

THREAT AND BIAS: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THREAT IN  
ATTITUDES TOWARDS RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

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This research project is motivated by the question of what type of relationship exists between threat and bias. Such a relationship has been demonstrated for racial bias and theorized for sexism and heterosexism; however the nature of the relationship is unknown. In particular, it is unclear whether threat functions at the individual level, group level, or both levels simultaneously. This is accomplished by considering three types of bias: sexism, racism, and heterosexism.

All three analyses utilize virtually identical background measures and employ ordered logistic and multinomial logistic regressions, with differing outcome measures and threats. Each paper begins by considering how the relevant literatures treat threat and bias. They then examine the same four hypotheses describing the possible relationships between individual threat, group threat, and biased attitudes.

The gender and race analyses utilize the General Social Survey. Attitudes towards policies aimed at promoting gender equity are the outcome measures for the gender study, while attitudes towards policies aimed at promoting racial equity are the outcome measures for the race analysis. Threat measures assess perceptions of the impact of the women's movement on individuals and men (gender analysis) and perceptions of white job security and stability (race analysis).

The sexual orientation analysis relies on student data, because there are no available datasets with appropriate measures of individual and group threats. A questionnaire was developed and administered to undergraduate students at an elite Northeastern university. Unlike the other two analyses, the results from this study are

not generalizable; however, they should provide an indication of whether the trends identified with gender and racial attitudes may carry over to opinions regarding sexual minorities. Outcomes are attitudes towards legalizing gay marriage and providing same-sex couples with job benefits

The results confirm the link between feelings of threat and negative views of the out-group. All three analyses demonstrate that individual threat and group threat are simultaneously associated with opposition to policies aiding the subordinate group. Furthermore, the results suggest the possibility of a proxy relationship between individual threat and group threat.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Judith Rosenstein is a graduate of the University of Michigan, with honors in both Mathematics and Sociology. She received her Masters degree in Sociology from Cornell in 2005. That same year she won the Sociology Department's Robin Williams Jr. Best Graduate Paper Award.

Judith's research focuses on inequality, and in particular, differential treatment of out-groups. The question motivating her research is why some people hate and mistreat others for no reason other than their group affiliation.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Bias is a persistent and pervasive problem in the United States and around the world. The U.S.'s history of bias is long and sordid with its attempted exterminations, round-ups, and forced marches of Native Americans; slavery of Africans and African Americans; Jim Crow laws; internment of people of Japanese descent during the Second World War; profiling of Middle Easterners following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001; restriction of voting rights to propertied white males; and criminalization of sodomy. Although many types of bigoted behavior have been banned, both legal and illegal forms remain pervasive.

Bias not only harms its direct victims, but also the victimized groups and the society as a whole. Individual victims face physical and psychological consequences ranging from depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, anger, and fear (Garnets, Herek, and Levy 1992; Herek et al. 1997, p.576) to posttraumatic stress (Rose and Mechanic 2002), severe physical injury, and even death (Berrill 1992; Federal Bureau of Investigation 2003, 2004, 2005; Stovel 2001; Tolnay, Beck, and Massey 1989a). The impact on a victim's group is no less severe, as many acts of bias are aimed less at a specific individual than at the group to which the individual belongs or appears to belong (Jenness and Grattet 2001; Perry 2001). These acts of bias may be geared towards keeping a group out of a community (Green, Strolovitch, and Wong 1998), preventing occupational advancement (Heilman 2001), putting a group "in its place" (Glaser, Dixit, and Green 2002; Perry 2001, 2002), or outright extermination (Gilbert 1985).

At its most severe, bias can lead to genocide and large scale ethnic conflict, such as those ongoing in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Sudan, and past conflicts in

Rwanda, Germany, Indonesia, and Yugoslavia (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Horowitz 1985; See 1986; Young 1986). On a less destructive level, bias can keep able-bodied workers out of professions (Heilman 2001), resulting in a loss of productivity and innovation. It can also foster the formation of homogeneous communities, such as the inner city ghettos that have developed in cities throughout the U.S., due in part to discrimination in the housing and lending markets (Massey and Denton 1993). These ghettos can in turn breed anger and resentment directed at the dominant group, further heightening intergroup hostility (Boskin 1976; Kelly and Isaac 1984; Wilson 1980).

The repercussions of bias and biased behavior touch everyone, regardless of whether or not they recognize it. It is a problem facing us all and one we need to fight. But, in order to do that, we must have a better understanding of bias, what it is, what causes it, and how it is manifest.

## BIAS: DEFINITION AND EXAMINATION

Intergroup bias, or simply bias, is “the systematic tendency to evaluate one’s own membership group (the in-group) or its members more favorably than a nonmembership group (the out-group) or its members” (Hewstone, Rubin, and Willis 2002, p. 576). There is no specific profile that bias adopts; it can appear as prejudice, discrimination, ethnic cleansing, or a host of other forms of beliefs and actions (Hewstone et al. 2002). Furthermore, bias acts as both a motivator and a rationale for hostile behavior by members of one group directed at members of another group.

The pervasive, often destructive, nature of bias has made it an area of intense study for social scientists. Examinations of bias are generally conducted in one of two ways: either by concentrating on expressions of bias, such as prejudice (Allport 1958; Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999; Dovidio 2001; Firebaugh and Davis 1988; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995; Quillian 1995), discrimination (Blalock 1957; Blalock 1967; Feagin

1991; Feagin and Eckberg 1980; Fox 2000; Goldin 2002; Padavic and Reskin 1990), ethnic conflict (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Horowitz 1985; Olzak 1992), lynching (Corzine, Creech, and Corzine 1983; Olzak 1990; Stovel 2001; Tolnay et al. 1989a), and civil disorders and urban violence (Berk and Aldrich 1972; Boskin 1976; Kelly and Isaac 1984; Olzak, Shanahan, and McEneaney 1996); or by considering the target of bias, such as racism (Bobo 1983, 1988a, 1988b; Fredrickson 2002; Kinder and Sears 1981; Powell 1992), sexism (Glick et al. 2000; Swim et al. 1995), anti-Semitism (Brustein and King 2004; Zukier 1996), and heterosexism (Davies 2004; Haddock, Zanna, and Esses 1993; Herek 1992a, 1992b, 2000, 2002; Hinrichs and Rosenberg 2002; Lim 2002; Steffens 2005; Yang 1997). Often, the focus is even narrower, so that examinations of forms of bias consider only one class of bias, such as gender discrimination, or concentrate on only one target, such as prejudice towards a single racial or ethnic group.

These simplifications are the products of both pragmatism and structural constraints. Bias is simply too overwhelming a topic to comprehensively examine in its entirety; books have been devoted to ethnic conflict (Horowitz 1985; Olzak 1992), prejudice (Allport 1958; Ehrlich 1973), racism (Fredrickson 2002; Powell 1992), and heterosexism (Blumenfeld 1992; Herek 1998), to name a few. Consequently, we must make due by examining bias piece by piece. Second, the social sciences, and sociology in particular, have become “balkanized” to the extent that they are divided into distinct areas, many of which incorporate some form of bias – there are race scholars, gender scholars, religion scholars, students of inequality (which often results from bias), and so on. These scholars focus on the forms of bias relevant to their area of expertise, but rarely do they explore other kinds of bias. These studies provide vital information about how bias is manifest in the specified domain. The downside is that there are few analyses that cover multiple areas, which means that we have limited

information about the similarities and differences across types of bias. This leaves a gap in our understanding of bias.

A related weakness is our relative ignorance of the impact of the intersection of bias categories. People belong to multiple groups simultaneously, so a person can be a member of the dominant group in one area (e.g., white), but a member of a subordinate group in another (e.g., female), or belong to multiple subordinate groups (e.g., black and female). To date, relatively little has been done to explore the intersection of groups with respect to bias (exceptions include Browne and Misra 2003; Collins 2001; Kane 2000; West and Fenstermaker 1995). Furthermore, the separation of subfields discourages the cross-pollination of ideas. Each subfield has a unique literature, often with a distinct vocabulary. Unless a study involves the intersection of subject areas, there is little reason for a scholar to leave her subfield to seek literature in another. Consequently, it is difficult to compare phenomena across areas.

The disparate literatures have found common themes in the manifestation of bias. The idea of threat is one of the most important. The specifics of threat vary by context, but at its core the idea is the same: when a person feels that either an individual or her group are endangered by an individual or group she will be hostile towards the perceived source of threat. Where literatures diverge is the type of threat, whether or not the threat must be real, the expression of bias, and the specific groups involved.

### *Groups Examined*

What groups are involved in a study of bias is not as self-evident as it seems. The simplistic answer is that the groups of interest are generally contingent on the field of study, with gender papers usually focusing on men and women, race analyses

considering blacks and whites (and sometimes others), and so forth. At a deeper level is the relationship between the groups (e.g., dominant vs. subordinate, subordinate vs. subordinate, etc.). The majority of studies focus on dominant-subordinate relations – race studies explore white’s attitudes towards blacks (Bobo 1983; Firebaugh and Davis 1988; Glaser et al. 2002; Quillian 1996; Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979; Sears et al. 1997), while sexual orientation papers examine heterosexual’s opinions of sexual minorities (Herek 2002; Herek and Capitano 1999; Hinrichs and Rosenberg 2002). Gender studies are an exception, as most include men’s and women’s attitudes (Alwin, Braun, and Scott 1992; Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Cassidy and Warren 1996; Mason and Lu 1988). Dominant-subordinate relationships are particularly important for comprehending social relations, because by its nature, it is often the dominant group that plays the greatest role in shaping social interactions. But because our society is not monolithic, we also need to understand other relationships, even if they are not the most influential for the society as whole. Many race scholars appear to have recognized the importance of subordinate group opinions, and have begun to examine them more frequently (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Charles 2001; Green and Waxman 1987; Kluegel and Bobo 2001).

### *Expression of Bias*

There are many different ways bias can be expressed, ranging from prejudice to ethnic conflict to genocide. In some cases, there are fields devoted entirely to one area of antagonism, such as ethnic conflict; in others a single field may cover the spectrum of bias (e.g., racism). Threat has been associated with the entire array of antagonistic forms, and appears in a manner appropriate to the relevant expression of bias (e.g., race based threat relates to racism).

### *Real vs. Perceived Threat*

There is some debate as to whether threat must be real (Bobo 1988b; Quillian 1995). The idea of real and perceived threats stems from the differentiation between realistic and nonrealistic conflicts. According to Coser (1956), realistic conflict relates to the attainment of a specific objective, such that the conflict fades once the situation has been satisfactorily resolved. A nonrealistic conflict has to do with a “response to frustration in which the object appears suitable for a release of aggressiveness” (Coser 1956, pp. 49-50). Since the conflict does not relate to a specific objective, it will not dissipate as readily as a realistic conflict. Realistic and nonrealistic conflicts translate directly to real and unreal (or perceived) threats. Real threats are threats to actual group interests or resources, while perceived threats do not involve actual group interests (Quillian 1995).

The question of whether or not threats must be real for them to generate hostility is theoretically interesting, but empirically problematic. Because of theoretical concerns some scholars try to restrict their analysis to real threats. While it is sound research procedure to strictly adhere to theoretical claims, in this case those claims are difficult to translate into everyday life. Real threats are obviously a greater danger than unreal threats; however until a situation has been resolved, it is unknown if a threat will be realized and it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine if reactions to a real threat are due to the actual threat or to underlying hostilities towards the group posing the threat. As Bobo (1999) notes in reference to conflict, “there are both affect-laden identities and orientations that are bound up with differential positions and interests” (p. 457).

### *Type of Threat*

The final issue is the type of threat. The various literatures on bias independently identify two forms of threat: individual threat and group threat. The two types of threat are discrete and therefore deserve to be considered independently. More importantly, the threats have distinct roots. Consequently, they behave differently and require their own unique responses. There are four forms of threat that have been identified: threats to status, goals and values, identity, and security and survival. Identity threats can be subdivided into threats to distinctiveness and sense of self. Distinctiveness applies more at the group level, while sense of self occurs at the individual level (table 1.1).

*Individual threat.* As the name implies, individual threat occurs when an individual faces harm. It is a threat to “personal lives” (Kinder and Sears 1981, p. 417) and occurs when there is the belief that some event will result in an individual being worse off than she was previously (Kane and Sanchez 1994). Some common examples include the loss of one’s job or a decline in the job’s prestige (Banton 1983; Bonacich 1972; Olzak 1992; Ridgeway 1997), the concern that one’s behavior does not conform to prescribed gender roles (Connell 1995; Hopkins 1996; West and Zimmerman 1987), and the belief that a family member will be contaminated because of an intermarriage with someone from an out-group (Glaser et al. 2002). Three forms of individual threat are readily identifiable in the literature: status threat, identity threat, and security/survival threat. Scholars do not consider threats to individual goals and values; although such threats are mentioned by nonacademics.

Status threats are threats to those resources that signal a person’s social position. One of the most commonly cited status threats is declining property values

Table 1.1. Threat Typology

Threat Type	Description	Terminology/Examples <sup>†</sup>	
		Individual Threat	Group Threat
Status	Threat to person/group's social position	Resources: symbol of status, prestige (Bonacich 1972; Charles 2003; Ridgeway 1997; Wilson 2001)	Position (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996) Prestige (Goldin 2002) Legitimacy (Maass et al. 2003) Group value (Maass et al. 2003) Power threat (Blalock 1957) Competition (Bréchon and Mitra 1992; D'Alessio, Stolzenberg, and Eitle 2002; Olzak 1990)
Goals and Values	Infringement on culture, values, or way of life		Conflicting objectives (Bobo 1988a; Hewstone et al. 2002) Cultural identity (Glaser et al. 2002) Preserving way of life (Green et al. 1998)
Identity			
Sense of Self	Threat to how individual perceives and values him/herself	Contamination: cleanliness (Blee 2002; Glaser et al. 2002) Self-perception, self-worth, self-esteem (Connell 1995; Hopkins 1996; West and Zimmerman 1987) Acceptance/Prototypicality (Maass et al. 2003)	
Distinctiveness	Threat to the group's uniqueness		Distinctiveness (Maass et al. 2003) Separateness (Glaser et al. 2002) Contamination: racial purity (Perry 2001)
Security and Survival	Threat to security, safety, or survival	Resource threats: requirement for survival (Bonacich 1972) Crime and violence (Blee 2002; Fredrickson 2002; Perry 2001)	Contamination: racial death (Ezekiel 2002; Perry 2001) Crime/delinquency (Bréchon and Mitra 1992) Race war (Blee 2002; Perry 2001)

<sup>†</sup> The terminology examples provide a flavor of the ways each form of threat is expressed. The lists are in no way exhaustive

brought on by the influx of an out-group into a neighborhood (Charles 2003; Massey and Denton 1993). Another example is the loss of a high prestige job that confers status through association.

When a threat to resources impacts an actor's ability to live, then it is a security of survival threat. For instance, the loss of a job could mean lack of income. Alternatively, people may express concerns about increasing crime. These beliefs are reinforced by stereotypes that out-group members are prone to violence or involved in violent activities such as drugs and gangs (Bréchon and Mitra 1992; Charles 2003; Massey and Denton 1993) and encourage fears about neighborhood safety, children playing in the streets, and women walking alone at night. There is also racist propaganda which portrays white women as victims of predatory black (and other nonwhite) males' "hypersexuality" (Blee 2002; Fredrickson 2002; Perry 2001).

The third category is identity threats. These are threats to what it means for the actor to be who she is. Sense of self threats relate to how an actor views herself. Such threats occur when an actor is concerned that she does not sufficiently embody the characteristics of her group or she is somehow atypical for her group. People with strong group identities will feel threatened if they learn that they are not \_\_\_ enough or are not exemplars of group ideals, because being part of the group is a fundamental component of how they define themselves. To learn that they are less than what they thought threatens their self-esteem, their self-worth (they are not worthy to be part of the group), and their identity. This type of threat appears frequently with respect to gender and sexuality, and Maass et al. (2003) refer to it as an acceptance or prototypicality threat. One example is intergroup sexual relations which are often particularly problematic when they involve an in-group woman and an out-group man. Sexual contact, or potentially any type of physical contact, sullies the woman, making

her unclean and has potential negative implications for her family members (Blee 2002).

Distinctiveness threats are akin to some individual sense of self threats, only applied at the group level. Distinctiveness refers to two groups having unique characteristics such that the groups are different and distinguishable from one another. This uniqueness is part of the group's identity. As members and representatives of groups, individuals perceive distinctiveness threats; however the threats are to the group, not the individual, so they are group threats.

Can distinctiveness apply at the individual level? It is hard to see how. As unique entities individuals do not face the threat of losing their identities and their reason for existing because they closely resemble someone else. They are inherently distinct. This makes it difficult for a distinctiveness threat to apply.

The fourth type of threat, one to goals and values, does not appear in the academic literature; although it does appear elsewhere. This type of threat occurs when someone's action infringes on an individual's ability to live according to her culture and her values or restricts her attainment of her goals. Sprigg (2006) provides one example when he argues that legalizing same-sex marriages will encourage people to leave their opposite-sex spouses for ones of the same sex. Apparently the spouse leaving the marriage for a same-sex lover prevents the abandoned spouse from fulfilling her goals of a permanent heterosexual union. Such abandonment is also a blow to the values of the abandoned spouse, who believes that same-sex relationships are morally wrong. (This is presumably why same-sex marriage is problematic at the individual level, since is it not uncommon for a heterosexual marriage to dissolve because of one partner's involvement with someone else, regardless of gender. Of course, is it unclear from this argument why the actual legalization of gay marriage is

so problematic, since there is no current legal barrier to leaving a spouse for a same-sex lover.)

*Group Threat.* Group threat, in contrast, occurs when a social group is perceived to be threatened by an out-group. For instance, group threats include the fear that economic competition will lead to a decline in the dominant group's status (Blalock 1957; Goldin 2002; Kimmel 2004), concern that acceptance of nontraditional types of masculinity (e.g., effeminate males) will cause men to lose their position of dominance (Hopkins 1996), and the belief that intermarriage will pollute the gene pool (Blee 2002; Ezekiel 2002; Fredrickson 2002; Glaser et al. 2002).

The study of group threat generally focuses on the large social salient groups within a society, such as ethnic and racial groups, tribes, genders, and religions; however, it can theoretically occur among smaller groups such as families, provided that the conditions pertaining to group threat are met. There are two preconditions for group threats. First, for there to be a group threat, the threat must be to the group and not to individual group members. This means that the group must have a distinct identity that exists independently from the identities of individual group members; otherwise the group could not be threatened. The condition is easily met for large groups such as racial and ethnic groups, because group membership is socially salient and reified independently from group members. Group affiliation influences actors' lives and life chances, regardless of whether actors want them to or not. This condition is harder to meet for smaller groups, because it requires that a group is an entity in its own right, not solely a collection of its members. For instance, for kinship groups this is a distinction between the family and The Family.

The second characteristic of group threat is that it is inherently relational, meaning that it involves the comparison of the in-group with an out-group. A group

cannot be threatened unless another group is posing a threat. In the context of race relations the most frequently considered threat relationship is blacks threatening whites. Whether it is the entire group posing the threat or only one or two group members is irrelevant. What matters is the perception that “they” are threatening “us.” If one or two out-group members are seen as group representatives, then it is the entire group posing the threat, not the individuals per se.

All four classes of group threat are discussed in the literature (table 1.1). The most frequently discussed threats are those to a group’s social position. These include all situations where a group is concerned about its place in the social hierarchy (Blumer 1958; Bobo 1999; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996), as well as competition for political, social, and economic resources (Beck and Tolnay 1990; Blalock 1967; Bréchon and Mitra 1992; D'Alessio et al. 2002; Olzak 1990). Competition is categorized with threats to social position because they both relate to status. Resources are symbols of status and group competition is generally viewed as a zero-sum game for resources – the in-group loses if the out-group wins (Bobo 1998; Bobo 1999; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). The in-group wants to maintain its access to resources, material or otherwise, so it will fight off any out-group that attempts to encroach on its territory.

