordance with the single study on women's general homonegativity relating to importance of femininity (Basow & Johnson, 2000), as well as men's stigmatization of homosexuality through male gender roles, it is predicted that expressing one's own gender roles, through self-perception or self-concept, will predict homonegativity in both men and women.

Method

Sampling Procedure

Three-hundred eleven undergraduate students from a mid-sized, Midwestern university participated in this study to fulfill course requirements or gain extra credit in introductory-level psychology courses. Participants were recruited through the university's online portal for psychological studies during both of the 2023 semester terms. Following a pre-screen that asked

students their age, gender, sex, year in school, and race, students were able to choose from a multitude of studies, in which they could choose this study, which was listed under the name “Self-Esteem, Attitudes, and Norms Among Young Adults.” Students were redirected to a survey site where they were presented with an informed consent page, followed by a questionnaire with questions about their identification with certain personality traits, levels of desire to be feminine and masculine, and levels of attitudes towards lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals. Participants were then debriefed about the purpose of the study.

Exclusion Criteria

Near the end of the second semester of data collection, participation was restricted to those who identified as cisgender men in the pre-screen to gain fourteen more male participants in order to balance for the large sample size of female participants ($n = 227$) in our study. No one was notified of this restriction. Three participants (1.03% of sample) were excluded from analyses due to identifying as 17 years old in the study’s demographics survey. After controlling for age in the sample ($n = 308$), data was further controlled to include only those who identify as cisgender to understand how they identify and enforce traditional gender roles as the gender majority. Twenty-two participants (7.14%) were excluded from analyses due to not identifying as cisgender.

Participants

After exclusion procedures, the finalized sample for analyses ($n = 288$) had a mean age of 19.33 ($SD_{age} = 2.9$ years), and ages ranged from 18 to 35, with an outlier of a 52-year-old. One-hundred sixty-nine participants were freshmen (58.7%), sixty-five were sophomores (22.6%), thirty-two were juniors (11.1%), twenty-one were seniors (7.3%), and one declined to respond about their year in college within the online survey (0.3%). Two-hundred forty-four

participants of the sample identified as white (84.7%), twenty-one as Black (7.2%), four as Asian-American (1.4%) one as Arab (0.3%), one as American Indian or Alaska Native (0.3%), and fourteen as multiracial (4.86%). Additionally, thirteen individuals (4.5%) identified as Hispanic/Latinx, and seven individuals declined to respond about their ethnicity within the online survey (2.4%). Two-hundred twenty-five participants identified themselves as straight/heterosexual (78.1%), thirty-three as bisexual (11.5%), seven as lesbian (2.4%), seven as queer (2.4%), five as gay (1.7%) two as questioning (0.7%), one as asexual (0.3%), and eight declined to respond about their sexuality within the online survey (2.8%).

Measurements

Homonegativity Scales

Participants' attitudes and beliefs about lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals and the LGB community were assessed using a combination of both the "old-fashioned" Homonegativity Scale (Morrison et al., 1999) and the Modern Homonegativity Scale (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). This combination of scales was previously constructed to capture both traditional and contemporary homonegativity, with their original counterparts utilized as subscales (Górska et al., 2017). Higher scores represent higher levels of homonegativity on all homonegativity measurements within this study. Homonegativity scales were calculated using the means of participants' scores.

"Old-Fashioned" Homonegativity Scale. Participants rated their agreement to statements within the Homonegativity Scale on a five-point Likert scale spanning from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This measure consisted of six statements, including but not limited to: "Individuals who identify as LGB should not be allowed to work with children," "Individuals who identify as LGB are immoral," "Individuals who identify as LGB

should be avoided whenever possible.” Within this study, the scale was found to be reliable ($\alpha = .788$). The author of the scale also found it to be reliable ($\alpha = .84$; Morrison et al., 1999).