Threats to goals and values occur when groups have conflicting objectives (Bobo 1988a) or when there are cultural clashes (Green, Abelson, and Garnett 1999). The former occurs when groups in the same arena have differing goals or agendas, even when the groups share the same values (Bobo 1988a). For instance, Democrats and Republicans both want what is best for the country, but they disagree on what that is and how to accomplish it. Cultural clashes occur when the in-group’s perceived way of life is threatened, particularly when this way of life is an aspect of the group’s identity. Green and his colleagues (1999) argue that this transpires “when an outgroup

acts, or threats to act, in a way that restricts the scope of the group's life space or makes the exercise of options within it difficult" (p. 453). For instance, they report that white supremacists are less comfortable than others around people who want to ban the confederate flag. Similarly the French conflict over the headscarf and other overt religious symbols centers around what it means to be French (Bréchon and Mitra 1992; Wyatt 2003), while the Klu Klux Klan of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century targeted those who represented moral degradation (Chalmers 1965).

The third type of threat relates to a group's need to be distinct from other groups. It occurs when the boundaries between groups begin to fade (or they are believed to be fading), so that it becomes difficult to differentiate the groups. Groups that want to maintain a unique identity will be threatened if they believe they are losing their distinctiveness. These groups need to be able to distinguish "us" from "them." It is this distinctiveness that helps define who they are and without it they "lose their *raison d'être*" (Jetten, Spears, and Manstead 1998, p. 1481). This situation is unique from the previous types of threat, because here threatened groups will strive to differentiate themselves in any way possible, even if it results in a negative differentiation (Maass et al. 2003).

Security and survival, the final form of group threat, is related to distinctiveness. Groups will be threatened if they fear for their existence or their safety. The former may occur because they face annihilation or the merging with another group. (It is the merging or blending of two groups that relates to group distinctiveness.) When two groups merge one of two things happens: either one group subsumes the other (and the identity with it) or the joint group has a unique identity of its own. Regardless, one or both groups lose their original identity and, for all intents and purposes, cease to exist. The other possibility is direct annihilation. Outright extermination is the most straight forward way to eliminate a group, but there are

others. One is the fear of “mongrolization” expressed by supremacists groups. The believed end result of “race-mixing” is the “pollution” of the gene pool to the extent that there are no remaining “pure bloods” and results in the death of the race (Ezekiel 2002; Perry 2001).

Along with survival are concerns about safety and security. The influx of a new group is often concomitant with fears about a spike in crime, especially when the newcomers are of lower status. The fear of crime is the same as described for individual threat, except that the danger is broader, including a “breakdown of law and order” (Bréchon and Mitra 1992, p. 70). This is a fear frequently expressed by anti-immigration activists and rightwing political groups (Rydgren 2002) who strive to maintain community homogeneity.

All four of these scenarios demand that the group be salient and that group members have a strong sense of group identity. The group must be meaningful, otherwise actors would not identify with it, nor would there be a need to defend it. It is only meaningful groups for which actors perceive a threat and consider the group worth defending. Moreover, perception and reaction to group threat relate to strength of group identity. As Maass and her colleagues (2003) note, “threat to an in-group should mainly affect those who are highly identified with that particular group” (p. 855). If an actor does not have a strong group identity then even if she perceives a threat, she has little incentive to react to it.

*Importance of Differentiating Individual Threat and Group Threat.* Individual and group threats are similar and sometimes difficult to differentiate, but they are fundamentally distinct. The threats are different because they are born out of different circumstances. Perception of an individual threat emerges from an actor’s personal experiences and make-up, such as her “disposition,” “personality,” and “social

experiences” (Blumer 1958, p. 3). Group threat, in contrast, develops out of group relations. The relationships between groups and their social positioning involve a collective process (Blumer 1958), not an individual one. This distinction is the core reason why individual threat and group threat are fundamentally different and why it is important to distinguish between them.

The need to differentiate the threats goes beyond their origin; because individual threat and group threat have different roots, their resolution may require very different strategies. To use an inequality analogy, the factors causing the poverty of an individual family may be very different from the large scale poverty of a group. Individuals can be helped by aid packages and outreach programs, but addressing group level poverty is likely to require structural change. The same is true with threat and bias. Bias related to individual factors may be moderated through reeducation programs such as those discussed by Levin and McDevitt (1993) for some hate crime perpetrators. However, such tactics are insufficient for eliminating group level bias; different strategies are required.

Although the literatures identify two types of threat, actual studies tend to focus on only one of the two. For instance, within the gender and sexuality literature gender identity arguments concentrate on individual threat (Toller, Suter, and Trautman 2004), while in the race literature individual threat is the focus of economic deprivation approaches (Bonacich 1972) and pollution arguments (Glaser et al. 2002), and group threat is the focus of arguments such as Blumer’s group position model (Blumer 1958) and Blalock’s power threat hypothesis (Blalock 1957). There are a couple of perspectives in the gender and sexuality literatures that consider both types of threat simultaneously (Connell 1987). However, although these discussions postulate the existence of both threats, there are no discussions of the relationship between the threats or whether the threats occur jointly or singly.

With two possible threats and two options for each threat (not threatened and threatened), there are four potential threat combinations (see figure 1.1). The first scenario is that neither threat is relevant. In other words, the actor perceives neither an individual threat nor a group threat. The second option is that the actor perceives an individual threat, but not a group threat. One way this might occur is if cheaper immigrant labor enters a market and native workers fear they might lose their jobs, but they are not anxious about the jobs of native workers in general. However, if the native manager is concerned about the native workers losing their jobs, even though her own job is not at risk, then there is a group threat without an individual threat. When native actors fear for their own jobs (or those of specific individuals) as well as the jobs of native workers generally, then the two threats are operating simultaneously.

		Group Threat	
		No threat	Threat
Individual Threat	No threat	Neither threat	Group threat
	Threat	Individual threat	Both threats

**Figure 1.1. Possible threat combinations**

**RESEARCH MOTIVATION**

This research project is motivated by the question of how threat is related to bias. That such an association exists is evident for racial bias and theorized in the gender and sexuality literatures; however the nature of the relationship between threat and bias is less apparent. In particular, it is unclear whether threat functions at the

individual level, group level, or both levels simultaneously. Furthermore, if both threats are associated with bias, it is important to know if there is a relationship between the two threats.

These issues are pertinent for both scholars of bias and policy makers interested in promoting equality. The goal of bias research is to understand the mechanisms associated with bigotry. Furthermore, scholars need to know what covariates to include in their analyses, since model misspecification can lead to faulty results that overstate (or understate) the effects of certain measures and lead to erroneous conclusions. For policy makers, more accurate information about the factors associated with bias will help them better draft and pass legislation promoting equality. By knowing whether one or both threats are associated with bias, legislators can anticipate the concerns of their constituents and opponents, which should improve the odds that the legislation is passed. Furthermore, properly identifying associated forms of threat may be key to successfully reducing bias.

## OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this research is to examine individual threat and group threat in concert to determine if one or both threats are associated with group specific policy attitudes. Also of interest is whether there is a relationship between the two threats. Finally, the project aims to help bridge the gap between various sociological subfields, by considering the same question in three contexts. These three goals are accomplished by considering three types of bias: sexism, racism, and heterosexism. Each is examined individually and the separate results are later considered together. Within each analysis the relationship between policy attitudes and threat are assessed for the threats individually and jointly.

## APPROACH

The three cases of sexism, racism, and heterosexism were selected because of their unique position in U.S. social relations and the American sociological tradition. The ugly history of U.S. race relations has deservedly led race to be one of the foremost research subjects for U.S. sociologists. No study of bias in the United States is complete without a discussion of race. Gender, like race, is a major area of research for students of inequality. Moreover, gender inequality is of international interest (Charles and Grusky 2004; Grusky and Charles 2001; Vrugt and Nauta 1995). Heterosexism has not received the same level of attention as either racism or sexism. However, equal treatment of minorities is the current civil rights battleground, following in the footsteps of the women's suffrage movement, the civil rights movement, and the new feminist movement. These three types of bias were selected because of their current and historical significance, but this in no way implies that they are the only forms of bias worth studying. (The possibility of extending this analysis to other types of bias is discussed in the final chapter.)

### *Research Method*

The relationship between policy attitudes and threat is assessed using survey data. There is a rich history of using survey data to assess attitudes (Alwin et al. 1992; Huber and Spitze 1981; Huddy, Neely, and Lafay 2000; Lewis 2003; Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985; Schuman et al. 1997; Spitze and Waite 1981; Steeh and Krysan 1996; Stouffer 1955; Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983; Yang 1997). Surveys are commonly used in the racial prejudice literature to examine threat and attitudes (Bobo 1983, 1988a, 1998; Kluegel and Bobo 2001; Quillian 1996) and not infrequently used in other areas of attitudinal research (Konrad and Hartmann 2001; Semyonov et al. 2004; Wilson 2001), due at least in part to the quality of data available on racial

attitudes and the length of time these questions have been asked. Moreover, the surveys frequently utilized have large nationally representative samples, so the results are generalizable. These reasons, along with the availability of measures for two of the three analyses, motivated the decision to use survey data for this project.

Where the survey approach poses problems is for the heterosexism analysis, because there are no existing surveys with all of the necessary measures, and for assessments of causality. The absence of existing data means that the heterosexism analysis can employ any methodological approach. However, because the race and gender analyses use survey data it makes sense to also use survey data for the heterosexism analysis.

The nature of the available survey data makes it impossible to infer whether threat leads to policy opposition or if policy opposition increases perceptions of threat. Consequently, the most this analysis can do is indicate whether there is an association between threat and policy opposition. An ideal way to address causality would be to employ an experimental design. With an experiment the researcher could manipulate scenarios to explore the directionality of the policy attitudes-threat relationship. Moreover, an experiment could assess the impact of group identity on perceptions of threat and policy views (although this could have been done with a survey had the appropriate questions been asked). However, experiments could not offer the generalizability of a national survey, nor do they have the same historical foundation as surveys in the study of threat and attitudes.

### *Analysis*

This research considers attitudes towards women, blacks, and sexual minorities. Blacks were chosen as the racial group of interest because they are the lowest status and least popular racial group (Charles 2001) and therefore the racial

group likely to generate the strongest threat. The three analyses are as similar as possible to enable comparisons across the groups. All three studies utilize virtually identical background measures and employ ordered logistic and multinomial logistic regressions, with differing outcome measures and threats. The greatest difference among the three portions of the project is that the gender and race assessments utilize the same large nationally representative survey (albeit different years), while the sexual orientation study relies on a convenience sample of college students. Each analysis uses attitudes towards relevant policies as outcome measures, measures of both individual threat and group threat, and a range of background controls. The general procedure is based on studies of the relationship between threat and racial attitudes (Bobo 1988a; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Kluegel and Bobo 2001; Quillian 1996).

The gender and race analyses are conducted using the General Social Survey (GSS), a nationally representative survey of English speaking U.S. residents, at least 18 years old. Attitudes towards policies aimed at promoting gender equity are the outcome measures for the gender study, while attitudes towards policies aimed at promoting racial equity are the outcome measures for the race analysis. Threat measures assess perceptions of the impact of the women's movement on individuals and men (for the gender paper) and perceptions of white job security and stability (for the race paper).

The sexual orientation analysis relies on a different dataset, because neither the GSS nor any other available dataset includes appropriate measures of individual and group threats. Furthermore, there is no known questionnaire that includes the necessary threat measures as well as attitudinal measures vis-à-vis sexual minorities. Consequently, a questionnaire was developed and administered to undergraduate students at an elite Northeastern university. Unlike the other two analyses, the results

from this study are not generalizable; however, they should provide an indication of whether the trends identified with gender and racial attitudes may carry over to college students' opinions regarding sexual minorities.

Each paper begins by considering how the relevant literatures treat threat and bias. They then each examine the same four hypotheses that describe the possible relationships between individual threat, group threat, and biased attitudes. The race analysis employs the same approach as the gender and sexual orientation analyses, because although the association between threat and racial/ethnic bias is well documented (Bobo 1983; Bobo 1999; Quillian 1995, 1996; Semyonov et al. 2004; Verberk, Scheepers, and Felling 2002), none of the studies reporting this result included both types of threat.

The results confirm the link between feelings of threat and negative views of the out-group. Although an association between threat and attitudes has been demonstrated for race, it has only begun to be verified for gender (Maass et al. 2003), and to my knowledge, this is the first confirmation for sexual orientation. All three analyses further demonstrate that individual threat and group threat are both associated with opposition to policies aiding the subordinate group.

In the final chapter the analyses are reconsidered to see what trends emerge across all three scenarios. Possible explanations are presented for some of the findings. The implications for the theoretical models are also considered. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future research directions.

## CHAPTER 2

### THREAT AND SEXISM: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF THREAT IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Fear of losing access to privileges is a key component in explaining opposition to gender equalizing policies. For centuries men and women have held different and distinct roles. Men were full participants in society – they held jobs; owned property; controlled financial resources; and participated in the political process, from voting, to holding office, to writing and enacting legislation. Even beyond their rights, men had freedom. Women, in contrast, were not only secondary to men, but belonged to them. Women were relegated to the home and appropriate social functions (Jackson 1998). Prior to marriage, some women worked outside the home. After marriage, the only women in the labor force were those “unfortunate enough” to be in situations where their men could not adequately provide for the family (Ferree and Hess 1994). These women, like most working women, were relegated to specific female “appropriate” jobs and paid accordingly (i.e., significantly less than men) (Ferree and Hess 1994; Rosen 2000). This male dominated world likely led many men (and probably some women) to believe that men were entitled to certain privileges, whether those privileges were specific occupations, political power, or control over women.

The women's movement helped alter the situation. Women fought for and won the vote, eating into the complete political power of men. Women also began entering the labor force in larger numbers and many who would previously have left upon marriage opted to stay (Ferree and Hess 1994). With increasing credentials and legislation barring discrimination on the basis of gender, the job options available to women expanded (Goldin 2002), further eroding the system of male domination and privilege.

Women's gains in social and political freedom meant that men were losing their exclusive privileges. Men who felt entitled to unlimited access to occupations, political power, and other advantages now had to endure the encroachment of women. Men seeking to protect their privileges routinely employed such tactics as barring women from entering certain professions, restricting women's opportunities for professional advancement, and discouraging women from remaining in an organization (Goldin 2002). Although many of these practices have been banned, practices intended to exclude women remain pervasive, even if less blatant (Ferree and Hess 1994; Padavic and Reskin 1990; Ridgeway 1997; Uggen and Blackstone 2004).

One explanation as to why antagonism towards women remains prevalent is threat. A changing sociopolitical environment is threatening to those who feel the changes will have negative consequences for them or a group to which they belong. When people feel threatened they have a tendency to try and protect themselves, and they do so by attacking the perceived source of the threat (Maass et al. 2003). In the case of changing gender roles, women, particularly feminist women, are likely viewed as a source of threat to men.

Drawing on the masculinity and gender role identity literatures, this paper systematically examines the relationship between gender based threat and opposition to policies promoting gender equity in the workplace. The expectation is that people who perceive a threat directed at them or a group to which they belong will oppose any policy aimed at helping the group believed to be posing the threat. Such a relationship has been theorized, but it has yet to be fully tested empirically.

The paper also decomposes threat into its components of individual threat and group threat. The analysis considers the threats individually and together to see whether one or both threats are associated with racial policy attitudes. As the name implies, individual threat occurs when a person feels that he or she is being personally

threatened, such as the fear that economic competition will lead to loss of one's job or a decline in the job's prestige (e.g., Banton 1983; Bonacich 1972; Olzak 1992; Ridgeway 1997) or the concern that one's behavior does not conform to prescribed gender roles (e.g., Connell 1995; Hopkins 1996; West and Zimmerman 1987) and may lead to harassment (Uggen and Blackstone 2004). In contrast, group threat occurs when someone feels that a group to which he or she belongs is being threatened, even if the individual him or herself will not be harmed. For instance, the fear that economic competition will lead to a decline in the dominant group's status (e.g., Blalock 1957; Goldin 2002; Kimmel 2004), or the concern that acceptance of nontraditional types of masculinity (e.g., effeminate males) will cause men to lose their position of dominance (Hopkins 1996). The decomposition of threat and the focus on attitudes towards gender equalizing policies distinguish this paper from others in the field.

The analysis is conducted using the General Social Survey (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 2003), a nationally representative sample, with attitudes towards policies aimed at promoting gender equity as the outcome measures. Threat measures assess perceptions of the impact of the women's movement on individuals and men as a whole. This procedure of using policy attitudes as outcome measures and threat as independent measures is similar to that often used to examine the relationship between threat and racial attitudes (Bobo 1988a; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Kluegel and Bobo 2001; Quillian 1996). The paper begins by determining if there is a relationship between threat and attitudes towards women. Once such an association has been established, the components of individual and group threat are examined in depth to explore which threat has the stronger affiliation with attitudes and whether there is a connection between the two types of threat.

## BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

The gender literature contains two sets of arguments that discuss the impact of threat on attitudes and behavior. Masculinity arguments focus primarily on the behavior and attitudes of men. In contrast, gender role identity arguments are concerned with explaining why some people espouse traditional gender roles, while others do not. Interest arguments present a nonthreat based alternative, asserting that people makes decisions based on what is in their best interest. While differing in many respects, these accounts suggest that feelings of threat are often associated with negative feelings towards the group posing the threat.

One of the core concepts of the current Western approach to masculinity is the differentiation of the masculine and the feminine. In logical terms, to be male is to be not female (Connell 1995; Hopkins 1996). If a man embodies feminine traits, then his manhood is in doubt (an individual level threat). Furthermore, when a man does not embody all of the prescribed traits of masculinity, his masculinity will similarly be questioned (Connell 1987). For this reason, some men are particularly sensitive to any behavior that does not exemplify the masculine ideal. When these men find themselves in a situation in which their masculinity is questioned, they will fight to protect their manhood. Similarly, men concerned about their masculinity must be careful not to express views of women that might be interpreted as “siding with the enemy” and betraying their own gender.

The concept of group threat appears primarily in connection to threats to the gender power structure and in particular, what Connell (1987; 1995) terms “hegemonic masculinity.” The prevailing power structure has men atop the hierarchy; if the power structure is threatened, men risk losing their privileged position and all the benefits inherent in it. Two of the most notable instances of threats to men as a group are first, women vying for equal rights and equal treatment, thereby eroding

men's dominance over women, the economy, and political power (Connell 1995; Kimmel 1996) and second, greater acceptance of nontraditional forms of masculinity, making it harder to identify the "real men" and ascertain who deserves the privileges of masculinity (Connell 1987; Hopkins 1996). In one of the few tests of the relevance of group threat to men's behavior, Maass and her colleagues (2003) conclude that men exposed to a threat to the system of male dominance are more likely to respond with hostility than men not exposed to the threat.

One of the limitations of masculinity arguments is that they offer few predictions for women's reactions. What they do offer suggests that women who embody the traditional ideal of femininity, what Connell (1987) terms "emphasized femininity," may resent women whose actions diminish the position of the traditional woman. Being in the presence of nontraditional forms of femininity may make traditional women feel that their individual lifestyle choice is under attack or that the "proper role" of women as mothers and wives is being subverted. This tension is especially evident in the conflict appropriately called the "Mommy Wars."

A similar but potentially more intuitive way to predict women's attitudes is by using a nonthreat based interest model. This approach is akin to threat based arguments, but considers the question from the opposite direction. Instead of following the threat based paradigm where people oppose policies benefiting group they believe pose a threat, interest based models assert that people support policies from which they will benefit (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004; Kane 1995) and, conversely, oppose policies which will be detrimental (Kane and Sanchez 1994). Using this logic, employed women should support policies to improve the position of women in the labor force, while unemployed women with working husbands should oppose such policies.