Modern Homonegativity Scale. Participants rated their agreement to thirteen statements within the Modern Homonegativity Scale on a five-point Likert scale spanning from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This measure consisted of thirteen statements, including but not limited to: “In today’s tough economic times, Americans’ tax dollars shouldn’t be used to support LGB organizations,” “Individuals who identify as LGB use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges,” “The notion of universities providing students with undergraduate degrees in Gay and Lesbian Studies is ridiculous.” Within this study, the scale was found to be greatly reliable ($\alpha = .941$). The author of the scale also found it to be greatly reliable ($\alpha = .93$; Morrison & Morrison, 2002.)

Modern Old-Fashioned Homonegativity Scale. Combining both the “old-fashioned” Homonegativity Scale and Modern Homonegativity Scale grants a nineteen-item scale rated their homonegative beliefs on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Within this study, the scale was found to be greatly reliable ($\alpha = .92$). Researchers who previously combined these two scales found full metric invariance occurred between the old-fashioned and modern scales ($\Delta S-B \chi^2 (13) = 7.90, p = .850$), meaning that they reflected an equal and well-fit to their sample data, giving the scales the same meaning of generalizing prejudice towards all sexual minorities (Górska et al., 2017).

Gender Role Scales

Measures of gender role self-perception through stereotyped traits and gender role self-concept through gender-related social norms were chosen to understand how personal gender role expression, from a traditional perspective, could relate to homonegativity in both traditional

and modern contexts. Higher scores on each subscale of the gender role measurements represents higher expression to that specific gender role.

Gender Role Inventory. The Gender Role Inventory (GRI) assesses gender role self-perceptions through typically stereotyped masculine and feminine character traits on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Within the first subscale, seven masculinity/agency items measure levels of being “assertive,” “individualistic,” “dominant,” “willing to take a stand,” “acting as a leader,” having a “strong personality,” or “leadership ability.” Within the second subscale, seven femininity/communal items measure levels of being “gentle,” “warm,” “tender,” “compassionate,” “eager to soothe hurt feelings,” “sympathetic,” and “sensitive to others’ needs.” Both subscales were calculated by averaging the participants’ scores. The masculinity/agency subscale was deemed reliable within the context of this study ($\alpha = .794$), as well as within the original study that constructed the scale ($\alpha = .82$; Weaver & Sargent, 2007). The femininity/communal subscale was deemed reliable within the context of this study ($\alpha = .846$), as well as within the original study that constructed the scale ($\alpha = .9$; Weaver & Sargent, 2007).

Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale. The Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (TMFS) directly assesses a participant’s gender role self-concept through two subscales on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Not at all masculine) to 7 (Totally masculine) within the Masculinity subscale, and ranging from 1 (Not at all feminine) to 7 (Totally feminine) within the Femininity subscale. The measure requests the participant to indicate the applicability to the six fill-in-the-blank statements for both the Masculinity and Femininity subscales, including questions such as, “I consider myself...,” “Ideally, I consider myself to be...,” “Traditionally, my attitudes and beliefs would be considered as...,” “Traditionally, my behavior would be

considered as...,” “Traditionally, my outer appearance would be considered as...” Both subscales were calculated by averaging the participants’ scores. This traditional masculinity subscale was deemed greatly reliable within the current study ($\alpha = .956$), as similar to the reliability of the original study ($\alpha = .89$; Kachel et al., 2016). This traditional femininity subscale also was deemed greatly reliable within the current study ($\alpha = .967$), and was similar to the reliability of the original study ($\alpha = .90$; Kachel et al., 2016).

Results

Testing Hypothesis 1

To test hypothesis 1 regarding levels of homonegative attitudes across gender, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare how women and men differed within their expressions of Old-Fashioned Homonegativity, Modern Homonegativity, and General Homonegativity (MOFH). As can be seen in Table 1, the sample of men who participated to share their attitudes on LGB individuals, compared to the sample of women expressed significantly greater old-fashioned homonegative attitudes $t(285) = 4.34, p < .001$. In comparison to women, men rated significantly greater on modern homonegative attitudes $t(285) = 4.80, p < .001$. Similarly, men reported significantly greater general homonegative attitudes than women, $t(285) = 4.99, p < .001$. These results indicate the men in our study had overall stronger homonegative attitudes than the women in our study, supporting the first hypothesis.