While interest and threat based models yield similar conclusions, the threat based approach has a couple of advantages for this particular project. First, masculinity scholars highlight group level factors as vital to opinions about out-groups, which suggests that group level factors deserve consideration. Second, for interest based arguments group interests are closely tied to individual interests. An actor may advocate her group's interests when those interests are in accord with her personal interests. This approach does not accommodate the separation of group interests from individual interests, and it does not consider groups in their own right.

The argument espoused by Toller and her colleagues (2004) is similar to the masculinity and interest based perspectives. They contend that people's views on women's behavior conform to their own gender identity. So "masculine" men and "feminine" women support traditional gender roles and oppose nontraditional ones, as nontraditional roles threaten what it means for them to be men or women. For instance, women are traditionally considered to be meek and subservient (Rudman and Glick 2001). An assertive woman embodies masculine traits, not feminine ones, thus threatening a masculine man's sense of masculinity and a feminine woman's sense of femininity. In contrast, feminine men and masculine women should support nontraditional gender roles so that their behavior and ideology are in accord.

These arguments agree that a threat to an individual may lead to hostility towards women (in masculinity and interest arguments) or women who are different (in the case of Toller et al.'s argument). This leads to the first set of hypotheses:

H1: There is an association between feelings of threat and holding negative views of women.

More precisely, all three arguments discuss the relevance of individual level threat.

H1<sub>M</sub>: Men who feel personally threatened will express negative views of women.

H1<sub>w</sub>: Women who feel personally threatened will express negative views of the women posing the threat.

The hypotheses with respect to group threat are not as obvious, since the gender role identity argument does not incorporate group threat and masculinity arguments focus primarily only on men. According to masculinity arguments, men who experience a sense of group threat should be hostile towards women, but what about women? Connell's (1987) argument suggests that women who display emphasized femininity will be antagonistic towards women embodying other forms female behavior. When considered with the individual level gender role identity argument, the arguments yield the following predictions:

H1<sub>M</sub>: Men who experience a sense of group threat will be hostile towards women.

H1<sub>gw</sub>: Women who feel that the status of women is changing in a negative way will be hostile to those women posing the threat (i.e., pushing for change).

The next obvious question is which threat is stronger? In other words, if someone feels that both he (or she) as an individual is being threatened and that men (or women) as a group are being threatened which threat will have the stronger association with his (or her) views of women. This is not a question that can be directly addressed by either the masculinity or gender role literatures. However, the racial threat literature can provide some insight. For instance, Blumer (1958) argues that "race prejudice exists basically in a sense of group position rather than in a set of feelings which members of one racial group have towards members of another racial group" (p. 3). Moreover, when group identification is strong, group perspectives will dominate individual ones, because "to act contrary to [the group position] is to risk a feeling of self-alienation and to face the possibility of ostracism" (Blumer 1958, p. 5).

In other words, when dealing with prejudice, group level feelings are often more powerful than individual level ones. If this holds true for gender related attitudes, then:

H2: Feelings of group threat will have a stronger association with negative views of women than will feelings of individual level threat.

This should apply equally to men and women.

### *Threat and Gender*

The hypotheses discussed deal with threat in the abstract, but they do not identify the domains where gender threats are most likely to emerge. One domain where the hypotheses should hold is the labor force, which is a traditionally male bastion forced to absorb an influx of female workers.<sup>1</sup> For the past century, women's labor force participation has been increasing, but where once the majority of middle-class working women left upon marriage rarely to return, many are now opting to remain employed (Ferree and Hess 1994; Jackson 1998). Consequently, the range of jobs available to women has widened, especially in areas requiring extensive training. For men, the result is not only greater job competition, but also the potential discomfort of working with women presumed to be their equals (Kanter 1993). Concurrently, there is also the possibility that the influx of women into an occupation will result in a drop in the occupation's prestige, and consequently the prestige of men in that occupation (Goldin 2002).

The increase in women's labor force participation means that fewer women are devoting themselves to full-time childrearing. Those women who opt to stay home may feel that their work is being devalued by employed women who believe that

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<sup>1</sup> A similar argument can be applied to the realm of higher education, where women now outnumber men (Peter, Horn, and Carroll 2005) and there are policies in place to ensure equal treatment (e.g., Title IX). However, as the measures available for this analysis relate to employment, I will leave the subject of education for a future discussion. (I thank Shelley Correll for raising this point.)

homemakers are lazy, because they are not living up to their potential (Hirshman 2006; Rindfuss, Brewster, and Kavee 1996; Rosen 2000). Alternatively, nonemployed women may feel that they are looked down upon by employed women for adopting a traditional role and not advancing women's social position (Hirshman 2006).

Given women's increasing participation in the paid labor market, it is reasonable for some people to be concerned about how all of the changes will impact their status and that of their gender as a whole. The anxiety that these people feel may be narrowly focused, such as personal fear of job loss, or may be broader, such as a reaction to an event that is believed to have altered or be altering the labor market. One example of just such an event is the women's movement. The women's movement is often credited with opening up the labor market to women (Rosen 2000). Women (particularly those in the middle-class) are now increasingly encouraged to enter and remain in the labor force, obtain necessary credentialing, and pursue professions not previously open to them. The women's movement has also increased awareness of gender inequality and spurred programs to rectify the inequities (e.g., Rosen 2000). Although some people question the extent of the impact of the women's movement on the expansion of women's economic opportunities (Jackson 1998), many nonetheless perceive the women's movement to be largely responsible for women's greater participation in the labor force. Therefore, many people may believe that the women's movement posed or continues to pose a threat to their individual welfare or that of their gender.

### *Data and Methods*

This paper relies on data from the General Social Survey (GSS) (Davis et al. 2003). Using a national probability sample of households the GSS provides information generalizable to the non-institutionalized U.S. population (residing in

country) 18 years old and older. In order to address a wide range of topics, the GSS does not ask all questions every year and within a year not all respondents are asked the same questions. The questions relevant to this analysis were only asked in 1996 (the response rate was 76%). In this year, the sample was divided into two panels, which were then divided into thirds (for a total of six sets of respondents) (Davis et al. 2003). Both of the relevant outcome variables for this analysis were asked to one panel and two thirds of the panel received both outcome measures. The sample used here is restricted to these respondents (N = 725). (The third of the panel that received only one of the questions is excluded from the analysis.) This ensures that any differences emerging from the models are due to the measures included in the models, and not a function of different respondents.

#### *Policy Questions (Outcome Variables)*

Today, many consider it socially unacceptable to voice opinions deemed prejudicial. In the context of gender relations, this means that people can no longer say that women are inferior or that the workplace belongs to men, even if they personally hold such beliefs. A socially acceptable way to circumvent this normative pressure is to express opposition to policies aimed at promoting gender equality. In other words, people with negative views about women should oppose policies aimed at helping women in the labor force.

However, it is not only those who hold negative views towards women who reject gender equalizing policies, but also those who believe that the government should not be involved or that the policies are inherently unfair (either because they advantage one group over another or because they violate ideals of equality). However, Kinder and Sanders (1996) found that these factors had only a modest

association with attitudes towards employment policies targeting blacks.<sup>2</sup> Even though the group of people opposed to policies aimed at gender equity is larger than the group of interest here, attitudes towards these policies are still good starting points for assessing gender hostility. Furthermore, there is precedent for this approach as studies in both the sexism and racism literatures have used attitudes towards policies as outcome measures (Bobo 1983; Sears et al. 1979; Sears et al. 1997; Swim et al. 1995).

In 1996 two questions were asked about opinions towards gender based affirmative action. The first is in a reverse discrimination frame and says, “Some people say that because of past discrimination, women should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion is wrong because it discriminates against men. What about your opinion – are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of women?” The second question asks whether the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement: “Because of past discrimination, employers should make special efforts to hire and promote qualified women” (*special efforts*). The question in the reverse discrimination frame was reverse coded so that it has responses ranging from 1 to 4, with higher numbers representing support; it has a mean of 1.88 and a standard deviation of 1.07. In contrast, the latter question is on a five point scale (again it was reverse coded so that higher numbers indicate policy support), with a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 1.27 (table 2.1). In both cases, men express greater opposition to the policies than do women. Although in the reverse discrimination context the greatest number of respondents (50%) express strong opposition to gender based affirmative action, men

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<sup>2</sup> Kinder and Sanders (1996) examined equality rather than fairness per se, the idea being that people who believe in equality should support policies aimed at promoting equality. The converse is that people who are comfortable with inequality should oppose such policies, because they give the targeted group an unfair advantage in getting positions. Alternatively, one could argue that people who support the idea of equality should oppose preferential policies because they give one group an unfair advantage.

are particularly opposed, (the majority of men not only oppose, but strongly oppose, 53%). Reaction to affirmative action when presented as special efforts is more dispersed, with the greatest proportion of men evenly split between supporting (agree) and opposing (disagree) affirmative action. In contrast, women are more inclined to support affirmative action. It is apparent, even without further analyses, that the reverse discrimination frame garners more opposition than the special efforts frame.

These preliminary findings are consistent with expectations based on the literature on affirmative action frames. Although the majority of work on affirmative action has been devoted to race based policies, research has consistently found that the level of support for these programs, as well as gender based ones, varies significantly depending on the way in which the questions are phrased (Fine 1992; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Swain 2001; Terkildsen and Schnell 1997). A question's frame<sup>3</sup> highlights specific factors while downplaying others, influencing how the audience perceives the situation. Slight differences in wording can have dramatic effects on both the overall level of policy support and on who supports it (Kinder and Sanders 1996).

The two frames employed by the questions of interest are a reverse discrimination frame and a special efforts frame. The first question is in a reverse discrimination frame, which has respondents decide whether it is acceptable to reduce gender inequality by preferentially hiring and promoting women, possibly leading to discrimination against men. In other words, it asks if past discrimination should be rectified if reverse discrimination might result. The question's targeting of men (they would be the victims of reverse discrimination) and Fine's (1992) research on race

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<sup>3</sup> Gamson and Modigliani (1987) define a frame as "a cultural organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them" (p. 143).

**Table 2.1. Descriptive Statistics (Weighted) for Variables Used in the Analysis, by Sex**

	Total (N=725)		Male (N=319)		Female (N=406)	
Reverse discrimination	1.88	(1.07)	1.81	(1.04)	1.93 <sup>c</sup>	(1.09)
Strongly oppose (%)	49.77		52.59		47.31	
Oppose (%)	27.19		25.73		28.47	
For (%)	8.69		9.39		8.07	
Strongly for (%)	14.35		12.30		16.15	
Special efforts	3.19	(1.27)	3.01	(1.28)	3.35 <sup>c</sup>	(1.25)
Strongly disagree (%)	10.12		11.97		8.50	
Disagree (%)	27.42		31.88		23.51	
Neither (%)	10.73		11.49		10.06	
Agree (%)	36.56		32.04		40.51	
Strongly agree (%)	15.18		12.62		17.42	
Sense of individual threat (mean)	0.06	(0.24)	0.08 <sup>a</sup>	(0.27)	0.04	(0.20)
Sense of threat to men (mean)	0.34	(0.48)	0.31	(0.46)	0.38 <sup>d</sup>	(0.49)
Female (%)	53.32		0.00		100.00	
Age (mean)	43.73	(16.21)	43.21	(16.42)	44.18	(16.03)
Political views (mean)	4.27	(1.38)	4.30 <sup>a</sup>	(1.40)	4.23	(1.36)
Educational attainment (mean)	13.48	(2.73)	13.49	(2.88)	13.48	(2.60)
None or some high school (%)	16.16		17.80		14.73	
High school graduate (%)	29.15		27.18		30.88	
Some college (%)	27.95		27.99		27.90	
College graduate (%)	13.52		11.97		14.87	
Graduate school (%)	13.22		15.05		11.61	
Income (mean in thousands \$US)	12.64	(10.62)	15.35 <sup>b</sup>	(10.47)	10.28	(10.19)
Region of residence						
South (%)	34.89		32.69		36.83	
Midwest (%)	25.91		26.86		25.07	
Other (%)	39.20		40.45		38.10	
Race						
White (%)	83.01		85.44 <sup>a</sup>		80.88	
Black (%)	12.39		10.19		14.31	
Latino (%)	4.61		4.37		4.82	
Religion						
Black Protestant (%)	9.21		6.63		11.47 <sup>c</sup>	
Mainline Protestant (%)	20.32		21.20		19.55	
Evangelical Protestant (%)	25.98		23.46		28.19	
Catholic (%)	25.98		25.89		26.06	
Jewish (%)	2.27		2.10		2.41	
Other religion (%)	6.87		8.90		5.10	
No religion (%)	9.37		11.81 <sup>a</sup>		7.22	
Attendance weekly (%)	26.74		23.79		29.32 <sup>c</sup>	
Marital status						
Married (%)	57.93		59.22		56.80	
Never married (%)	21.22		25.73 <sup>a</sup>		17.28	
Previously married (%)	20.85		15.05		25.92 <sup>c</sup>	
Employment						
Employed (%)	68.13		76.70 <sup>b</sup>		60.62	
Spouse employed (%)	40.79		33.50		47.17 <sup>d</sup>	

*Note:* Standard deviations in parentheses. All t-tests are one-tailed.

- a. Men significantly greater than women at  $p < .05$       d. Women significantly greater than men at  $p < .01$   
b. Men significantly greater than women at  $p < .001$       e. Women significantly greater than men at  $p < .001$   
c. Women significantly greater than men at  $p < .05$

leads us to expect that men will express greater opposition to this question than will women. The second question does not have a commonly utilized frame. It asks if an employer should make a special effort to hire and promote women. Through this phrasing it avoids the suggestion of giving women preferential treatment or harming men. Given the relative innocuousness of the question, it is reasonable to expect that it will garner greater support than the former question and that it will activate fewer feelings of threat. In other words, threat is less likely to be associated with responses to this question than the question on reverse discrimination.

### *Methods*

Given the categorical nature of the outcome variables, ordered logistical regression is employed. The analyses are restricted to respondents answering all of the relevant questions; other respondents are dropped from the sample (i.e., listwise deletion). The questions included have response rates of greater than or equal to 93%. As the analyses are conducted at the individual level, all of the models presented are weighted to adjust for the sampling design which was conducted at the household level (using the “adults” measure). The coefficients for the independent variables are standardized, in order to compare the relative impact of the measures.

### *Independent Variables*

*Threat.* The threat questions for the 1996 survey relate to reactions to the women’s movement.<sup>4</sup> The first question asks about the impact of the women’s movement on the respondent’s life: “We’d like your views on how the women’s

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<sup>4</sup> The GSS includes an alternative set of measures that appears to better assess employment based gender threat. However, the number of respondents to these questions is dramatically lower (N = 137 for men and N = 192 for women), resulting in a sample size less than half as large as that available with the measures used and with a significantly different sample composition.

movement has affected certain groups. For each group I name, please tell me whether you think the women's movement has improved their lives, made their lives worse, or had no effect on their lives: You, yourself.” When a respondent, male or female, reveals that the women’s movement has hurt them, it is indicative of an individual level threat, which would provide support for a self-interest motivated model. In contrast, the second question asks if respondents feel that the women’s movement has hurt men as a whole. This question is identical to the first question, with the exception that “you, yourself” is replaced with “men.” It thus implies a threat to men’s group position. Because this question identifies men as victims of the women’s movement, people who perceive a threat to men may be more likely to oppose helping women when doing so would further harm men. Unfortunately, there is no question asking if the women’s movement hurt women as a whole. The absence of a group threat measure for women is not ideal; however, even a preliminary understanding of women’s reactions may yield insights into how to better craft gender related policies and foster support for those policies.

The two variables are recoded so that 1 represents those who feel that the women’s movement hurt them or hurt men (“made life worse”), while 0 includes all other responses (“improved life” and “had no effect”). The levels are collapsed in this way because the study’s aim is to understand whether people who feel threatened have different attitudes than people who do not identify a threat. In other words, do people who perceive a negative impact of the women’s movement have different attitudes than people who feel that the women’s movement either improved their life or had no impact on it? Overall, slightly less than a third of men perceive the women’s movement to be harmful to men (31%), while less than a tenth feel that they have been personally harmed (8%) (table 2.1). Furthermore, of those men who see a threat, 20% see a threat to both themselves and men generally. Of those who identify a threat,

almost all (95%) identify a group threat. For men, the two types of threat have a strong association (odds ratio = 12.53), which suggests that they might operate similarly. More precisely, of the 8% of men who feel personally threatened, 82% also identify a threat to men as a whole. In the reverse situation, of the 31% of men who identify a group threat, only 21% also feel personally threatened. The association is weaker for women (odds ratio = 3.00). The descriptive statistics indicate that although few respondents feel that the women's movement has had a negative impact on them personally, more believe that men are negatively impacted. It is interesting to note that women are significantly more likely than men to see the women's movement as having a negative impact on men.

*Background Measures.* The analyses include a wide variety of background and social controls that have been routinely employed in studies of gender attitudes. These measures cover the spectrum of factors that scholars have found to be associated with attitudes towards gender roles and which therefore may impact the association between the threat and policy measures. The measures include: age, education, income, political conservatism, region, race, religious affiliation and frequency of religious attendance, marital status, gender, and own and spouse's employment status (table 2.1).

Age and education are measured continuously, along with their squared terms to account for possible threshold effects (Harris and Firestone 1998). Contrary to what one might guess, age is not correlated with reactions to the women's movement (i.e., age is not correlated with either individual or group threat).

Income is the respondent's income and is right censored at \$25,000. People who are unemployed or who report a negative income are recoded as having an

income of \$500, the lowest income level in the analysis. The natural logarithm of income is used in the models.

Political views are on a seven point scale from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7). The mean is slightly above 4, indicating that the sample contains a fairly even balance of political viewpoints. Political conservatism is generally expected to correspond with traditionalism, which is anticipated to occur here. However, initial indications are that this may not be the case, as political conservatism is only weakly correlated with opinions about affirmative action in either frame ( $r = .21$  for the reverse discrimination frame and  $r = .19$  for the special efforts frame). The associations between political conservatism and individual and group threat are similarly weak (point biserial correlations of  $.18$  and  $.16$  for individual and group threat, respectively).

Race is restricted to black non-Latino, white non-Latino, and Latino respondents (12%, 83%, and 5% respectively), with each recoded as a dummy variable. Whites are used as the reference group.

Both religious affiliation and frequent attendance at religious services are believed to be associated with traditional views (Thornton et al. 1983) and might interact with perceptions of threat. Following Steensland et al. (2000), religion is divided into seven categories: Black Protestants<sup>5</sup> (9%), mainline Protestants (20%), evangelical Protestants (26%), Catholics (26%), Jews (2%), other (7%), and none (9%). Mainline Protestants are used as the reference group. Attendance at religious services is dichotomized into those who attend religious services once a week or more (27%) versus those who attend less frequently (Brewster and Padavic 2000).

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<sup>5</sup> Steensland et al. (2000) discuss the impact of including both black and black Protestants in the same model and determine that collinearity is not a problem.

Southerners<sup>6</sup> (35%) are often thought more likely than others to adhere to conservative viewpoints (Sears et al. 1997; Smith 1981; Stouffer 1955), but in some instances living in the Midwest<sup>7</sup> (26%) may have an even greater impact (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004). Region is divided into these three categories (South, Midwest, and other), with other used as the reference category.

Marital status is broken down into three categories: never married, married, and previously married. For the majority of tests run, the attitudes of people who are widowed more closely resemble the attitudes of divorced or separated individuals than married people.