Table 1 Independent samples *t*-test examining the differences within old-fashioned homonegativity, modern homonegativity, and “general” homonegativity between cisgender men and women.

| | Men (n = 61) | | Women (n=227) | | <i>t</i> -test |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------|---------------|------|----------------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | |
| 1. Old-Fashioned Homonegativity | 2.29 | .929 | 1.80 | .725 | 4.34** |
| 2. Modern Homonegativity | 3.08 | 1.03 | 2.40 | .971 | 4.80** |
| 3. General Homonegativity | 2.85 | .944 | 2.23 | .835 | 4.99** |

Note. General Homonegativity encompasses both old-fashioned and modern homonegativity to capture all homonegative attitudes within participants through the Modern Old-Fashioned Homonegativity Scale (MOFH).

** Correlations significant at $p < .001$

Testing Hypothesis 2 through Masculinity Expression

To test hypothesis 2 regarding masculine gender role expression across gender, another independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare how women and men differed within their self-concept of traditional masculinity and femininity (TMFS), and within their gender role self-perceptions through stereotyped masculine/agentive traits and stereotyped feminine/communal traits (GRI). As seen in Table 2, there was no significant difference in self-perceived masculine/agentive traits, $t(286) = 1.21, p = .113$, such that both men and women scored similarly on this gender role self-perception measure. However, the men within the study did have significantly greater traditional masculinity self-concepts in comparison to women within the study, $t(284) = 16.29, p < .001$. Since only one *t*-value showed a significant difference between men and women, hypothesis 2 is partially supported, in which the sample’s men scored higher on one masculinity expression measure than the sample’s women.

Testing Hypothesis 3 through Femininity Expression

To test hypothesis 3 regarding feminine gender role expression across gender, the same independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare how women and men differed within their self-concept of traditional masculinity and femininity (TMFS), and within their gender role self-perceptions through stereotyped masculine/agentive traits and stereotyped feminine/communal traits (GRI). As seen in Table 2, the women within the study had significantly greater self-perceptions of stereotypically feminine and communalistic traits (GRI), than the men within the study, $t(286) = -4.22, p < .001$. Similarly, the study's women had a significantly greater self-concept of femininity in comparison to the men, $t(286) = -19.9, p < .001$. Since both *t* values show great significant differences between men and women, hypothesis 3 is supported in which women scored higher on both femininity expression measures than men.

Table 2 Independent samples *t*-test examining the differences between gender role self-perceptions (GRI) and gender role self-concept (TMFS) between cisgender men and women.

| | Men (n = 61) | | Women (n = 227) | | <i>t</i> -test |
|----------------------------|--------------|------|-----------------|------|----------------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | |
| 1. Masculinity/Agency | 3.59 | .632 | 3.47 | .675 | 1.21 |
| 2. Femininity/Communalism | 3.60 | .673 | 4.00 | .662 | -4.22** |
| 3. Traditional Femininity | 2.20 | 1.32 | 5.51 | 1.10 | -19.9** |
| 4. Traditional Masculinity | 5.56 | 1.28 | 2.60 | 1.25 | 16.29** |

Note. Gender role self-perceptions of masculinity/agency and femininity/communalism are derived from the Gender Role Inventory (GRI), and gender role self-concept of traditional masculinity and traditional femininity are derived from the Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (TMFS).

** Significant at $p < .001$

Testing Hypothesis 4 through Gender Role Interactions Among Men and Women

In order to test the fourth hypothesis of inverse relations between femininity dimensions and masculinity dimensions in both cisgender men and cisgender women, bivariate correlational analyses were run on all four variables. In terms of significant gender role interactions within men (see Table 3), a strong negative correlation was found amongst a traditionally masculine self-concept (TMFS) and a traditionally-feminine self-concept (TMFS). There were no other significant gender role interactions found for men.

In terms of significant gender role interactions within women (see Table 4), a strong negative correlation was found among a traditionally masculine self-concept (TMFS) and a traditionally feminine self-concept (TMFS). There was also a negative correlation between traditional masculine self-concept and self-perceived feminine/communalistic traits (GRI). This repeated inverse correlation between reports of femininity and masculinity expression supports the fourth hypothesis specifically within the study's women.