The final two measures are whether the respondent is employed outside the home (77% of men and 61% of women) and whether the respondent's spouse is employed outside the home (41%).<sup>8</sup> Men's attitudes may be influenced by their spouse's employment (Cassidy and Warren 1996). Men with working wives (34%) may appreciate the benefits afforded by a second income and thus favor increased occupational opportunities for women (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004). Alternatively, these men may be more influenced by the negative consequences that are concurrent with having a wife employed outside the home, such as fewer home cooked meals, a dirtier house, increased demands for his participation in household chores, and a less attentive spouse.

Although it would be ideal to include measures of fairness and perceptions of the government's appropriate role, it is not feasible. There is no indicator of fairness available for this survey year, and while there are indicators of government role, the

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<sup>6</sup> South consists of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

<sup>7</sup> Midwest is defined as Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

<sup>8</sup> Unmarried respondents are coded as not having an employed spouse (0). This follows the procedure of Peek and his colleagues (1991).

sample sizes are too small ( $n < 210$  for both men and women) to permit a detailed analysis.

## RESULTS

Table 2.2 contains the results from ordered logistic regressions of men's attitudes towards gender equalizing policies. Models 1 and 5 are baseline models that include all control measures and no threats; models 2 and 6 add individual threat; models 3 and 7 are the same as models 2 and 6, except that men's threat replaces individual threat; and tables 4 and 8 include both types of threat. Table 2.3 presents the same analyses for women. Interaction terms are only included when significant.

For men, the importance of threat is context specific – the framing of the question matters. Men exhibit both senses of group threat and personal threat when asked about affirmative action in the reverse discrimination frame (table 2, models 2 and 3). In other words, men who feel that the women's movement has hurt men as a whole are opposed to gender based affirmative action, as are men who feel that the women's movement has had a negative impact on their lives. The same does not hold true when the context is change to special efforts. In this situation, both men who believe that men are hurt by the women's movement (model 7) and men who believe they themselves are hurt (model 6) hold the same opinions as other men about aiding women in the workplace. The relative unimportance of the threats is further evidenced by the value of the coefficients, which are approaching zero.

The findings from the reverse discrimination models are as predicted by hypotheses  $H1_M$  and  $H1_{GM}$ , but the results from the special efforts models do not support the hypotheses. This disparity in the association between threat and attitudes towards the two response measures is dramatic, but not surprising given the threat questions and findings from previous research on affirmative action frames (e.g., Fine

1992; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Swain 2001; Terkildsen and Schnell 1997). Men who perceive a group threat may be primed to oppose helping women achieve greater success in the labor market. (It is also possible that the priming may work in the reverse direction. Unfortunately there is no way to determine the order in which the questions were asked.) Earlier studies have shown that “both the frequency of responses and choice of response options are affected by question wording” (Fine 1992, p. 323).

Results for women are not as clear cut (table 2.3). There is no indication that individual threat has any association with women’s attitudes, in either scenario (models 2 and 6). This is contrary to hypothesis H1<sub>w</sub>. Threat to men generates a somewhat different response. In the reverse discrimination context there is no association between believing that the women’s movement hurt men and attitudes towards gender equalizing policies (model 3); however, under the special efforts frame these women are more supportive of gender based affirmative action (model 7). It appears as though women who believe the women’s movement hurt men support policies to continue helping women, without directly hurting men. Overall, hypothesis 1 that there is an association between feelings of threat and holding negative views of women, receives support.

When the two threats are together, those threats that were significant in earlier models remain significant. For women in the special efforts scenario there is virtually no change in either the magnitude of the group threat measure or its level of significance (table 3, model 8). In contrast, for men under reverse discrimination, the magnitude of both threats declines (although the difference is not significant). Furthermore, the level of significance of both threats declines, such that they are only just significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

**Table 2.2. Standardized Coefficients from Ordered Logistic Regression of Men's Attitudes towards Affirmative Action**

	Reverse Discrimination (N = 319)							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
<i>Threat</i>								
Individual			-0.24**	(0.09)			-0.19*	(0.09)
Men					-0.26**	(0.09)	-0.20*	(0.10)
<i>Controls</i>								
<i>Political</i>								
conservative	-0.58***	(0.10)	-0.56***	(0.10)	-0.55***	(0.10)	-0.54***	(0.10)
Age	0.17	(0.10)	0.15	(0.10)	0.17	(0.10)	0.16	(0.10)
Education	-2.09**	(0.61)	-2.08**	(0.61)	-1.84**	(0.61)	-1.89**	(0.61)
Education <sup>2</sup>	1.77**	(0.60)	1.78**	(0.59)	1.52*	(0.60)	1.58**	(0.60)
Income (ln)	-0.25	(0.23)	-0.41	(0.24)	-0.35	(0.23)	-0.45	(0.24)
South	-0.10	(0.11)	-0.11	(0.11)	-0.06	(0.11)	-0.07	(0.11)
Midwest	-0.01	(0.10)	-0.01	(0.10)	-0.01	(0.10)	-0.01	(0.10)
Black	0.82***	(0.13)	0.87***	(0.13)	0.81***	(0.13)	0.85***	(0.13)
Latino	0.26**	(0.09)	0.23*	(0.09)	0.23*	(0.09)	0.22*	(0.09)
Black Prot.	-0.03	(0.13)	-0.06	(0.13)	0.00	(0.14)	-0.03	(0.14)
Evangel. Prot.	-0.27*	(0.11)	-0.24*	(0.12)	-0.26*	(0.12)	-0.24*	(0.12)
Catholic	0.08	(0.10)	0.10	(0.10)	0.08	(0.10)	0.09	(0.10)
Jewish	-0.09	(0.10)	-0.08	(0.11)	-0.09	(0.11)	-0.08	(0.11)
Other religion	-0.01	(0.09)	0.00	(0.09)	0.00	(0.09)	0.00	(0.09)
No religion	-0.02	(0.10)	-0.03	(0.10)	-0.03	(0.10)	-0.04	(0.10)
Weekly attend.	-0.01	(0.09)	-0.04	(0.10)	-0.03	(0.10)	-0.05	(0.10)
<i>Previously</i>								
married	-0.31*	(0.13)	-0.33**	(0.13)	-0.31*	(0.13)	-0.33**	(0.13)
Never married	-0.37**	(0.11)	-0.41***	(0.11)	-0.39***	(0.11)	-0.42***	(0.11)
Employed	0.17	(0.23)	0.30	(0.24)	0.26	(0.24)	0.34	(0.24)
Spouse empld.	-0.35**	(0.11)	-0.37**	(0.11)	-0.34**	(0.11)	-0.35**	(0.11)
<i>Cuts<sup>†</sup></i>								
so vs. o, f, sf	-0.05	(0.11)	-0.07	(0.11)	-0.04	(0.11)	-0.06	(0.11)
so, o, vs. f, sf	1.54	(0.13)	1.54	(0.13)	1.56	(0.13)	1.56	(0.13)
so, o, sf	2.44	(0.15)	2.45	(0.16)	2.47	(0.16)	2.47	(0.16)
Log likelihood	-611		-607		-607		-605	
df	20		21		21		22	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.15		.16		.16		.16	
BIC	-2601		-2602		-2602		-2600	

*Notes:* Positive values indicate support for the policy, negative values indicate opposition. Comparison groups are whites, other region, mainline Protestants, and married, for race, region, religion, and marital status, respectively. Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>†</sup> so = strongly oppose, o = oppose, f = for, sf = strongly for

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

**Table 2.2. Standardized Coefficients from Ordered Logistic Regression of Men's Attitudes towards Affirmative Action (continued)**

	Special Efforts (N = 319)							
	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model	
<i>Threat</i>								
Individual			0.00	(0.07)			0.01	(0.07)
Men					-0.07	(0.08)	-0.07	(0.08)
<i>Controls</i>								
<i>Political</i>								
conservative	-0.40***	(0.08)	-0.40***	(0.09)	-0.39***	(0.09)	-0.39***	(0.09)
Age	0.14	(0.09)	0.14	(0.09)	0.14	(0.09)	0.14	(0.09)
Education	-0.06	(0.08)	-0.06	(0.08)	-0.06	(0.08)	-0.06	(0.08)
Income (ln)	-0.61**	(0.23)	-0.61**	(0.24)	-0.63**	(0.23)	-0.62**	(0.24)
South	-0.08	(0.09)	-0.08	(0.09)	-0.07	(0.09)	-0.07	(0.09)
Midwest	0.02	(0.09)	0.02	(0.09)	0.02	(0.09)	0.02	(0.09)
Black	0.32**	(0.12)	0.32**	(0.12)	0.31**	(0.12)	0.31*	(0.12)
Latino	0.03	(0.08)	0.03	(0.08)	0.02	(0.08)	0.02	(0.08)
Black Prot.	0.10	(0.13)	0.10	(0.13)	0.11	(0.13)	0.11	(0.13)
Evangel. Prot.	0.08	(0.10)	0.08	(0.10)	0.08	(0.10)	0.07	(0.10)
Catholic	-0.07	(0.09)	-0.07	(0.09)	-0.07	(0.09)	-0.07	(0.09)
Jewish	-0.12	(0.10)	-0.12	(0.10)	-0.12	(0.10)	-0.12	(0.10)
Other religion	0.03	(0.07)	0.03	(0.07)	0.03	(0.07)	0.03	(0.07)
No religion	-0.03	(0.09)	-0.03	(0.09)	-0.03	(0.09)	-0.03	(0.09)
Weekly attend.	-0.19*	(0.08)	-0.19*	(0.08)	-0.19*	(0.08)	-0.20*	(0.08)
<i>Previously</i>								
married	-0.11	(0.11)	-0.11	(0.11)	-0.11	(0.11)	-0.11	(0.11)
Never married	-0.08	(0.10)	-0.08	(0.10)	-0.08	(0.10)	-0.08	(0.10)
Employed	0.40	(0.23)	0.41	(0.24)	0.42	(0.23)	0.41	(0.24)
Spouse empld.	-0.05	(0.10)	-0.05	(0.10)	-0.05	(0.10)	-0.04	(0.10)
<i>Cuts<sup>†</sup></i>								
sd vs. d, n, a, sa	-2.30	(0.14)	-2.30	(0.14)	-2.29	(0.14)	-2.29	(0.14)
sd, d, vs. n, a, sa	-0.42	(0.10)	-0.42	(0.10)	-0.41	(0.10)	-0.41	(0.10)
sd, d, n, vs. a, sa	0.10	(0.10)	0.10	(0.10)	0.10	(0.10)	0.10	(0.10)
sd, d, n, a vs. sa	1.99	(0.13)	1.99	(0.13)	1.99	(0.13)	1.99	(0.13)
Log likelihood	-882		-882		-881		-881	
df	19		20		20		21	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.04		.04		.05		.05	
BIC	-2061		-2054		-2055		-2049	

*Notes:* Positive values indicate support for the policy, negative values indicate opposition. Comparison groups are whites, other region, mainline Protestants, and married, for race, region, religion, and marital status, respectively. Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>†</sup> sd = strongly disagree, d = disagree, n = neither, a = agree, sa = strongly agree;

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

**Table 2.3. Standardized Coefficients from Ordered Logistic Regression of Women's Attitudes towards Affirmative Action**

	Reverse Discrimination (N = 406)							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
<i>Threat</i>								
Individual			-0.05	(0.09)			-0.04	(0.09)
Men					-0.08	(0.08)	-0.08	(0.08)
<i>Controls</i>								
<i>Political</i>								
conservative	-0.37***	(0.08)	-0.37***	(0.08)	-0.36***	(0.08)	-0.36***	(0.08)
Age	0.09	(0.10)	0.08	(0.10)	0.09	(0.10)	0.09	(0.10)
Education	-2.08**	(0.65)	-2.17**	(0.67)	-2.02**	(0.66)	-2.09**	(0.68)
Education <sup>2</sup>	1.90**	(0.64)	1.98**	(0.65)	1.85**	(0.64)	1.92**	(0.65)
Income (ln)	-0.45*	(0.22)	-0.45*	(0.22)	-0.46*	(0.22)	-0.46*	(0.22)
South	0.08	(0.09)	0.08	(0.09)	0.08	(0.09)	0.08	(0.09)
Midwest	-0.13	(0.09)	-0.13	(0.09)	-0.12	(0.09)	-0.13	(0.09)
Black	0.24*	(0.12)	0.24*	(0.12)	0.24*	(0.12)	0.24*	(0.12)
Latino	0.14	(0.08)	0.14	(0.08)	0.13	(0.08)	0.13	(0.08)
Black Prot.	0.26*	(0.12)	0.26*	(0.12)	0.26*	(0.12)	0.25*	(0.12)
Evangel. Prot.	0.16	(0.10)	0.16	(0.10)	0.16	(0.10)	0.16	(0.10)
Catholic	0.14	(0.10)	0.14	(0.10)	0.15	(0.10)	0.15	(0.10)
Jewish	-0.06	(0.08)	-0.06	(0.08)	-0.06	(0.08)	-0.06	(0.08)
Other religion	-0.14	(0.10)	-0.14	(0.10)	-0.15	(0.10)	-0.15	(0.10)
No religion	-0.04	(0.10)	-0.04	(0.10)	-0.04	(0.10)	-0.04	(0.10)
Weekly attend.	-0.36***	(0.08)	-0.36***	(0.08)	-0.36***	(0.08)	-0.36***	(0.08)
<i>Previously</i>								
married	0.63***	(0.14)	0.62***	(0.14)	0.63***	(0.14)	0.62***	(0.14)
Never married	0.49**	(0.15)	0.49**	(0.15)	0.49**	(0.15)	0.48**	(0.15)
Employed	0.47*	(0.20)	0.48*	(0.20)	0.48*	(0.20)	0.48*	(0.20)
Spouse empld.	0.35*	(0.15)	0.35*	(0.15)	0.35*	(0.15)	0.34*	(0.15)
<i>Cuts<sup>b</sup></i>								
so vs. o, f, sf	-0.19	(0.09)	-0.19	(0.09)	-0.20	(0.09)	-0.20	(0.09)
so, o, vs. f, sf	1.29	(0.10)	1.29	(0.10)	1.29	(0.10)	1.29	(0.10)
so, o, sf	1.88	(0.12)	1.88	(0.12)	1.88	(0.12)	1.88	(0.12)
Log likelihood	-773		-773		-772		-772	
df	20		21		21		22	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.09		.10		.10		.10	
BIC	-2935		-2928		-2929		-2923	

*Notes:* Positive values indicate support for the policy, negative values indicate opposition. Comparison groups are whites, other region, mainline Protestants, and married, for race, region, religion, and marital status, respectively. Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>†</sup> so = strongly oppose, o = oppose, f = for, sf = strongly for

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

**Table 2.3. Standardized Coefficients from Ordered Logistic Regression of Women's Attitudes towards Affirmative Action (continued)**

	Special Efforts (N = 406)							
	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
<i>Threat</i>								
Individual			-0.06	(0.08)			-0.08	(0.08)
Men					0.16*	(0.07)	0.16*	(0.07)
<i>Controls</i>								
Political conservative	-0.16	(0.08)	-0.15	(0.08)	-0.17*	(0.08)	-0.17*	(0.08)
Age	-0.99*	(0.47)	-0.97*	(0.47)	-1.10*	(0.47)	-1.08*	(0.47)
Age <sup>2</sup>	1.00*	(0.47)	0.98*	(0.47)	1.11*	(0.48)	1.09*	(0.48)
Education	-0.23*	(0.09)	-0.23**	(0.09)	-0.25**	(0.09)	-0.25**	(0.09)
Income (ln)	-0.25	(0.20)	-0.26	(0.21)	-0.22	(0.21)	-0.24	(0.21)
South	-0.15	(0.08)	-0.15	(0.08)	-0.16	(0.08)	-0.16	(0.08)
Midwest	-0.19*	(0.08)	-0.19*	(0.08)	-0.22**	(0.08)	-0.22**	(0.08)
Black	0.21	(0.12)	0.21	(0.12)	0.22	(0.12)	0.22	(0.12)
Latino	-0.01	(0.07)	-0.02	(0.07)	0.00	(0.07)	0.00	(0.07)
Black Prot.	0.21	(0.12)	0.21	(0.12)	0.22	(0.12)	0.22	(0.12)
Evangel. Prot.	-0.12	(0.09)	-0.12	(0.09)	-0.12	(0.09)	-0.12	(0.09)
Catholic	-0.24*	(0.09)	-0.24*	(0.09)	-0.25**	(0.10)	-0.25**	(0.10)
Jewish	0.02	(0.07)	0.02	(0.07)	0.03	(0.07)	0.03	(0.07)
Other religion	-0.21*	(0.09)	-0.21*	(0.09)	-0.19*	(0.09)	-0.19*	(0.09)
No religion	-0.16	(0.10)	-0.15	(0.10)	-0.15	(0.10)	-0.15	(0.10)
Weekly attend.	-0.16*	(0.07)	-0.16*	(0.07)	-0.16*	(0.07)	-0.16*	(0.07)
Previously								
married	0.45***	(0.13)	0.45***	(0.13)	0.46***	(0.13)	0.46***	(0.13)
Never married	0.13	(0.14)	0.13	(0.14)	0.15	(0.14)	0.14	(0.14)
Employed	0.26	(0.19)	0.27	(0.19)	0.25	(0.19)	0.26	(0.19)
Spouse empld.	0.16	(0.13)	0.15	(0.13)	0.17	(0.13)	0.17	(0.13)
<i>Cuts</i> <sup>†</sup>								
sd vs. d, n, a, sa	-2.64	(0.14)	-2.64	(0.14)	-2.64	(0.14)	-1.08	(0.47)
sd, d, vs. n, a, sa	-0.90	(0.09)	-0.89	(0.09)	-0.88	(0.09)	-0.25	(0.09)
sd, d, n, vs. a, sa	-0.41	(0.09)	-0.41	(0.09)	-0.40	(0.09)	-0.24	(0.21)
sd, d, n, a vs. sa	1.74	(0.11)	1.74	(0.11)	1.76	(0.11)	-0.16	(0.08)
Log likelihood	-961.40		-961.16		-958.95		-958.53	
df	20		21		21		22	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.06		.06		.06		.06	
BIC	-2551		-2545		-2549		-2543	

*Notes:* Positive values indicate support for the policy, negative values indicate opposition. Comparison groups are whites, other region, mainline Protestants, and married, for race, region, religion, and marital status, respectively. Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>†</sup> sd = strongly disagree, d = disagree, n = neither, a = agree, sa = strongly agree;

\* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

Hypothesis 2, that group threat has a stronger association with policy attitudes than individual threat, can be neither accepted nor rejected, as there is too little information from which to draw a conclusion. The results for men are uninformative. The threat measures have the same association with attitudes, whether they are in the models singularly or together. The analyses for women also provide no insight into this question as there is no measure of threat to women as a whole.

The results for the men's reverse discrimination model with both threats are suggestive of a possible relationship between individual and group threat. When considered in separate models, each threat has roughly the same association with attitudes (-.24 for individual threat and -.26 for group threat) and the same level of statistical significance. However, when they are combined in a single model (model 4) the magnitude and significance of both threats drop to the extent that they are only just significant at the  $p < .05$  level. This suggests the possibility that when only one threat is in a model it acts as a proxy for the omitted threat (an instance of omitted variable bias). This is important both theoretically and practically. For theorists whose goal is to craft explanations and to understand the unique factors associated with attitudes towards gender related issues, a potential relationship between individual and group threat implies that models (either theoretical or analytic) should incorporate both types of threat. The implications for policy makers are different. The results suggest that if policy makers base their assumptions on models containing a single type of threat, their policies may address the wrong issue.

The trends for men's and women's background characteristics are fairly similar and in the expected directions. In both frameworks, male and female political conservatives are more opposed to gender based affirmative action than are liberals; however, it appears as though political conservatism has a greater association with men's attitudes than women's (Wald  $\chi^2 = 4.50$  and  $4.31$ ,  $p < .05$  for special efforts

models 5 and 6 respectively; models 7 and 8 just miss significance at the  $p < .05$  level; and the difference is not significant for reverse discrimination). Whites are generally less supportive of these policies than either blacks or Latinos, with blacks being more supportive than Latinos.

Gender differences include the greater importance of being black for men (Wald  $\chi^2 = 10.38$ ,  $p < .001$  for all four reverse discrimination models, the difference is not significant for special efforts) and religion for women. Perhaps the most interesting difference is the direction of effects for marital status and employment in the reverse discrimination frame. Married men are more supportive of policies to help women than are never married or previously married men, and married women are less supportive than their nonmarried counterparts. In contrast, men with an employed spouse are less supportive of these policies than men without working wives, and women with employed husbands are more supportive of the policies than women with unemployed spouses. The finding for men holds true when the model is restricted to married men only, ruling out the possibility that the result is due to the construction of the measure where unmarried men are coded as having a non-employed spouse.

One surprise is that education functions differently in the two frames. In the special efforts context, education has only a minor impact, at most, on views towards women. In contrast, in the context of reverse discrimination, both the linear and nonlinear terms are important (i.e., the impact of education is not constant across all levels of education) and they have a strong association with attitudes. Furthermore, while education has the expected liberalizing effect in the reverse discrimination context, it appears to have the reverse effect in the special efforts frame. This provides some support for Kane's (1995) finding that education is not always a liberalizing force.

One final point of interest is the relative unimportance of region of residence. In the eight models, region is only relevant for women in the special efforts frame, where women in the Midwest express somewhat greater opposition to affirmative action than women in other regions. The unimportance of living in the South is surprising, as Southern residence is often associated with more traditional perspectives.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The most important conclusion from this research is that gender based threat is associated with attitudes towards women and must be taken seriously. The models provide no indication which threat is the stronger of the two, but both appear to be important. This is an area that warrants further study. Until we have more information, analysts should be cognizant that threat is not monolithic and that the two identified types of threat (individual and group) are each important in their own right. Policy makers, in contrast, may want to consider how people facing different types of threat may react to legislation, as their responses may differ. This is particularly true for those policies targeting women, as the results here illustrate that not all women equally support policies designed to help their gender.

The findings from this study bear out previous results that the framing of a question can dramatically influence outcomes. The question that arises is why the threat measures are significant under different frames for men and women. Men's feelings of threat were expected to have a stronger association with attitudes under the reverse discrimination frame than the special efforts frame, which they do. Women, in contrast, only have a significant threat in the special efforts models and that threat is a threat to men. One possible explanation is that those women who believe that men may have been hurt by the women's movement are also more aware of how the

movement helped women. These women may desire continued advances in gender equity, but do not want to hurt men in the process, so the women support special efforts to hire and promote women, as long as men will not face the possibility of reverse discrimination. The disparity by question frame is worth further exploration.

One unexpected finding is the hint that there may be a relationship between individual and group threat. The results seem to indicate that when only one threat measure is included in a model, that measure might act as a proxy for the omitted threat measure. What this suggests for theorists is that until there is more information about the relationship between individual threat and group threat, both measures should be included in threat based models to ensure that any conclusions drawn about individual threat are truly attributable to individual threat and vice versa. The potential association between individual and group threat also means that policy makers need to be aware that when they assess support (or opposition) to legislation they need to gauge reactions from people facing both types of threat, as their opinions may differ.

The association between threat and attitudes towards gender based attitudes suggests a few lines of future research. First, is to ascertain what role threat plays in other aspects of anti-female sentiment and behavior. Relevant questions include: Are threatened men more likely to abuse women, beyond the sexual harassment found by Maass et al. (2003)? and How does such threat influence men's views of women? To what extent are women aware of the threat they pose? How do they address it? And when women address the possibility they pose a threat, how do threatened men respond? Another point worthy of further exploration is the joint importance of individual and group threat. Although the results here indicate that individual and group threat should both be included in gender models, no such assessment has been done with respect to race.

CHAPTER 3  
INDIVIDUAL THREAT, GROUP THREAT, AND RACIAL POLICY:  
EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THREAT AND RACIAL  
ATTITUDES

Fear of losing privileges is a key component in explanations of white's hostility towards blacks. Since colonial times, whites have held a position of sociopolitical privilege. This position often brought with it advantages unavailable to people with darker skin (e.g., participation in the political process, the right to own property, etc.). Even those whites so "unfortunate" that they could not take advantage of the privileges available to their wealthier brethren could always comfort themselves with the knowledge that they were inherently superior (Banton 1983; Fredrickson 2002).

This set of beliefs and its attending entitlements began crumbling with the civil rights movement (Fredrickson 2002). However, white privilege remains, as does the desire of some to maintain these advantages. One consequence of the historic nature of these prerogatives is that all whites benefit, regardless of whether they support the racial hierarchy. Thus, there are some people who do not hold negative views of blacks, but want to preserve the privileges provided by white hegemony. The anxiety about losing privileges is one reason why some whites express hostility towards blacks (Wellman 1993). In response to a loss of privileges or other forms of threat, people have a tendency to try and protect themselves – often with hostility towards the perceived source of the threat (Blumer 1955; Perry 2001).

Drawing on the racial prejudice literature, this paper examines the relationship between race based threat and attitudes towards policies promoting racial equity. Numerous studies have determined that there is an association between threat and both

negative views of the out-group (Quillian 1995, 1996; Verberk et al. 2002) and opposition to policies aimed at helping the out-group (Bobo 1988a; Smith 1981). What this paper does differently is examine two types of threat – individual threat and group threat – in concert, in order to determine if both threats, or only one, are associated with attitudes, and if there is a relationship between the two threats. Although scholars have identified these two types of threat, no theory considers them simultaneously, nor are both incorporated in any empirical assessments (with one exception – a 1996 paper by Bobo and Hutchings, discussed later). It is of both theoretical and practical importance to examine both threats together.

Without a study incorporating both individual and group threats, we cannot claim that one threat is relevant while the other is not. This is exactly what existing theories do by focusing on only one threat. Thus to validate or invalidate any threat based argument we must incorporate both threats simultaneously (at least until we determine that only one threat is relevant). Such an assessment is also of substantive importance because it can help guide policy makers to better position legislation and address their constituents' concerns. This is particularly relevant for policies aimed at decreasing inequality.

This analysis is conducted using the General Social Survey (GSS), a nationally representative survey. The outcome measures are attitudes towards policies aimed at promoting racial equity, while threat measures assess perceptions of white job security and stability. The approach is based on past studies examining the relationship between threat and racial attitudes (Bobo 1988a; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Kluegel and Bobo 2001; Quillian 1996).

The paper does three things. First, the paper empirically tests if both threats are individually related to views on racial policies. Second, it explores the association between threats and policy attitudes. Finally, it examines if there is a relationship

between the two types of threat. There is no reason to anticipate a relationship between individual threat and group threat based on past research; however such a relationship is reasonable since the threats are similar.

## BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

### *Background*

The concept of threat is well developed in the racial prejudice literature, where there are two types of threat based arguments: those focusing on individual threat and those focusing on group threat. As the name implies, individual threat occurs when a person feels that he or she is being personally threatened, such as the fear that economic competition will lead to loss of one's job or a decline in the job's prestige (Banton 1983; Bonacich 1972; Olzak 1992; Ridgeway 1997) or the belief that the marriage of a close family member to someone from an out-group will result in the contamination of oneself and members of one's family (Glaser et al. 2002). In contrast, group threat occurs when someone feels that a group to which he or she belongs is being threatened, even if the individual him or herself will not be harmed. For instance, the fear that economic competition will lead to a decline in the dominant group's status (Blalock 1957; Goldin 2002; Kimmel 2004) or the belief that intermarriage will pollute the gene pool (Blee 2002; Ezekiel 2002; Fredrickson 2002; Glaser et al. 2002).

Individual and group threats are similar but theoretically distinct concepts. It is possible for an individual threat to develop from a group threat and vice versa. For example, a group threat can spawn a personal threat if a person believes that his neighborhood will deteriorate with the influx of blacks and he extrapolates that his own house will consequently lose value.

The role of threat is virtually the same within racial threat arguments. The primary differences are who gets hurt (the individual or the group) and the mechanisms connecting threat and attitudes. Among individual level threat arguments, perhaps the best known is Bonacich's discussion of split labor markets (1972). The group threat contingent is larger and includes such approaches as Blumer's group position model (1958) and Blalock's power threat hypothesis (1967). The fundamental idea behind all of these arguments is that when threatened, people will express negative feelings (i.e., prejudice) towards those perceived to be posing the threat.

Individual level threat arguments focus on how individuals respond to threats to themselves. For example, Bonacich (1972) argues that when cheaper labor enters a market, conflict can emerge between the cheaper labor, higher priced labor, and business. Each group is a potential threat to the other groups. This tension fosters intergroup hostility. Although the antagonism develops through group interaction, the threat occurs at the individual level, as individual workers fear the possibility of job loss or wage reduction for themselves.

Not all individual threat arguments focus on economic deprivations. Two alternatives are threats that are politically or socially motivated (Bobo and Hutchings 1996). For instance, William Julius Wilson (1980) describes how a black mayor's political decisions led to a decline in the perceived quality of life for some white residents. While an example of a social threat is the fear that a close family member will marry someone from another group, particularly a different racial or religious group. The threat is that the family member and, by diffusion, others close to him or her will be polluted or otherwise corrupted by the marriage (Glaser et al. 2002). Of particular concern are any children that may result from the relationship (Ezekiel 2002; Green et al. 1999).

Group threat arguments shift the focus from the individual to the group – instead of being concerned about their personal situation, people are apprehensive about their group’s status. Frequently, these models examine only threats to the dominant group posed by subordinate groups. Two such arguments are Blumer’s group position model (1958) and Blalock’s power threat hypothesis (1967). One exception is Bobo and Hutchings’ paper (1996) where the authors extend Blumer’s model to incorporate hostility of subordinate groups towards both the dominant group and other subordinate groups.<sup>9</sup>

Blumer’s group position model (1958) was one of the first to focus on group threat. He argues that an essential element for the emergence of racial prejudice is the fear that the out-group is or will threaten the sociopolitical position of the in-group. Whether the threat is real does not matter theoretically (Bobo 1999; Quillian 1995) (although, Semyonov and colleagues (2004) report that the distinction is of practical importance). What matters is that the actor perceives a threat. By explicitly stating that a sense of group threat is a necessary condition for the emergence of prejudice, the model presupposes that individuals have a sense of group membership; otherwise any antagonism would be directed at the individual, not his or her racial group. This recognition of group membership is different from individual threat where an actor need only identify himself as a target.

Blalock (1967) adopts a different approach. He argues that as the percent of the population that is non-white grows so do whites’ fears of a threat to their political and economic power. Furthermore, the relationship between minority group size and threat is nonlinear, such that the larger the minority group is relative to the majority, the greater the threat, and thus, the greater the prejudice. This approach has been applied

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<sup>9</sup> Bobo and Hutchings’ paper (1996) incorporates both types of threat to examine the factors associated with perceptions of group threat. Group threat is the outcome measure and individual threat is an independent measure. Their question is very different from the one posed here.

extensively to lynchings (Corzine et al. 1983; Tolnay, Beck, and Massey 1989b), racial conflict (Blalock 1957; D'Alessio et al. 2002), prejudice (Kunovich 2004), church burnings (Soule and Van Dyke 1999), and more recently private police size (D'Alessio, Eitle, and Stolzenberg 2005).

The arguments are seemingly very different, but they share some important similarities. The most notable point of agreement between Blumer and Blalock's models is that the minority group poses a threat to the dominant group's sociopolitical position. A second likeness, and one that applies to all three models, is the focus on only one type of threat, either individual threat or group threat. The arguments are cohesive as constructed, so there is no obvious rationale for why both threats should be included. Not surprisingly, tests of these and similar arguments generally include only the relevant threat (Beck and Tolnay 1990; Bobo 1998; Corzine et al. 1983; D'Alessio et al. 2002; Olzak 1990; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995; Quillian 1996; Soule and Van Dyke 1999). Consequently, although the models may be appropriate for assessing the relevant theory, they provide little insight into any possible relationship between individual threat and group threat or even if both threats matter.

### *Hypotheses*

There are intriguing questions about what occurs when both threats are analyzed together. First, are both threats associated with attitudes, or only one as the accounts suggest? If both are relevant, then which is stronger and what does this say about the arguments? Second, is there a relationship between the two threats, and if so, what is it? Finally, does the relationship vary based on the circumstance (i.e., the outcome measures)? The answers to these questions are not only important to race

scholars, but also to policy makers, because issue framing<sup>10</sup> can have a large impact on policy support and opposition (Fine 1992; Nelson and Kinder 1996; Terkildsen and Schnell 1997).

With two types of threat identified, there are four possible scenarios: first, only individual threat is important; second, only group threat is important; third, both threats are important; and finally, neither threat is important:

- H1: Individual threat alone is associated with racial attitudes.
- H2: Group threat alone is associated with racial attitudes.
- H3: Both individual and group threats are associated with racial attitudes.
- H4: Neither individual threat nor group threat are associated with racial attitudes.

The question now is what explanations might yield each of the four scenarios and how they might impact existing models.

The situation when only individual threat is relevant (H1) occurs in Bonacich's split labor markets argument (1972) and can be explained by a self-interest model (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears et al. 1979). The self-interest approach contends that people care only about themselves and their loved ones. These individuals either do not identify with a group or the identification is sufficiently weak so as to render it meaningless; however, they still identify others as part of the out-group. The only time a threat is associated with attitudes towards an out-group is when that threat has a direct impact on the actor's life.

The split labor market model meets these criteria. For Bonacich (1972), individual outcomes are paramount. Group membership matters only because it dictates individual outcomes. Under this formulation a group threat measure could

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<sup>10</sup> Gamson and Modigliani (1987) define a frame as "a cultural organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them" (p. 143).

have an effect if it is the only threat in a model, but such an effect would be spuriously capturing the potential for individual harm, and should therefore disappear if an individual threat measure is added to the model. Since most people are probably aware of their group membership, even if they do not strongly identify with their group, it is not unreasonable to expect group threat to act as a proxy for individual threat when individual threat is omitted from an analysis. In other words, if a test of the split labor market thesis included a measure for group threat, but none for individual threat, then group threat could be significant even though the argument contends otherwise.

The second scenario (H2), that only group threat is relevant, could occur for people with a strong attachment to their group. As Blumer argues (1958), a strong group affiliation may shape individual level views. This means that individual threat could be significant in a model without group threat, but not significant when group threat is in the model. The same results could also occur for people in a sufficiently secure position such that they are immune to personal threats or those who have such a strong sense of group identity that group membership supersedes personal factors. We see potential examples of this situation with suicide bombers who are willing to die for a cause. It is unlikely that this level of group identification is realistic at a broad level outside of certain select communities.

The third hypothesis asserts that both threats are associated with attitudes. In other words, neither of the scenarios presented is right, but neither is wrong. Instead, it is a combination of the two. This position contends that actors have personal interests, but also identify with their group. For the split labor market argument this would mean that individuals still want to protect their jobs and wages, but also care about the welfare of their group as a whole. So, even if an actor is in a secure position where he does not have to worry about his job or salary, he would still want his group to maintain its position vis-à-vis subordinate groups.

For Blumer's model this change would add individual threat as a distinct element associated with racial prejudice. Individual threat can be incorporated fairly easily, with only a slight weakening of the group as the primary source of prejudice. The group position model contends that four factors are associated with racial prejudice: the perception that the out-group poses a threat to the in-group, the conviction that the in-group is superior to the out-group, the feeling that the out-group is fundamentally different or alien, and the belief that the in-group is entitled to certain privileges (Blumer 1958). The addition of individual threat has no impact on the four original components. Furthermore, the three non-threat factors help explain why an individual threat might lead to group prejudice, instead of anger directed solely at the specific source of the threat.

The inclusion of individual threat would be problematic for Blalock's argument (1967). The model focuses on how prejudice relates to the size of the minority population relative to the majority. Individual actors are not considered. To incorporate individual level threat the model would first have to recognize individuals. Then the model could propose that increases in the relative size of the out-group increases the probability that individuals will face harm by a member of the out-group.<sup>11</sup> This would require either a complete overhaul of the model or the recognition that the model accounts for only one aspect of racial prejudice.

The final possibility is that neither threat is associated with racial attitudes (H4). In other words, people who feel threatened and people who feel no threat hold similar views of the out-group. This is contrary to the models discussed and to the evidence indicating that threat, in one form or the other, is associated with racial attitudes (Bobo 1998; Pettigrew 1998; Quillian 1995, 1996; Verberk et al. 2002).

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<sup>11</sup> My thanks to David Harris for pointing out this possibility.

Clearly, previous evidence indicates that this scenario is unlikely; although it could result from undetected reverse causality.<sup>12</sup>

## DATA AND METHODS

This paper relies on data from the General Social Survey (GSS) (Davis et al. 2003). Using a national probability sample of households the GSS provides information generalizable to the non-institutionalized, English speaking, adult U.S. population (residing in country). In order to address a wide range of topics, the GSS does not ask all questions every year, and within a year, not all respondents are asked the same questions. The questions relevant to this analysis were only asked in 1994 (the response rate was 78%). In this year, there were nine versions of the questionnaire. The policy questions were asked on three of these questionnaires. One version of the questionnaire contained both policy questions, one version contained one of the questions, and the third version contained the second question. In order to maximize the sample sizes, each model includes all respondents who answered the relevant outcome measure and all the independent measures. This means that the number of respondents varies by outcome measure (i.e., the sample is not identical across outcome measures). Even so, both of the samples are fairly small ( $N = 272$  for one sample and  $N = 299$  for the other). The samples are virtually statistically indistinguishable (see table 3.1).

### *Sample*

The analyses are restricted to members of the dominant group (i.e., whites) who answered all of the relevant questions. Respondents who did not answer all of the questions for a given outcome measures are dropped from analyses of that measure

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

(i.e., listwise deletion). The analyses are restricted to whites, because the sample size for blacks is too small for analysis ( $n < 62$ ). All of the models presented are weighted (using the GSS weight “adults”) to adjust for the sampling design, which was conducted at the household level while the analyses are conducted at the individual level. To maximize sample size, the samples for the outcome measures are not identical. Approximately 45% to 50% of each sample is unique to that question, while the remaining 50% to 55% are the same across the samples. The two samples are statistically indistinguishable, with two exceptions (see table 3.1): there are more women in the reverse discrimination sample than the special treatment sample and the special treatment sample contains more employed people than the reverse discrimination sample.