As seen in Table 4, an additional significant gender role interaction was found within women but not found within men, such that traditionally feminine self-concept (TMFS) and self-perceived feminine/communalistic traits positively correlated.

Testing Hypothesis 5 through Homonegative Attitudes and Gender Role Interactions

In order to test our last hypothesis of high traditional gender role expression (e.g. men will score high on masculinity dimensions; women will score high on femininity dimensions) relating to homonegativity, bivariate correlational analyses were run on all seven variables.

Within women (see Table 4), there was a significant correlation between greater general homonegativity (MOFH) and greater self-perceptions stereotypically masculine/agentive traits (GRI), $r = .134$, $p < .05$. No other gender roles significantly related to homonegativity within

women. Unexpectedly, this does not support the fifth hypothesis, in which these results indicate that women who express more femininity are not necessarily more homonegative.

Within men (see Table 3), there was a significant positive correlation between old-fashioned homonegativity and increased self-perceptions of stereotypically masculine/agentive traits (GRI), $r = .273$, $p = .045$. There were no other significant interactions found between stereotypically masculine/agentive traits (GRI) and homonegativity. However, old-fashioned homonegativity and increased self-concept of traditional masculinity (TMFS) significantly positively correlated. More significant findings were found involving other homonegative attitudes, such that Modern and General Homonegativity positively correlated to an increased self-concept of traditional masculinity (TMFS) within men (Table 3).

These four findings regarding men partially support the fourth hypothesis, in which men actively expressing more masculinity are much more likely to express greater homonegative attitudes.

Homonegative Attitudes and Femininity within Men

Unconsidered in hypotheses, there was a surplus of significant findings encompassing men's expression of femininity and homonegativity; in fact, all measures of homonegativity negatively related to expressions of femininity in a statistically significant way. As seen in Table 4, negative correlations were found between low levels of Old-Fashioned Homonegativity and increased self-perceptions of feminine/communalistic traits within the GRI, and low levels of Old-Fashioned Homonegativity and increased self-concept of traditional femininity within the TMFS. In comparison, even stronger correlations were found between lower scores on Modern Homonegativity and increased self-perceptions of feminine/communalistic traits and low scores on Modern Homonegativity and increased self-concept of traditional femininity. Negative

correlations were also found between expressions of General Homonegativity and self-perceptions of feminine/communalistic traits, as well as low expressions of General Homonegativity and self-concept of traditional femininity.

Table 3 Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics various expressions of homonegativity (MOFH), gender role self-perceptions (GRI), and gender role self-concept (TMFS) within cisgender men.

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. Old-Fashioned Homonegativity | -- | .788** | .877** | .273* | -.346** | -.425** | .407** |
| 2. Modern Homonegativity | | – | .986** | .173 | -.383** | -.521** | .518** |
| 3. General Homonegativity | | | – | .202 | -.391** | -.519** | .511** |
| 4. Masculinity/Agency | | | | – | .185 | -.073 | .231 |
| 5. Femininity/Communalism | | | | | – | .235 | -.169 |
| 6. Traditional Femininity | | | | | | – | -.839** |
| 7. Traditional Masculinity | | | | | | | – |
| <i>M</i> | 2.284 | 3.085 | 2.851 | 3.589 | 3.597 | 5.557 | 2.204 |
| <i>SD</i> | .929 | 1.03 | .945 | .632 | .673 | 1.28 | 1.32 |

Note. Masculinity/Agency and Femininity/Communalism are derived from the Gender Role Inventory (GRI), measuring gender role self-perceptions. Traditional Femininity and Traditional Masculinity are both derived from the Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (TMFS), measuring gender role self-concept. General Homonegativity encompasses both old-fashioned and modern homonegativity to capture all possible homonegative attitudes within participants. $n = 61$.

* Correlations significant at $p = .045$.

** Correlations significant at $p < .001$.

Table 4 Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics various expressions of homonegativity (MOFH), gender role self-perceptions (GRI), and gender role self-concept (TMFS) within cisgender women.