#### *Policy Questions (Outcome Variables)*

Today, voicing prejudicial opinions is generally deemed socially unacceptable. In the context of race relations, this means that regardless of what they actually believe, many people are no longer comfortable saying that blacks are inferior or that whites should be entitled to certain positions (Schuman et al. 1997). A socially acceptable way to circumvent this normative pressure is to express opposition to policies aimed at promoting racial equity (Wellman 1993). So, people with negative views about blacks should oppose policies aimed at helping blacks. However, people who hold negative views of blacks are not the only ones who oppose race equalizing policies. Some people will reject race equalizing policies not because they are hostile towards blacks, but because they believe that the policies are inherently unfair or that the government should not be involved. However, Kinder and Sanders (1996) report that these factors have only a modest association with attitudes towards the type of racial policies assessed here. Even though the sample of people opposed to policies

**Table 3.1. Descriptive statistics (weighted) for variables used in the analysis**

	Reverse Discrimination (N = 272)		Special Treatment (N = 299)	
Reverse discrimination (mean)	1.46	(0.77)		
Strongly oppose (%)	65.07			
Oppose (%)	26.10			
For (%)	5.15			
Strongly for (%)	3.68			
Special treatment (mean)			2.19	(1.07)
Strongly oppose(%)			33.44	
Oppose (%)			30.77	
No opinion (%)			25.42	
Support (%)			7.36	
Strongly support (%)			3.01	
Individual threat (mean)	2.26	(0.98)	2.31	(1.00)
Very unlikely (%)	28.68		27.76	
Somewhat unlikely (%)	26.84		24.08	
Somewhat likely (%)	34.19		36.45	
Very likely (%)	10.29		11.71	
Group threat (mean)	2.16	(0.71)	2.09	(0.73)
Not likely (%)	18.01		22.07	
Somewhat likely (%)	49.26		46.49	
Likely (%)	32.72		31.44	
Government should help poor (mean)	--	--	3.16	(1.07)
Blacks lazy (mean)	4.60	(1.24)	4.43	(1.26)
Resentment (mean)	3.57	(1.06)	3.58	(1.04)
Political views (mean)	4.27	(1.42)	4.36	(1.37)
Age (mean)	44.11	(16.41)	43.87	(15.11)
Income (ln) (mean)	9.88	(0.53)	9.91	(0.53)
Educational attainment (mean)	13.42	(2.92)	13.52	(2.95)
Region of residence				
South (%)	31.75		32.32	
Midwest (%)	25.20		23.93	
Other (%)	43.06		43.75	
Women (%)	53.37 <sup>a</sup>		48.93	
Religion				
Mainline Protestant (%)	19.84		24.46	
Evangelical Protestant (%)	30.56		32.14	
Catholic (%)	31.15		27.32	
Jewish (%)	2.78		3.57	
Other (%)	5.36		5.89	
None (%)	10.32		6.61	
Marital status				
Married (%)	66.27		68.93	
Never married (%)	18.06		15.18	
Previously married (%)	15.67		15.89	
Employment				
Employed (%)	64.48		71.43 <sup>b</sup>	
Spouse employed (%)	41.87		50.00	

a. Reverse discrimination greater than special treatment at  $p < .01$

b. Special threatment greater than reverse discrimination at  $p < .01$

aimed at racial equity is larger than those hostile to blacks, attitudes towards these policies are still good starting points for assessing racial hostility. Furthermore, there is precedent for this approach, as studies in the racism literature have used attitudes towards policies as outcome measures (Bobo 1983; Sears et al. 1979; Sears et al. 1997).

The 1994 GSS includes two questions on race based equalizing policies. The first says, “Some people say that because of past discrimination, blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of blacks is wrong because it discriminates against whites. What about your opinion – are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?” Responses are on a four point scale ranging from “strongly favor” to “strongly oppose” affirmative action. This question will be referred to as reverse discrimination, because it has respondents decide whether it is acceptable to reduce inequality by preferentially hiring and promoting blacks, possibly leading to discrimination against whites. In other words, the question is if past discrimination should be rectified if reverse discrimination might result.

The second question asks whether the government has an obligation to help blacks improve their living standards or if such “special treatment” is appropriate: “Some people think that (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans) have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans). Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you made up your mind on this?” Responses are on a five point scale ranging from “government should help” to “government should give no special treatment,” with “agree to both” as the midpoint. These categories, while clear to the respondent, are somewhat confusing when presented, so

the labels have been changed to “strongly support special treatment,” “support special treatment,” “no opinion,” “oppose special treatment,” and “strongly oppose special treatment.”

Responses to both questions were reverse coded to ensure that higher values indicate more policy support, while lower numbers indicate opposition. In both contexts, most whites express opposition to the policy (table 3.1). The negative response is strongest for the reverse discrimination frame, where 65% of respondents are strongly opposed to the policy, as compared to 33% for the special treatment frame. Overall, more than 90% of respondents oppose affirmative action (“oppose” or “strongly oppose”) when presented with the possibility of reverse discrimination, while 64% oppose the possibility of special treatment.

These preliminary findings are in line with expectations based on the affirmative action frames literature. Research consistently reports that support for race based programs varies by how questions are phrased (Fine 1992; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Swain 2001). A question’s frame highlights specific factors while downplaying others, influencing how the audience perceives the situation. Slight differences in wording can have dramatic effects on both the overall level of policy support and on who supports it (Kinder and Sanders 1996). Because wording is so important, it is worth examining the relationship between threat and attitudes with both of the available outcome measures.

### *Independent Variables*

*Threat.* The threat measures focus on the impact of labor market integration. The individual level threat measure asks, “What do you think the chances are these days that you or anyone in your family won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified Black/African-American employee receives one instead? Would you

say the chances of this happening are very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?" The group threat measure says, "What do you think the chances are these days that a white person won't get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified black person gets one instead? Is this very likely, somewhat likely, or not very likely to happen these days?" This question measures group threat because it assesses perceptions of threat facing the group as a whole, not individual group members. In both cases, the variables were converted into dummy variables, with one dummy for each level of threat.

Respondents indicate that they feel a greater sense of group threat than individual threat. Less than half of respondents believe that it is very likely or somewhat likely that they will lose a job or promotion to an equally or less qualified black applicant. In contrast, more than three quarters of respondents believe that a white person is at risk of losing a job or a promotion to an equally or less qualified black person. There is a moderate correlation between individual threat and group threat ( $r = .38$  and  $r = .47$  for the reverse discrimination and special treatment frames respectively).

Threat interaction terms are also assessed to explore a possible relationship between individual threat and group threat. An interaction might occur if people who identify one type of threat are more likely to also perceive the other type of threat. One explanation is that once people acknowledge one threat they may be primed to recognize other threats. At this point it is unclear whether an interaction would occur for only those people feeling strongly threatened or anyone perceiving a threat. Consequently, two interaction terms are considered: a strong threat (individual threat very likely and group threat very likely) and any threat (individual threat somewhat likely or very likely and group threat somewhat likely or very likely).

*Background Controls.* The analyses include a wide variety of background and social controls that are routinely employed in studies of racial attitudes. The measures are those found to be associated with racial attitudes, and therefore may influence the relationship between attitudes and threat. The measures include: age, education, gender, income, political conservatism, religious affiliation, region, marital status, own and spouse's employment status, opinions of blacks, and resentment of blacks (table 3.1).

Age and education are measured continuously. Contrary to what one might guess, age is not correlated with either individual or group threat. This is not entirely surprising given previous work which finds little to moderate association between age and threat (Bobo 1988a; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996).

Gender is one of the few factors on which the samples differ. The reverse discrimination sample has more women than men, while the special treatment sample has more men than women.

Income is the respondent's household income. People who are unemployed or who report a negative income are recoded as having an income of \$500, the lowest income level in the analysis. The highest level of income is \$25,000. The natural logarithm of income is used in the models. It is worth noting that the inclusion of income reduces both sample sizes by about ten percent. The impact of this reduction on sample size is discussed later.

Political views are on a seven point scale from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7). The mean is slightly above 4, indicating that the sample contains a fairly even balance of political viewpoints. Political conservatism is generally expected to correspond with opposition to policies aimed at racial equity, which is anticipated to occur here. However, initial indications are that this may not be the case, as political conservatism is weakly to moderately correlated with opinions

about the policies ( $r = .12$  for the reverse discrimination frame and  $r = .29$  for the special treatment frame). The associations between political conservatism and the two threats are similarly weak ( $r_{\text{individual threat}} = .09$  and  $r_{\text{group threat}} = .16$  for the reverse discrimination frame and  $r_{\text{individual threat}} = -.01$  and  $r_{\text{group threat}} = .20$  for the special treatment frame).

Religious affiliation also tends to be associated with policy attitudes (Thornton et al. 1983). Following Steensland et al. (2000), religion is divided into six categories: mainline Protestants (20% and 24%), evangelical Protestants (31% and 32%), Catholics (31% and 27%), Jews (3% and 4%), other (5% and 6%), and none (10% and 7%). Mainline Protestants are used as the reference group.

Southerners<sup>13</sup> (32%) are more likely than others to adhere to conservative viewpoints (Quillian 1996; Sears et al. 1997; Smith 1981; Stouffer 1955), but in some instances living in the Midwest<sup>14</sup> (25% and 24%) may have an even greater impact (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004). Region is divided into the three categories of South, Midwest, and other, with other used as the reference category.

Marital status is also broken down into three categories: never married, married, and previously married. For the majority of tests run, the attitudes of people who are widowed more closely resemble the attitudes of divorced or separated individuals than married people, so widows and widowers are included in the previously married category.

Two additional measures are whether the respondent is employed outside the home (64% and 71%) (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Quillian 1996) and whether the respondent's spouse is employed outside the home (42% and 50%).

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<sup>13</sup> South consists of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

<sup>14</sup> Midwest is defined as Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

A traditional measure of racism is employed to assess beliefs about the extent to which blacks tend to be hard-working or lazy. This is an appropriate measure to include since it is a classic indicator of racial prejudice. Furthermore, some scholars argue that negative stereotypes may lead to feelings of threat (see Stephan et al. 2002). Responses are on a seven point scale, with 1 being hard-working and 7 being lazy. The mean falls slightly above the midpoint. Other measures of traditional racism were considered and rejected because of high non-response rates.

Proponents of symbolic racism and similar arguments assert that resentment towards blacks is a key factor explaining opposition to race equalizing policies (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Krysan 2000; Pettigrew and Meertens 1995; Sears et al. 1997). Including a measure of symbolic racism ensures that any results attributable to threat are due to threat and not symbolic racism. The measure used here asks if “blacks get more attention than they deserve.” Answers are on a five point scale ranging from “much less attention than deserved” to “much more attention than deserved.” Responses are reverse coded so that higher values indicate greater resentment (i.e., more attention than deserved). The means fall just above the midpoint.

Also included in the special treatment analysis is perceptions of the government’s responsibility to reduce poverty. (See the next section for a discussion about why this measure is excluded from the reverse discrimination analysis.) This measure accounts for people who oppose race based policies not out of negative feelings towards blacks, but because they believe that the government should not be addressing the issue. The question says, “Some people think that the government in Washington should do everything possible to improve the standard of living of all poor Americans; they are at Point 1 on this card. Other people think it is not the government's responsibility, and that each person should take care of himself; they are

at Point 5. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you have up your mind on this?" The mean is 3.16.

*Background Measures Considered.* A number of additional background measures were considered, but excluded from the analysis for various reasons. These measures include anti-black prejudice based on biological principles, views on fairness, and perceptions of the government's role (excluded from the reverse discrimination analysis only).

The GSS includes a number of measures of racism rationalized on biological premises; however, all of the measures have substantial missing data and would dramatically reduce sample sizes. To determine the potential impact of excluding such measures, the measure with the least missing data was included in preliminary models. This dichotomous measure assesses beliefs about the innate ability of blacks. The question says, "On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are . . . Because most (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have less in-born ability to learn?" (1 indicates that differences are innate). The vast majority of respondents (89%) do not feel that blacks have less ability to learn. The inclusion of this measure had no significant impact on any of the other variables and is therefore excluded from subsequent analyses. However, there is some indication that such a measure may be associated with policy attitudes, so if possible it should be included in future assessments.

Although it would also be ideal to include a measure of fairness, it is not feasible as there is no measure of fairness available for this survey year.

As noted previously, there is an indicator of government role; however, the sample size for the reverse discrimination sample is too small ( $N < 150$ ) to enable a

strong analysis. Preliminary results indicate that government role has no significant impact on the results for the reverse discrimination models.

### *Method*

The models are run with multinomial logits. Ideally, ordered logit would have been used for analysis. However, neither set of models satisfied the parallel regression assumption (although it could be satisfied for the reverse discrimination models by dropping age and religion, without loss of information). Multinomial logit yields substantively similar results to order logits for the reverse discrimination sample. Multinomial logit consists of sets of binary logistic regressions, where each level of the outcome measure is compared with the reference category (Long 1997). The reference category here is the strongest level of policy opposition.

## RESULTS

### *Reverse Discrimination*

Table 3.2 presents results for the reverse discrimination multinomial logits. Model 1 is the baseline model with all control measures, but no threat measures; model 2 incorporates individual threat measures; model 3 is the same as model 2 except that the individual threat measures are replaced by group threat measures; and model 4 includes both individual and group threats. The panels are levels of policy support, with strongly oppose as the reference category. Support and strongly support were collapsed into a single outcome level to increase cell sizes. This had no impact on results. Correlates are included in all models. Results are available upon request.

Individual threat and group threat are each associated with policy attitudes, when included in the models individually (models 2 and 3, respectively) and together (model 4). Someone who feels a strong individual threat is more likely to oppose

affirmative action than someone who feels less of a threat. The same is generally true for people feeling a strong group threat. This provides support for hypothesis 3 that individual threat and group threat are both associated with racial policy attitudes.

**Table 3.2. Odds From Multinomial Logistic Regressions of White's Opposition to Reverse Discrimination Policies (N = 272)**

	1	2	3	4
<b>Oppose</b>				
Individual Threat				
Very unlikely		7.45* (5.82)		6.30* (5.00)
Unlikely		15.75*** (12.24)		13.42** (10.59)
Somewhat likely		5.50* (4.22)		4.76* (3.70)
Group Threat				
Not likely			2.05 (0.79)	1.41 (0.58)
Somewhat likely			1.93* (0.57)	1.44 (0.45)
<b>Support or Strongly Support</b>				
Individual Threat				
Very unlikely		13.09* (15.38)		8.45 (10.34)
Unlikely		6.29 (7.48)		4.73 (5.81)
Somewhat likely		11.05* (12.72)		13.17* (15.64)
Group Threat				
Not likely			8.95*** (5.13)	8.01** (4.80)
Somewhat likely			2.09 (1.10)	1.36 (0.74)
Log likelihood	-380	-362	-368	-351
df	32	38	36	42
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.09	0.13	0.12	0.16
BIC	-2165	-2164	-2164	-2161

Notes: Comparison groups are strongly oppose for the outcome, and very likely for individual and group threats.

- \* p < .05
- \*\* p < .01
- \*\*\* p < .001

Both threat measures decrease in magnitude with the addition of the other threat, while the level of significance stays the same or decreases slightly. The one exception is in the second panel, where the magnitude for one level of individual threat (somewhat likely) increases with the inclusion of group threat. This may suggest a relationship between individual threat and group threat; although the results do not

appear to be due to an interaction between individual threat and group threat, as no interaction is significant. However, the lack of effect may be due to small sample size. The small sample size may also account for the nonmonotonicity observed for individual threat.

### *Special Treatment*

The results for the special treatment multinomial logits are presented in table 3.3. The reference category is strongly oppose special treatment, the greatest level of policy opposition. The panels show results for each level of policy support, beginning with the second-most level of opposition and ending with the greatest level of support. Models are the same as for reverse discrimination, with model 1 the baseline, model 2 control variables plus individual threat, model 3 control variables with group threat, and model 4 control variables with both individual and group threats. The table presents only the threat outcomes. Background measures are included in all of the models, but are omitted from the tables. Complete results are available upon request.

The results for the special treatment models have a similar pattern to the results from the reverse discrimination models. Both threats are associated with policy opposition when included in the models individually (models 2 and 3). The magnitude and significance of the odds also decline with the addition of the other threat (model 4).

The findings for individual threat, however, are different from the reverse discrimination models and are not as predicted. As expected, after controlling for all other variables (model 4) people who do not feel a strong individual threat are more likely to oppose than strongly oppose giving blacks special treatment. This is as predicted by hypotheses 1 and 3. Similarly, those who do not feel strongly threatened are significantly more likely to have no opinion about providing special treatment than

**Table 3.3. Odds from multinomial logistic regression of white's opposition to special treatment policies (N = 299)**

	1	2	3	4
<b>Oppose</b>				
Individual Threat				
Very unlikely		5.60** (3.01)		4.87** (2.81)
Unlikely		4.88** (2.67)		3.52* (2.03)
Somewhat likely		5.32** (2.70)		3.66* (1.93)
Group Threat				
Not likely			1.24 (0.53)	0.80 (0.38)
Somewhat likely			3.18*** (1.02)	2.33* (0.79)
<b>No Opinion</b>				
Individual Threat				
Very unlikely		8.18** (5.80)		7.99** (5.93)
Unlikely		8.36** (5.99)		8.17** (6.00)
Somewhat likely		6.97** (4.73)		6.97** (4.83)
Group Threat				
Not likely			1.54 (0.65)	1.04 (0.48)
Somewhat likely			1.58 (0.54)	1.13 (0.40)
<b>Support</b>				
Individual Threat				
Very unlikely		0.95 (0.79)		0.53 (0.49)
Unlikely		1.83 (1.45)		1.28 (1.08)
Somewhat likely		0.95 (0.70)		0.76 (0.59)
Group Threat				
Not likely			2.72 (1.86)	3.16 (2.32)
Somewhat likely			2.03 (1.18)	2.11 (1.30)
<b>Strongly Support</b>				
Individual Threat				
Very unlikely		1.85 (3.30)		0.36 (0.95)
Unlikely		0.01 (0.03)		0.01 (0.04)
Somewhat likely		0.07 (0.13)		0.12 (0.28)
Group Threat				
Not likely			95.48* (190.28)	46.15 (128.64)
Somewhat likely			0.75 (1.13)	1.20 (2.58)
Log likelihood	-579	-558	-557	-544
df	68	80	76	88
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.25	0.28	0.28	0.30
BIC	-1931	-1896	-1923	-1874

Notes: Comparison groups are strongly oppose for the outcome, and very likely for individual and group threats.

- \* p < .05
- \*\* p < .01
- \*\*\* p < .001

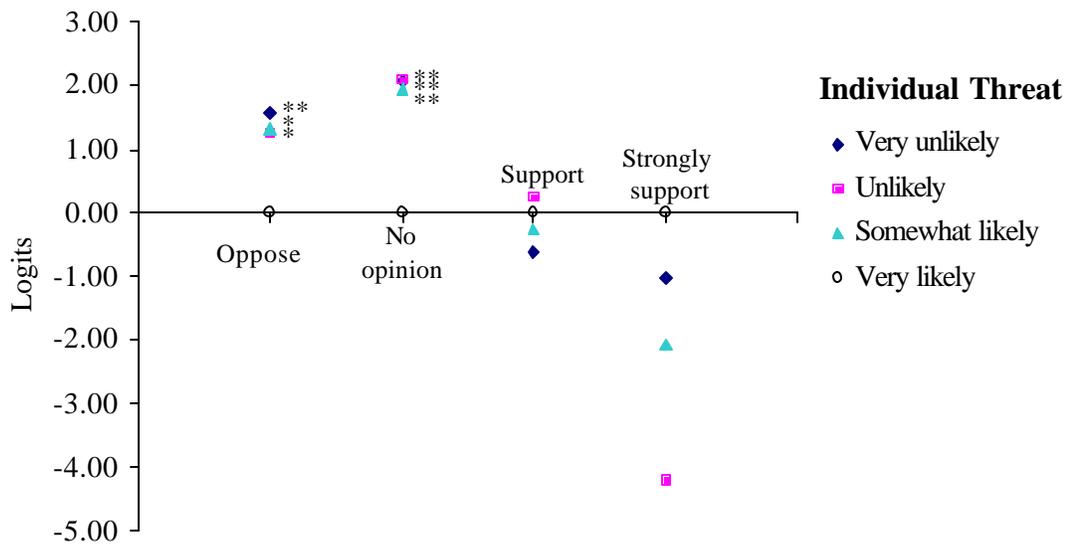
people who identify a strong threat (panel 2). The surprise is with policy support. The prediction was that people who felt strongly threatened would be more likely to oppose giving blacks' special treatment. This does not seem to be the case. First differences in individual threat are not associated with whether people strongly oppose or support special treatment (panels 3 and 4). Second, people who feel a strong individual threat appear more likely to support and strongly support special treatment, than people who feel a threat is unlikely (the odds are less than 1); although these results are not significant. The most probable explanation for these results is the small cell sizes (for support and strongly support special treatment).