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| 1. Old-Fashioned Homonegativity | -- | .658** | .784** | .117 | -.075 | .102 | -.039 |
| 2. Modern Homonegativity | | – | .983** | .124 | -.080 | .115 | -.091 |
| 3. General Homonegativity | | | – | .134* | -.089 | .121 | -.086 |
| 4. Masculinity/Agency | | | | – | -.050 | .063 | -.034 |
| 5. Femininity/Communalism | | | | | – | .348** | -.368** |
| 6. Traditional Femininity | | | | | | – | -.763** |
| 7. Traditional Masculinity | | | | | | | – |
| <i>M</i> | 1.801 | 2.403 | 2.232 | 3.472 | 4.002 | 2.598 | 5.509 |
| <i>SD</i> | .725 | .971 | .836 | .675 | .662 | 1.25 | 1.1 |

Note. Masculinity/Agency and Femininity/Communalism are derived from the Gender Role Inventory (GRI), measuring gender role self-perceptions. Traditional Femininity and Traditional Masculinity are both derived from the Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (TMFS), measuring gender role self-concept. General Homonegativity encompasses both old-fashioned and modern homonegativity to capture all possible homonegative attitudes within participants. $n = 227$.

* Correlations significant at $p < .05$

** Correlations significant at $p < .01$

Discussion

Our findings suggest gender role self-concept and gender role self-perceptions play important roles in developing homonegativity through gendered attitudes towards the self. This study uncovered that men's homonegativity was not only stronger in comparison to women's homonegativity, but it also strongly related to both femininity and masculinity expression in unexpected ways. While women in this study expressed homonegativity, this homonegativity did not relate to their feminine gender role self-concept or feminine/communalistic self-perception. These results were unforeseen, given previous findings that suggest women who hold greater

importance of feminine attributes within their own gender identity are more likely to express lesbian prejudice (Basow & Johnson, 2000). Traditional masculine self-concepts and traditional feminine self-concepts negatively related in a significant way for both men and women, which was aligned with the third prediction of gender roles opposing one another. Congruent with hypotheses, cisgender women reported more traditionally feminine self-concepts, while cisgender men reported more traditionally masculine self-concepts, both reported through the Traditional Femininity-Masculinity Scale (TMFS). Gender role self-perception reports from the Gender Role Inventory (GRI) did not align with the hypotheses predicting gender role opposition and gender role differences in men and women. Discovered through a correlational analysis, both men and women who expressed greater masculine/agentic traits (GRI) were also likely to express a variation of homonegative attitudes. This correlation between masculine/agentic trait expression and general homonegativity was the only correlation found in women in regards to homonegativity and gender role expression. In contrast with the amount of homonegativity correlations in women, men's gender role expression of femininity and masculinity significantly related to nearly all forms of homonegativity. The behavior of the gender role scales must be addressed, as well as the implications of interrelations found within the study.

Scale Validity, Dynamic Stereotypes, and Future Directions

The TMFS seemed to operationalize gender role correlations in a statistically consistent way, in that it directly inquired about gendered self-ascriptions and was generally consistent with interdependency hypotheses. Meanwhile, the GRI indirectly inquired about stereotypical gendered personality traits for and was unable to support nearly all hypotheses. Measuring self-concept (TMFS) could be more effective than measuring self-perception (GRI), as self-concept in this study captures ideals, attitudes, beliefs, outer appearance, and interests categorized by

gender role, while self-perception within this study is merely just traits categorized by gender role. The measure of femininity/communalism (GRI) did seem to capture expression of femininity similarly to traditional femininity (TMFS), but the measure of masculinity/agency (GRI) did not seem to capture masculinity similarly to traditional masculinity (TMFS). Measures of femininity/communalism and masculinity/agency did not even oppose each other correlationally, which is key to the bipolar social construction of gender roles (Constantinople, 1973; Kachel et al., 2016; Weaver & Sargent, 2007).