This pattern is more clearly illustrated in figure 3.1. The x-axis represents levels of threat, with very likely as the reference category. The y-axis is the logits for the results presented in table 3.3. The data points are levels of threat. Positive results indicate that respondents are more likely to hold that opinion than to strongly oppose the policy, while negative results imply that respondents are less likely to hold that opinion than to strongly oppose the policy. So, people who feel strongly threatened are more likely to strongly oppose the policy than to oppose it or have no opinion on it (results are positive), while these same people are more likely to support or strongly support the policy than to strongly oppose it (results are negative).

The pattern for group threat is different (figure 3.2). Most people who identify a strong group threat are more likely than others to strongly oppose special treatment (results are positive). Although these results are not all significant, they are almost all in the expected direction.

### *Role of Sample Size*

As previously noted, including income in the analysis reduces both the reverse discrimination and special treatment samples by about ten percent. Because the

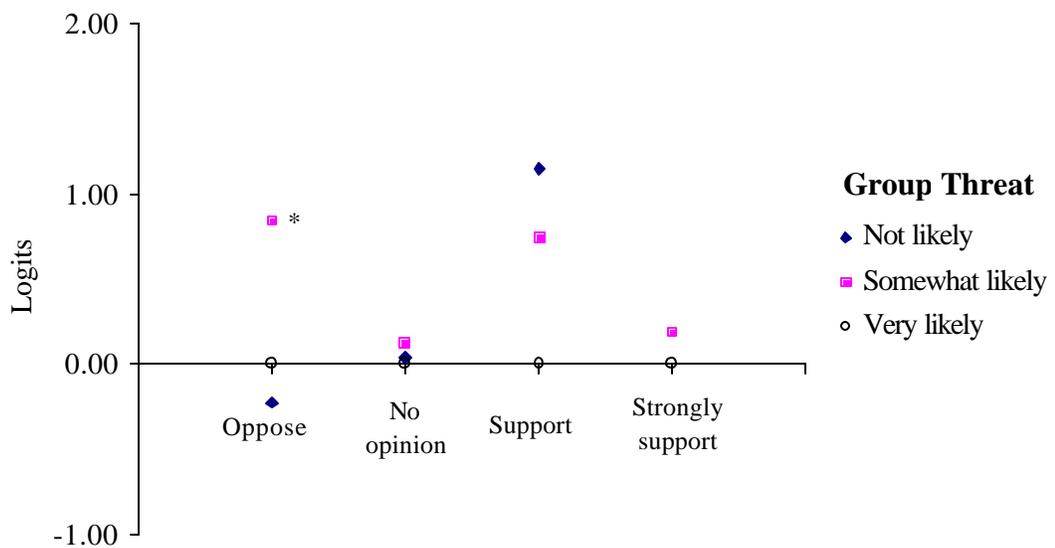


Note: Reference categories are strongly oppose for special treatment and very likely for individual threat

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

**Figure 3.1. Individual threat for special treatment frame, controlling for all other measures**



Note: Reference categories are strongly oppose for special treatment and very likely for group threat

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

**Figure 3.2. Group threat for special treatment frame, controlling for all other measures**

samples considered are so small, it is possible that some results are not significant that would be significant in a larger sample. To examine this possibility, the models were re-run first with the same sample as presented but excluding the income variable (i.e., the samples are exactly the same, the only difference is whether income is included in the analyses), the models were then run with the sample plus those previously omitted because they lacked income data ( $N = 272$  for the reverse discrimination sample and  $N = 299$  for the special treatment sample). (All results are available upon request.) The original models were first compared to the models with the sample excluding missing income data. This was done to see what results were due to income. Next examined were the two samples without income (one including those with missing income data and the other excluding those respondents), to see how the results differed based on sample size.

The comparisons indicate that the association between threat and policy attitudes is stronger (as measured by significance) with increased sample sizes. For reverse discrimination this is particularly noticeable for individual threat where all significant factors in model 2 retain their significance after controlling for group threat (model 4). Group threat also shows a stronger association with attitudes before controlling for individual threat (model 3); although, group threat remains insignificant after controlling for individual threat (model 4). For special treatment the larger samples again show generally stronger associations between policy attitudes and both threats. (There are, however, a couple instances where the strength of the association decreases.) These comparisons strengthen the conclusion that both individual threat and group threat are associated with policy attitudes.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results from the reverse discrimination models (table 3.2) and special treatment models (table 3.3) are similar. The odds of strongly opposing the policy are greater for people feeling either a strong individual threat or a strong group threat. Results from the two sets of models provide support for hypothesis 3, that both individual threat and group threat are associated with policy opposition. This conclusion is apparent in the reverse discrimination frame panel 2, where the threats are significant simultaneously (table 3.2 model 4). This is also seen in the special treatment analysis, where both threats are significant in the first panel (table 3.3 model 4). Alone, this may seem somewhat weak evidence to conclude that both threats are related to policy attitudes; however, the four panels should be considered as one, because they represent levels of the same variable. When they are examined together, it is apparent that individual threat and group threat are both associated with opinions on giving blacks special treatment. Furthermore, the analysis conducted to examine the effect of sample size demonstrates that a stronger association between threat and policy attitudes is likely with a larger sample.

The most important conclusion from this research is that individual threat and group threat are both associated with attitudes towards racial policies. The relevance of this finding is twofold. First, the majority of racial prejudice theories focus on only one type of threat. This is fine if only that threat is significant, but when both threats are pertinent the arguments lose some of their validity. The findings here do not necessarily indicate that single threat theories should be discarded, especially since there are times when only one threat appears relevant, but instead suggest that the theories be reevaluated to determine if the excluded threat can be incorporated without altering the theory's fundamental premise.

Second, since most theories consider only one threat, most analyses do as well. If both threats are important, then these analyses omit a potentially relevant measure. One consequence is misleading results that may overstate the significance of the included threat. This is particularly problematic for students of racial bias and policy makers hoping to reduce racial inequality. Improper model specification could lead policy makers to misframe a policy, incorrectly believing that one threat is the cause of opposition, when in fact the omitted threat might play a key role. This could lead to public rejection of a policy that would otherwise have received widespread support.

The results from this analysis suggest that the relationship between individual threat and group threat needs further exploration. First and foremost, we must determine the circumstances under which only one threat, and similarly both threats, are related to policy attitudes. We must also ascertain why each of the threats is important when it is, but not otherwise. Finally, whenever possible, we need to include both individual and group threats in assessments of racial policy attitudes

CHAPTER 4  
INDIVIDUAL THREAT, GROUP THREAT, AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
LEGALIZING GAY MARRIAGE AND PROVIDING JOB BENEFITS TO SAME-  
SEX COUPLES

The visibility of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals has increased in recent years with the brutal attacks on Matthew Shephard and Billy Jack Gaither (Herek 2000); the Supreme Court's 2003 decision overturning antisodomy laws (Hull 2006); the recent publicity surrounding the debate on the legalization (or prohibition) of gay marriage; and greater media exposure through productions such as "Ellen," "Will and Grace," and "Brokeback Mountain." With increased visibility has come increased debate about the proper place for LGB persons in American society. At times, the discussion has become vitriolic, which is not surprising given evidence indicating that even with generally increasing tolerance (Bobo 2001; Schuman et al. 1997; Yang 1997), homosexuals<sup>15</sup> are second only to atheists as the most disliked of group in the U.S. (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006).<sup>16</sup>

Sexual minorities are one of the last groups to receive legal protections. The lack of legal protection means that LGB persons routinely face the possibility of discrimination, verbal harassment, abuse at the hands of law enforcement, and violence motivated by their sexuality<sup>17</sup> (Berrill and Herek 1992; Connell 1995;

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<sup>15</sup> The term "homosexual" was used in the cited analysis, which is why it is used here. Many people avoid the word "homosexual" because it "has been associated in the past with deviance, mental illness, and criminal behavior" (Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns 1991) and it is often interpreted as incorporating only men (Simon 1998).

<sup>16</sup> The groups examined include atheists, Muslims, homosexuals, conservative Christians, recent immigrants, Hispanics, Jews, Asian Americans, African Americans, and White Americans.

<sup>17</sup> Only 29 states, plus the District of Columbia, have sexual orientation as a protected status under hate crime legislation (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2005-2006a).

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force 2005-2006b). To effectively combat this hostility more must be known about why LGB persons are targeted.

Explanations for the opposition to same-sex sexuality depend on the speaker. Religious conservatives decry same-sex behavior as immoral, unnatural, and a threat to the moral framework of society (Catholic Answers 2004; CNN 2006; Dallas 2005; NPR 2006). Gay men, in particular, are often considered dangerous because they are believed by some to molest children (Herek 2002; Vitagliano 2001) and endeavor to “convert” children to the “gay lifestyle” (Simon 1998; Traditional Values Coalition 2005). Gender scholars contend that hostility emerges because LGB persons are perceived to be violating gender norms (Franklin 1998; Lim 2002), with masculinity theorists, like Connell, arguing that alternatives to heterosexual norms pose a threat to the system of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987). These conflicting positions share the idea that nonheterosexual sexuality is a threat to the gender hierarchy.

The arguments allude to two types of threat: individual threat and group threat. As the name implies, individual threat occurs when a person feels that he or she is being personally threatened, such as the fear that economic competition will lead to loss of one’s job or a decline in the job’s prestige (Banton 1983; Bonacich 1972; Olzak 1992; Ridgeway 1997) or the concern that one’s behavior does not conform to prescribed gender roles (Connell 1995; Hopkins 1996; West and Zimmerman 1987) and may lead to harassment (Uggen and Blackstone 2004). In contrast, group threat occurs when someone feels that a group to which he belongs is being threatened, even if the individual himself will not be harmed. For instance, the fear that economic competition will lead to a decline in the dominant group’s status (Blalock 1957; Goldin 2002; Kimmel 2004) or the concern that acceptance of nontraditional types of masculinity (e.g., effeminate males) will cause men to lose their position of dominance (Hopkins 1996).

Determining whether one or both threats are associated with attitudes towards policies legitimating LGB relationships is important for both scholarly and practical reasons. Any empirical assessment of theoretical models advances our understanding of social relations. This research goes further because it will hopefully enable not just theory substantiation, but hopefully also theory refinement.

Ascertaining if individual threat is related to policy opposition is particularly important. Opponents of providing LGB persons equality frequently argue that heterosexual marriage and society will be irrevocably harmed if same-sex couples are granted the same rights as opposite-sex couples (Dobson 2004; Sprigg 2004, 2006). Rarely do discussions of LGB equality mention how policies benefiting same-sex couples would have a detrimental effect on other individuals. (In other words, individual threat is not a common factor in these discussions.) If individual threat proves to be associated with opposition to LGB related policies then we will have a new front on which to confront opponents of LGB equality.

Drawing on the gender, masculinity, and sexual orientation literatures, this paper examines the relationship between feelings of threat and attitudes towards policies legitimating same-sex relationships. Numerous studies of racial prejudice have found an association between feelings of threat and both negative views of the out-group (Quillian 1995, 1996; Verberk et al. 2002) and attitudes towards policies promoting equality (Bobo 1988a; Smith 1981). No such assessment has been conducted with respect to threat and heterosexism. This paper provides such an assessment. The paper also goes one step further by dividing threat into its components of individual threat and group threat. Scholars have identified these two types of threat, but no empirical assessment of heterosexism has incorporated both. It is of both theoretical and substantive importance to examine both threats together, because if we examine them separately we cannot claim that one threat is relevant

while the other is not. This is important for understanding the factors associated with heterosexism. Furthermore, we must examine the threats together to determine that there is no relationship between them. A relationship would imply that both threats associated with attitudes and that the threats need to both be included in analyses to ensure that the results attributable to a given threat are not a function of the omitted threat.

The analysis is conducted using data from a survey of undergraduate students at an elite, midsized university in the Northeastern United States. Such a convenience sample is clearly not ideal, as it does not produce representative data. Consequently, this research is primarily exploratory. The analysis may, however, provide insight into the association between threat and LGB related policy attitudes among college students, because the sample structurally represents the population composition. Moreover, there is a precedent for research using convenience samples in the area of sexual orientation analyses (Davies 2004; Haddock et al. 1993; Steffens 2005; Wilkinson and Roys 2005).

For outcome measures the analysis uses attitudes towards policies legalizing gay marriage and providing same-sex couples equal benefits. Threat measures assess personal and societal implications of same-sex relationships. This approach of using policy attitudes as outcome measures and feelings of threat as independent measures is similar to that often used to examine the relationship between threat and racial attitudes (Bobo 1988a; Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Kluegel and Bobo 2001; Quillian 1996).

The paper does three things. First, it examines if individual and group threats are individually associated with policy opposition. Second, it investigates the relationship between individual threat, group threat, and policy attitudes. Finally, the paper explores whether there is a relationship between individual and group threat.

## BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Gender and sexuality scholars have identified two key theoretical accounts of heterosexism. The first views same-sex sexuality in the context of gender norms, while the second focuses on hegemonic masculinity. These two perspectives are highly similar.

### *Gender Norms*

The gender norms argument contends that there are socially understood gendered norms of behavior. These norms delineate appropriate (and conversely, inappropriate) forms of conduct, and more importantly, differentiate men from women. Men have one set of rules, women another. For instance, men are “supposed” to be assertive and dominant, whereas women are “expected” to be meek and subservient (Heilman 2001). The rules provide guidance for an actor’s behavior, interaction with others, and sense of self. For those who adhere strictly to these gender roles beliefs someone else’s gender role deviation can cause confusion (Kite and Whitley 1998). Deviation signals a rejection of traditional gender norms and may also be seen as an invasion into the territory of the other gender. Traditional gender role supporters may feel the need to protect the “gender line” by punishing anyone who crosses it (Franklin 1998). For instance, women who assert themselves in the workplace may be punished by not receiving promotions or being labeled a bitch (Heilman 2001), while women who do not behave “properly” in the home may be on the receiving end of domestic abuse (Perry 2001).

LGB persons are a potentially greater threat to the gender line than “misbehaving” heterosexual women. The women are problematic because they try to overstep their bounds while still maintaining their own gender; LGB persons, in

contrast, may not only try to cross gender lines, but may be perceived as attempting to *become* the other gender. One of the most fundamental beliefs about the distinctions between men and women is that men have sex with women and women have sex with men. For gender line police, when a man has sex with another man, he rejects the “proper” male role and becomes “feminized” – neither a “real” man, nor a woman (Connell 1995; Hopkins 1996). He is a traitor to his gender (Hopkins 1996). In sum, same-sex sexuality threatens not only the existence of the gender line, but also the meaning of gender.

An alternative explanation relates to the need some men feel to actively prove their manhood (Kimmel 1996) when an actor believes that he does not sufficiently embody appropriate gender roles, he may express negative opinions about LGB persons (Franklin 1998; Herek 1992a, 2000, 2002). By denigrating LGB persons he reinforces his own adherence to traditional gendered behavior by announcing “I am not like them, I am a real man” (Herek 1986, 1992a; Kimmel 1996; Perry 2001). This argument is particularly applicable to men, because men’s gender roles are more rigid than women’s (Kite and Whitley 1998).

### *Masculinity Arguments*

Masculinity arguments build on the idea of the gender line by stressing the importance of the hierarchical relationship between the genders. Men are in the dominant position; women are in the subordinate one. According to this logic, although men are believed to be inherently superior to women, not all men are equal – those who embody the ideals of masculinity are superior to those who do not. This system of male power and privilege, what Connell (1987) terms “hegemonic masculinity,” is fragile and requires constant protecting (Hopkins 1996); if the system topples, men risk losing their long held privileges.

Heterosexuality is one of the core components of the current version of hegemonic masculinity, just as it is for the gender norms argument. Gay men threaten to undermine the system of hegemonic masculinity by offering an alternative approach to masculinity that does not conform to the hegemonic ideal. Specifically, “homosexuality threatens the credibility of a naturalized ideology of gender and a dichotomized sexual world” (Connell 1987, p. 248). The very existence of nonhegemonic masculinities is problematic because they imply a wider range of male behavior than the hegemonic ideal allows and less distinction between men and women, or even worse, some overlap of the two (Perry 2001).

Acceptance of nonhegemonic masculinity is awkward for some heterosexual men for two reasons. First, they may be mistakenly identified as gay, thereby losing the privileges inherent in their status as heterosexual men (Kimmel 1996). Second, gender overlap would mean that some women are superior to some men, and it is therefore possible that a heterosexual man currently at the top of the gender hierarchy could be surpassed by a woman. Put differently, if men are at the top of the hierarchy and women are at the bottom with no overlap between the two, then even if a man is at the very bottom of the men’s hierarchy he will still be superior to all women. But, if there is an overlap of the hierarchical boundaries, then it is theoretically possible for a man to be below a woman. It also allows for the possibility that gender boundaries will blur to such an extent that a man could fall to the absolute bottom and be superior to no one or, worse yet, the groups could switch positions and women could be at the top of the hierarchy and men at the bottom.

There is another and possibly more fundamental problem with same-sex sexuality under the hegemonic masculinity thesis, that of gay men “choosing” to renounce their “natural” socially dominant position (Hopkins 1996). Because the current system of hegemonic masculinity assumes heterosexuality, anyone who lives

as a gay man essentially abdicates his position of power. The troubling question for proponents of hegemonic masculinity is why would anyone do this? One logical answer is that “life on the other side” is preferable (i.e., women have it better than men); another is that the gender hierarchy is a myth. Neither presents a positive assessment of hegemonic masculinity.

### *Threat*

These arguments imply two types of threat. First is a threat to the groups that will be harmed by a change in the gender structure (e.g., heterosexual men and women who support traditional gender roles). Second is a threat to an individual, where the individual faces personal harm. This latter instance includes young men who fear ridicule or worse if they are not perceived as appropriately masculine; while the former includes men fearful of hegemonic masculinity’s collapse, even if their own status would remain unchanged. Although the connection between threat and sexuality is apparent in these arguments, it has yet to be examined empirically.

### *Hypotheses*

The identification of threat as a factor associated with negative views of sexual minorities raises important theoretical and substantive issues. First, although the models utilize individual and group threat they are not always precise about delineating the circumstances under which each threat is relevant. This lack of specificity leads to the second problem of whether both threats may be applicable simultaneously. These issues are important because in order to effectively combat heterosexism we must first know the factors with which it is associated. Very different strategies are needed if people oppose legalizing gay marriage because they fear some

harm to themselves versus if their opposition stems from fear of harm to heterosexuals in general.

There are thus four relevant hypotheses:

H1: Feelings of individual threat alone are associated with negative views of LGB persons.

H2: Feelings of group threat alone are associated with negative views of LGB persons.

H3: Both individual and group threats are associated with attitudes towards LGB persons.

H4: Neither individual threat nor group threat are associated with attitudes towards LGB persons.

For hypothesis 1 to be true, there must be an association between personal threat and attitudes towards LGB persons, but no relationship between group threat and attitudes. If this is the case, then the most obvious implication is that individuals are paramount and focus on themselves to the exclusion of their group. This would mean that people have no desire to preserve the system of hegemonic masculinity (or the system does not exist). Similarly, the gender line would be either meaningless or nonexistent. Neither set of scenarios seems likely given the results of prior research.

Evidence for hypothesis 2, in contrast, would indicate that actors put group welfare before personal well-being, to the extent that personal well-being is irrelevant. It is hard to imagine that many people are sufficiently group-centric so as to entirely ignore detrimental personal outcomes.

The third hypothesis that both individual threat and group threat are associated with attitudes towards LGB related policies is best predicted by the theoretical arguments. Here, people's opinions would be associated with not only what is best for them, but also with what benefits their group as a whole.

Hypothesis 4 would occur if the theoretical arguments are wrong and there is no association between either threat and attitudes towards sexual minorities. This seems unlikely.