While the Gender Role Inventory does encompass gender roles in a stereotypical and traditional way, perhaps it is unfit in a modern context. The GRI likely measures dynamic stereotypes, in which a group's current characteristics are unlike the group's characteristics preceding or proceeding the present time period (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). Men and women are becoming increasingly more nontraditional, gender roles are becoming increasingly more egalitarian, and men and women are becoming more similar to one another in their characteristics and personality traits (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). Additionally, gendered attitudes towards women have recently emerged in a more egalitarian manner, such that women are socially allowed to get an education and gain employment, even in male-centered vocations (Spence & Hahn, 1997; Jacobs et al., 1989). It has also become common for women to express agentic personality traits, such as being assertive, goal oriented, and independent (Spence 1984; Spence & Helmrich, 1978). This could explain the lack of difference in masculine/agentic trait expression between men and women within this study. Further research should incorporate measuring non-traditionalism to investigate if there are mediating or moderating effects between homonegativity, gender role self-concept, or gender role self-perceptions.

However, dynamic stereotype theory's chronological context (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000) does not explain why masculine/agentic traits are related to homonegativity in both genders (see Table 4). These results within women could involve other characteristics associated with agentic traits, in which agentic individuals separate themselves from others and prefer to be in opposition to others within social situations (Weaver & Sargent, 2007). Both men and women in this sample who hold agentic and socially-oppositional self-perceived traits could merely be less prosocial, and more likely to socially oppose out-groups in general, but more research must be conducted to understand the likelihood of prejudice from primarily agentic individuals.

While it was hypothesized that women's increased feminine gender role expression would relate to homonegativity, this was greatly incongruent with the resulting significant correlation between self-perceived masculine/agentic traits and general homonegativity in women (see Table 4). If the social opposition found within agentic individuals (those with masculine/agentic traits) could explain their homonegativity, then communal individuals' (those with feminine/communal traits) encouragement of social harmony, interdependency, connectedness, and congruence (Weaver & Sargent, 2007) could explain why there is a lack of homonegativity and other gender role expression within women. If women are socially expected to be integrative and communalistic, this may illustrate why the sampled women are less homonegative. Basow & Johnson (2000)'s findings regarding women's homonegativity and the importance of feminine attributes could be incongruent with this study's findings due to social expectations changing within dynamic stereotype theory (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). Considering previous findings that women's fears of sexual identity discrimination may impact various forms of gender role expression (Fahs, 2011; Kavasoglu, 2021; Krane, 2001; Flanagan, 2016),

subsequent studies should investigate aspects of women's hegemonic femininity to understand if there are correlations to internalized and externally-expressed homonegativity.

Addressing Hypotheses

Addressing Hypothesis 1

Supporting the first hypothesis, this study's cisgender men, indeed, reported more homonegativity on all measures than did cisgender women, as seen in Table 1. Men are expected to fulfill male role norms and typical expectations of masculinity, in which behavior deemed feminine or homosexual is stigmatized and frowned upon. Therefore, this finding is consistent with previous literature (Hoskin et al., 2024; Levant et al., 2013), and explains potential outcomes such as greater anti-gay aggression in men (the increased likelihood of men committing forms of homonegative violence in comparison to women (Lantz, 2022)).

Addressing Hypothesis 2 and 3

The feminine/communalistic measure within the GRI, as well as the traditional femininity measure within the TMFS, were both significant predictors of difference in feminine gender role expression between men and women. As seen in Table 2, women expressed greater feminine self-concept and self-perceptions, supporting hypothesis 3. However, the traditional masculinity measure within the TMFS was the only significant predictor of difference in masculine gender role expression between men and women, such that men were greater in masculine self-concept, which partially supports hypothesis two. The masculine/agentive measure within the GRI predicted no difference between men and women likely due to shifting societal expectations for women (Spence & Hahn, 1997; Jacobs et al., 1989; Spence 1984; Spence & Helmrich, 1978) explained within dynamic stereotype theory (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). While the GRI did not result in gender role expression differences in men and women, the TMFS displayed differences

in traditional masculinity and femininity expression in men and women, which should be addressed as congruent with hypotheses of men expressing greater masculinity and women expressing greater femininity.

Addressing Hypothesis 4

Consistent from previous findings and supporting hypotheses 4, (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Haines et al., 2016), gender role ascriptions are interdependent on one another, in both men and women, as shown in Table 3 and 4's significant negative correlations. However, it was only participants' self-concepts of traditional femininity and traditional masculinity (TMFS) that were inversely related in the strongest and most significant way; the interdependency between participants' self-perceptions of stereotypically-gendered traits of femininity/communalism and masculinity/agency (GRI) was insignificant and indicated very little linear association. It can be understood that the significant negative interdependencies among the Traditional Masculinity-Femininity subscales supports hypothesis four of femininity and masculinity opposing one another.

Addressing Hypothesis 5

Men's Masculinity and Homonegativity. Masculine expression by both men and women related to homonegative attitudes in our dataset. Specifically within men in Table 3, self-perceptions of masculinity/agency (GRI) are loosely associated with old-fashioned homonegativity. This was the only homonegative association with masculinity/agency within men, which could be explained by old-fashioned homonegativity's overt, confrontational nature. This nature could potentially align more so with agentic traits of instrumentalism and social opposition-based behavior, rather than masculinity as a gender role due to this subscale's dynamic change (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). All three variations of homonegativity significantly

related to an increased self-concept traditional masculinity, which not only supports hypothesis 5, but also gives evidence to the distinctiveness of expressed masculinity and related stigmatization of sexual minorities in previous literature (Levant et al., 2010; Levant et al., 2013). If increased traditional masculine gender self-concept within a man is indicative of stronger homonegativity, such information should be utilized for recontextualizing masculinity for homonegative men as an intervention to prejudice and hegemonization of this gender role.

Exemplifying this recontextualization is the positive masculinity approach, which is contemporarily used in counseling to uplift masculine individuals and acknowledging stigmas that negatively impact men's health decisions and prosocial behaviors (Ringdahl, 2020). This counseling method socially allows the coexistence of masculinity and communalistic behaviors, but has not yet been used to combat masculinity-based heterosexist stigma. Future research within men should incorporate gender role self-concept, the developments of positive masculinity and hegemonic masculinity scales, and homonegativity measures to understand how these variables may moderate or temporally instigate one another.

Women's Masculinity and Homonegativity. Within masculine expression in women in Table 4, general homonegativity and masculinity/agentive traits significantly correlated. Considering there were no other gender role-homonegativity interactions within women, and that the general homonegativity dimension was a combination of both old-fashioned and modern homonegativity, this significant result could be due to the increase in statistical variance. Additionally, because agency often indicates social opposition within one's personality (Weaver & Sargent, 2007), this correlation may simply be understood as meaning that women who are generally more socially oppositional could be less integrative and, therefore, more likely to be generally prejudiced.

To further understand this interaction, masculine expression within heterosexual women and sexual minority women should be individually investigated as a function of potential internalized homonegativity within sexual minority women, and potential externalized homonegativity within heterosexual women. Internalized homonegativity, which is the process in which homonegative ideologies are internalized by sexual minorities, has been seen to mediate the correlation between sexual orientation visibility and greater expression to stereotypically masculine traits within women (Flanagan, 2016), giving additional importance to researching gender role expression related to gender attitudes and sexual orientation attitudes.

Women's Femininity and Homonegativity. As seen in Table 4, feminine self-concept and feminine/communalistic self-perceptions within women did not relate to homonegativity as they did in Basow & Johnson (2000)'s study, which was incongruent with hypothesis five. However, since femininity is defined by integration and prosocial behavior (Weaver & Sargent, 2007), arguably, femininity should not be related to homonegativity at all. Despite this, women in this study still expressed all forms of homonegativity, as seen in Table 1. The correlations between masculinity and homonegativity in men may not parallel with femininity and homonegativity within women due to the complexity in social categorization of the hegemonization of women. Even when women abide by traditional feminine gender roles, they still experience social critique, sexual identity discrimination, and consequences of heterosexism, whether or not they express feminine or masculine gender roles (Krane, 2001; Fahs, 2011; Kavasoğlu, 2021). Therefore, women's contemporary expression of femininity, in relation to both effects of hegemonization and homonegativity, should be studied in the future to understand key variables that instigate prejudice in women.

Men's Femininity and Homonegativity. Previous manuscripts conclude that anti-gay behavior or homonegativity is significantly related to anti-femininity or femmephobia (Hoskin et al., 2024; Levant et al., 2013), but none have examined the “reverse” correlation between greater expression to femininity within men and a lack of homonegativity. As seen in Table 3, men's increased self-concept of traditional femininity and increased self-perceptions of feminine/agentive traits negatively related to all forms of homonegativity, which was unaccounted for in hypotheses, but was, perhaps, the most significant finding in the entirety of the study. Among the specific homonegative attitudes, General Homonegativity was the greatest negative predictor for self-perceptions of feminine/communalistic traits, and Modern Homonegativity was the greatest negative predictor for self-concepts of traditional femininity.

As agentive traits positively predicted general homonegativity in women, communalistic traits negatively predicting homonegativity in men may be indicative integrative, prosocial behavior towards others and could be generally less prejudiced. Furthermore, men who expressed traditional femininity likely had to combat feelings of socially-mediated masculinity (Vandello et al., 2008) and potentially practiced positive masculinity to destigmatize their own expression of femininity (Ringdahl, 2022) and others' expression of sexual minority status. Qualitative research investigating the temporal relations between hegemonic masculinity, the introduction of positive masculine ideologies, and impacted homonegativity levels must be conducted for homonegativity-reduction interventions.

Limitations and Future Directions

Given the construct validity of the Gender Role Inventory is being questioned, this study's hypotheses are only partially supported, as these femininity/communalistic and masculinity/agentive subscales did not behave as expected in hypotheses, and did not behave

similar to the Traditional Masculinity Femininity subscales. Additionally, while this study gave tremendous insight into who is more likely to express homonegative attitudes, its quantitative nature could not be argued for temporal relations. The external validity of the study could be improved by incorporating multiple young adult populations within the Midwest, as well as incorporating more cisgender men as participants. Qualitative studies regarding homonegativity and hegemonic gender roles with a more diverse sample would greatly benefit social psychological studies regarding prejudice.

Implications and Conclusions

Considering LGBTQ+ individuals are 11 times more likely to become hate crime victims compared to non-LGBTQ+ peers (Flores et al., 2022), understanding these differences within gender and gender roles could instigate better homonegativity reduction interventions for populations with specific gendered attitudes. Outwardly-expressed homonegativity towards sexual minorities has been seen to increase internalized homonegativity and sexual minority stress, and further instigate mental health problems for homosexual and bisexual individuals (Meyer, 2003). Incorporating this study's results involving traditional masculinity and femininity self-concepts with correlations to homonegativity within men (see Table 3) would be invaluable, as these gender role self-concepts reveal very oppositional likelihoods of much greater prejudice towards sexual minorities, or much greater acceptance of sexual minorities, respectively. Prejudice interventions such as regular intergroup interaction (between heterosexuals and sexual minorities) and bringing awareness of cultural influences on homonegativity have been seen to be effective against reducing bias within professional development (Kwok, 2021). If cultural influence on prejudice can be taught to reduce homonegative attitudes and behaviors, these

interventions could be even more effective with awareness of the influence of gendered attitudes within social and intergroup contexts.

Even though chronological contexts influenced the construct validity of the Gender Role Inventory, these results gave insight into the differences in prejudiced attitudes between communalistic and agentic individuals. Those who are high on feminine/communalistic traits may not need highly developed diversity or prosocial training for prejudice reduction, since these individuals already possess integrative qualities they may possess. However, those who are high on masculine/agentic traits should be further studied to properly construct prosocial encouragement interventions to reduce general prejudicial attitudes.

Still, this study importantly tells us how gender role self-concept (TMFS), especially within cisgender men, correlates with their likelihood of homonegativity. Those with greater traditional masculinity (TMFS) are at risk for greater homonegative attitudes, while men who freely express traditional femininity (TMFS) by destigmatizing their own manhood will likely accept sexual minorities in social contexts. Even if women upholding the importance of personal feminine traits does not correlate with homonegative values as previously seen (Basow & Johnson, 2000), these results will allow for further investigation of more complex social processes, such as hegemony, in women's homonegativity and gender role expression. Not only are these findings important steps for gender role-based intergroup relation research, but also for social and professional interventions incorporating gendered contexts to reduce prejudicial attitudes.

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