## METHOD

### *Survey Instrument*

The investigator developed a survey instrument to assess attitudes towards LGB persons (Appendix A). Questions were drawn from pre-existing surveys whenever possible. The survey was pretested with members of the survey population and adjusted accordingly. The instrument was retested after each set of modifications. No change was made when it might have impacted comparability with earlier studies. The survey took approximately ten minutes to complete.

### *Recruitment and Sample*

The survey was open to all undergraduates eighteen years old and older at a midsized university in the Northeastern U.S. The age restriction reduced the pool of eligible students, particularly freshman, but was necessary to ensure all participants were of legal age. It is unclear how many people wished to take the survey but stopped after learning of the age requirement, although first year students are underrepresented (see table 4.1).

Survey participants were recruited in two ways. First, posters advertising the study were distributed in academic and social buildings around campus (Appendix B). No posters were hung in dormitories. The poster informed students that they could receive a free drink from a local coffee shop by completing a brief sociology survey. The poster also contained the URL for accessing the survey and contact information for the lead investigator. The posters alone did not generate a strong response and the

**Table 4.1. Sample Composition vs. University Composition 2006**

	Sample (N=278)	University (N=13,562)
Sex		
Male (%)	38.48	50.9
Female (%)	61.51	49.1
Year in school		
Freshman (%)	7.19	23.9
Sophomore (%)	18.35	24.6
Junior (%)	29.50	24.4
Senior (%)	43.17	26.8
Other (%)	1.80	<0.01
College <sup>†</sup>		
Arts and Sciences (%)	26.62	31.45
Human Ecology (%)	5.76	8.89
Engineering (%)	30.22	19.83
Other (%)	37.39	39.82
Race		
White (%)	63.24	53.2
Black (%)	2.57	5.0
Asian (%)	26.84	16.1
Latino (%)	1.84	5.5
Multiracial (%)	5.15	3.5
Other/unknown (%)	0.37	16.2
Regional origin		
Mid Atlantic (%)	18.35	19.6
Midwest (%)	7.20	7.0
New England (%)	9.71	10.1
New York (%)	31.29	35.4
Southeast (%)	8.27	6.5
Southwest (%)	4.32	2.7
West (%)	11.51	10.5
Other (%)	9.35	8.2
Political conservatism (mean) <sup>†, ††</sup>	3.22	2.60

**Note:** Whenever possible institutional data are from 2006. Non-2006 data are noted.

<sup>†</sup>Data are from 2005

<sup>††</sup>Institutional data on a 5 point scale. Survey data converted to a 5 point scale for comparability

**Source:** Cornell University 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d

response was particularly weak for certain subpopulations (e.g., younger students and blacks). To increase the sample size, e-mails were sent to the heads of virtually all student organizations on campus. (Graduate student organizations were excluded.) The e-mail asked the organization leaders to distribute an e-mail advertising the study to their group members. The message contained the same information as the poster. No

information is available on the rate at which organization leaders distributed the message.

The resulting sample is neither unbiased nor representative of the student body. The first recruitment method could theoretically have produced an unbiased representative sample (although it would have been unlikely), because any student on campus could have seen a poster. The e-mail approach is unlikely to have resulted in an unbiased representative sample, because e-mail recipients are self-selected into clubs and club leaders decided whether or not to distribute the message.

The absence of an unbiased representative sample is less than ideal and it severely limits what can be concluded from the analysis. As a result, the research primarily explores the possible relationship between threat and anti-LGB policy attitudes among college students. The sample composition is structurally similar to that of the undergraduate student body at this institution (table 4.1). There is an oversample of women, older students, and engineers, but neither year nor enrollment in the engineering program had any impact on the results. Asians also appear to be overrepresented; however the university classifies many of these students as “other” as they are foreign nationals. As with academic program and year in school, there are no statistically significant racial differences. Gender is the only one of these measures that proves significant.

### *Survey Administration*

The survey was administered electronically using a commercially available web survey product. This web tool allowed participants to access the survey at their convenience (both time and location) and in large numbers. It did, however, have some drawbacks. The product does not permit randomization of question order and it

cannot produce unique codes during the survey process (each survey is given a unique identification number, but this number is only available to the researcher).

Participants accessed the survey through an address (URL) provided in the recruitment materials. Upon entering the survey respondents were given a standard consent form indicating that they understood the nature of the survey, were at least 18 years old, and agreed to participate in the study. Following the consent page was a set of screener questions verifying a respondent's status as undergraduate student at the institution and at least 18 years old.

At the end of the survey respondents were asked to enter a code which they used to obtain a certificate for a free drink.<sup>18</sup> The code consisted of information from a respondent's student id (first letter of their first name, last letter of their last name, and last three digits of their student id number), as well as some unverifiable information (day of birth and first letter of place of birth). This information produced unique codes that could not be used to identify the respondent without already knowing the relevant information.

The code was necessary for three reasons. First, respondents needed a unique number to prove they had participated in the survey and were eligible for the incentive. Since the survey tool did not have the capability of generating unique codes, respondents needed to enter them. Second, being able to compare a code to a student id ensured that no one received multiple incentives (because there was only one code per id). Finally, the code helped eliminate replication (i.e., a person who took the survey multiple times), both because they could only receive one incentive and because the code enabled identification of multiple surveys by the same person (assuming they entered the code twice).

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<sup>18</sup> The person distributing the certificates had no contact with the survey data.

The code was designed such that a respondent's identity could not be determined from the code. However, it is possible that some participants were not comfortable providing this information. 53 respondents completed the survey, but did not enter a code or entered an obviously invalid code (e.g., "bleah").

## DATA

### *Data Cleaning*

Over the course of three months, 483 people attempted to take the survey. Of these, three people did not consent to participate and another 59 did not complete or did not satisfy the sample criteria (undergraduate at institution and at least 18 years old). An additional case is excluded because the respondent attempted to take the survey twice (the first survey is included, the duplicate is dropped). Also excluded are cases where respondents failed to complete the survey (N = 35). Analysis is further restricted to people answering all of the relevant questions (i.e., listwise deletion) and identifying as primarily heterosexual (1 or 2 "on a scale from one to ten, where one is heterosexual or straight and ten is gay or lesbian"). This was done so that results gauge reactions of the dominant group towards the subordinate group. Also excluded are those who entered an invalid code (N = 7). These individuals are omitted out of concern that they did not take the survey seriously and thus their answers could not be trusted. Their omission has no substantive impact on the results. The resulting sample size is 278.

### *Policy Questions (Outcome Variables)*

Two policy measures are included in the analysis. The first outcome measure asks about support for "gay marriage" while the second asks about providing same-sex couples with the same job benefits given to married couples. The job benefits question

is likely to receive greater support, because it does not include the idea of gay marriage. These two subjects were selected because the debate over the status of same-sex couples has received regular media attention with various court cases and legal battles attempting to ensure that marriage is restricted to heterosexual unions. Consequently this is a familiar topic for many people.

The question about legalizing gay marriage was based on a similar question in the GSS.<sup>19</sup> However, the GSS asks about homosexual couples. The phrase “people of the same sex” was used to avoid any stigma associated with the word homosexual (Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns 1991). The marriage question says, “Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement ‘people of the same sex should have the right to marry.’” Responses are on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with neither agree nor disagree as the midpoint. Responses were reverse coded so that higher values indicate greater policy support. The mean of 3.85 indicates that respondents tend to be supportive of legalizing same-sex marriage (see table 4.2).

The job benefits question is drawn from Herek (2002) and asks respondents “Do you favor or oppose same-sex couples getting the same job benefits as are now given to married couples, such as insurance and pension benefits?” Responses are on a four point scale ranging from strongly favor to strongly oppose. This question wording was adopted for two reasons. First, the question implies that same-sex relationships are marriage-like without actually being marriages. This allows leeway for respondents who want to support same-sex relationships, but not same-sex marriages. Second, the question avoids the term “civil unions,” which although it may be the best way to describe these relationships, may not be fully understood by respondents. As

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<sup>19</sup> The text of the GSS question is “Do you agree or disagree that homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another.”

with the legalizing gay marriage measure, the responses were reverse coded so higher values indicate greater policy support. Additionally, the disagree and strongly disagree categories were collapsed to increase cell size. The resulting measure has a mean of 1.65 with a standard deviation of .72 (see table 4.2).

Both questions gauge reactions to legal recognition of same-sex couples. People who support a gender hierarchy or adhere to a traditional gender ideology are likely to find both scenarios disturbing. The problem is that the policies reward people who violate “appropriate” gendered behavior.

The policy legalizing gay marriage is likely to generate stronger negative responses than the policy providing job benefits. First, same-sex marriage defies not only the traditional gender roles of men and women, but also the gendered roles of husband and wife. If a couple is of the same sex, who is the husband? Who is the wife? It brings into question the very meaning of marriage, because how can there be a marriage without either a husband or a wife? Nonmarital same-sex partnerships do not have this issue. Second, marriage is as much a religious institution as it is a secular one. So people whose religious doctrines oppose same-sex sexuality are likely to oppose same-sex marriage because it violates their religious beliefs. Finally, legalizing gay marriage implies that same-sex relationships are equivalent to opposite-sex relationships, something that religious conservatives harshly deny (Catholic Answers 2004; Sprigg 2006). Providing same-sex couples with job benefits should be easier for many people to accept, because while it affords same-sex couples legal recognition, it does not elevate their relationships to the same status as opposite-sex couples (McLeod and Crawford 1998).

**Table 4.2. Sample Descriptive Statistics**

	<b>Total (N=278)</b>	
Legalize gay marriage (mean)	3.85	(1.31)
Strongly agree (%)	43.17	
Agree (%)	25.90	
Neither (%)	11.87	
Disagree (%)	10.79	
Strongly disagree (%)	8.27	
Job benefits (mean)	1.65	(0.72)
Strongly agree (%)	49.28	
Agree (%)	36.33	
Disagree & strongly disagree (%)	14.39	
Individual Threat (mean)	2.03	(0.61)
Unlikely (%)	16.91	
None (%)	62.95	
Likely (%)	20.15	
Group Threat (mean)	1.90	(0.92)
Strongly disagree (%)	41.37	
Disagree (%)	33.45	
Agree (%)	19.06	
Strongly agree (%)	6.12	
Feelings for gay brother (mean)	2.23	(1.15)
Support (%)	71.22	
Neither (%)	13.31	
Oppose (%)	15.47	
Political conservatism (mean)	3.22	(1.39)
Attitude scale (mean)	14.48	(1.76)
Sex		
Male (%)	38.48	
Female (%)	61.51	
Age (mean)	20.36	(1.29)
Year in school (mean)	3.15	(1.00)
College – Human Ecology (%)	5.76	
Living arrangements		
Alone (%)	14.39	
Parents, spouse, or partner (%)	1.08	
Boyfriend/girlfriend (%)	2.52	
Roommate (%)	82.01	
Religion		
Protestant (%)	20.14	
Catholic (%)	15.47	
Jewish (%)	11.87	
Other (%)	15.11	
None (%)	37.41	
Religious attendance		
Never (%)	24.82	
Rarely (%)	33.09	
Sometimes (%)	21.58	
Often (%)	10.07	
Weekly (%)	10.43	
Legitimate code (%)	19.08	

**Note:** Standard deviations in parentheses.

*National and Collegiate Support for LGB Civil Rights.* One downside of using a convenience sample is that the sample is rarely comparable to the general population. This is clearly true here, as the sample is restricted to college students. Based on student characteristics and findings from previous research, it is reasonable to expect this sample to be more accepting of sexual minorities than the population at large. To assess this prediction table 4.3 compares responses to the questions from this study about legalizing gay marriage and providing job benefits to responses from several institutional and national surveys and of both college students and the general public.

The students in this sample are highly similar to freshman entering the university in 2003 and 2004 with regards to their level of support for legalizing gay marriage.<sup>20</sup> The students at this institution are more supportive than students nationally of legalizing gay marriage, but students in general are more pro gay marriage than the general population.

Less than one third of people nationally support legalizing marriage for same-sex couples, in contrast to over two thirds of the students from this analysis. When job benefits and civil unions are considered, almost 90% of students support legal recognition of same-sex couples, as compared to 50 to 60% of the general population. This supports the assumption that the student sample is more accepting of sexual minorities than the population as a whole.

### *Independent Variables*

*Threat.* The threat measures examine the impact of same-sex partnerships on social institutions and the respondent's life. The individual threat measure considers how the respondent would feel about a hypothetical brother's gay relationship, while

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<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately there surveys for students entering in 2005 and 2006 are not yet available.

**Table 4.3. Support for LGB Civil Rights**

	Current analysis <sup>†</sup> 10/06-1/07, N=356	College Students				General Population			
		This university		National		Newsweek 3/07 N=1,001	Fox News/ Opinions Dynamics 11/06 N=900 likely voters	CBS/New York Times 10/06 N=1,084	Newsweek 10/06 N=1,002
		2003 Freshman	2004 Freshman	2006 Freshman	2005 Freshman				
Marriage	69%	75%	73%	61%	58%	26%	30%	28%	24%
Civil unions/ Legal partnerships						24%	30%	29%	26%
Job benefits	18%								

<sup>†</sup> People who support legalizing gay marriage agree or strongly agree that same-sex couples should be able to marry. People who support job benefits are restricted to those who favor or strongly favor providing job benefits to same-sex couples, but do not support legalizing gay marriage.

**University, National survey of freshman, 2003 and 2004:** "Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status"

**Newsweek, 3/07 and 10/06:** "There has been much talk recently about whether gays and lesbians should have the legal right to marry someone of the same sex. Which of the following comes closest to your position on this issue? Do you support FULL marriage rights for same-sex couples, support civil unions or partnerships for same-sex couples BUT NOT full marriage rights, or do you oppose ANY legal recognition for same-sex couples?"

**FOX News/Opinion Dynamics Poll, 11/06:** "Do you believe gays and lesbians should be allowed to get legally married, allowed a legal partnership similar to but not called marriage, or should there be no legal recognition given to gay and lesbian relationships?"

**CBS News/New York Times Poll, 10/06:** "There has been much talk recently about whether gays and lesbians should have the legal right to marry someone of the same sex. Which of the following comes closest to your position on this issue? Do you support FULL marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples; do you support gay civil unions or partnerships, BUT NOT gay marriage; or, do you oppose ANY legal recognition for gay and lesbian couples?"

**Source:** Cornell University 2003, 2004; Pryor 2006; PollingReport.com, 2007

the group threat measure explores how legalizing same-sex marriage would impact the “American family.” The advantage of considering a sibling relationship versus a different relationship is that it may be harder to avoid contact or sever the relationship than a nonblood tie. This means that that the announcement is likely to have a greater impact than it would for a more easily dissolved relationship. A brother was chosen as the kinship tie, because gay men have often been found to elicit stronger negative reactions than lesbians (Herek 2002).

The individual threat question gauges how a committed same-sex relationship might impact the respondent’s own life. The question says, “It is the end of November and you gather with the rest of your family for Thanksgiving dinner. Your older brother Sam, with whom you are very close, has brought home a male friend Mike. While everyone is seated around the table, Sam announces that he and Mike are in love and plan to spend their lives together and raise a family. When you think of Sam’s announcement, what impact do you think it would have on your relationship with him?”<sup>21</sup> Question responses are on a five point scale ranging from very positive impact to very negative impact, with no change as the midpoint. The response categories were collapsed into threat unlikely (“very positive” or “positive” – 17%), no threat (“no change” – 63%), and threat likely (“negative” or “very negative” – 20%).

The aim of the group threat measure is to determine if respondents believe that legalizing same-sex marriage will have a detrimental impact on the “American family.” Since marriage is an institution open only to mixed-sex couples, legalizing gay marriage would fundamentally alter the “traditional” family structure. If respondents believe that legalizing gay marriage would harm the “American family”

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<sup>21</sup> The ideal question would ask how legalizing gay marriage would impact the respondent’s marriage; however, given that the sample consists of college students, this question is clearly inappropriate.

then their group (heterosexuals) faces potential harm, even if they themselves never marry or personally experience the consequences. The group threat question asks respondents whether they agree or disagree that “allowing gay and lesbian couples to legally marry would undermine the traditional American family.” Responses are on a four point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A quarter of respondents believe that legalizing gay marriage will hurt the American family. The wording for this question is drawn from a survey conducted by the Pew Forum for Religion and Public Life (2003). This is one of the few existing questions that directly assess a group threat and builds on ideas expressed by religious conservatives about the negative consequences of legalizing gay marriage (Dobson 2004; Sprigg 2006).

The measures are coded so that higher values indicate a stronger negative reaction. There are moderate to strong correlations between feelings of threat and opinions about legalizing gay marriage ( $r = -.55$  and  $r = -.69$  for individual threat and group threat respectively). The correlations are weaker for the threats and providing same-sex couples with job benefits ( $r = -.48$  and  $r = -.59$  for individual threat and group threat respectively). Both threat measures are converted into dummy variables, for the analysis, with one dummy for each level of threat.

*Background Controls.* A wide variety of background and social controls were considered. Only those significant are included in the analysis. The measures included are: the respondent’s reaction to the brother’s announcement, gender, age, year in school, academic program, political conservatism, religious affiliation, religious attendance, and opinions of LGB persons (table 4.2).

To control for the possibility that the individual threat measure is gauging respondent’s initial reactions to Sam’s (the brother) announcement and not the impact it will have on the respondent’s relationship with Sam, a measure is included that

assesses reactions to Sam's announcement that he is in love with a man. This question preceded the individual threat question in the questionnaire, so there is no concern that respondents incorrectly interpreted the individual threat question. The question asks: "How do you feel about Sam's relationship? Do you ... strongly support, support, neither support nor oppose, oppose, strongly oppose."

Gender is controlled for to account for attitudinal differences (Hinrichs and Rosenberg 2002; Kite and Whitley 1996). Women are coded 1, men 0. Women comprise 62% of the sample.

Age is measured continuously from 18 to 24, with respondents older than 24 coded as 24. Contrary to what one might guess, age is correlated with neither individual nor group threats. Age<sup>2</sup> was considered but found to be not significant.

Political views are on a seven point scale from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7). The mean is 3.22, indicating that the respondents are somewhat more liberal than conservative. Political conservatism generally corresponds with negative views of sexual minorities and opposition to LGB civil rights (Sherrod and Nardi 1998; Strand 1998). Initial indications are that this also occurs here, as political conservatism is correlated with opinions about legalizing gay marriage ( $r = -.57$ ). Political conservatism and the two threats are also correlated ( $r = .40$  and  $r = .57$  for individual threat and group threat, respectively).

Religious affiliation and religious attendance are often found to be associated with policy attitudes and negative views of LGB persons (Sherrod and Nardi 1998; Simon 1998; Thornton et al. 1983). Five religious categories are considered: Protestant (20%), Catholic (15%), Jewish (12%), other (15%), and none (37%). Unfortunately, there is not enough detail available to follow Steensland et al. (2000), and subdivide Protestants into mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants and Black Protestants. As

it is, religious affiliation only matters for people who are Jewish or who have no religion.

Religious attendance is how frequently the respondent attends religious services. Responses range from never attend (25%) to attend weekly (10%). People who attend often (a few times a month) are the only ones who differ significantly from those who never attend religious services.

We must also control for opinions about sexual minorities to ensure that the threat measures do not inadvertently capture the effects of antigay prejudice. A scale measure was created consisting of six questions about reactions towards sexual minorities. The six measures and their factor loadings are listed in Appendix C. All the measures are on a four point scale and were reverse coded as necessary to ensure that lower values indicate more positive views of LGB persons. The scale ranges from 11 to 19 with a mean of 14.78 and a standard deviation of 1.76. The scale has an alpha of .85, indicating high internal consistency.

The final control is whether the respondent entered a valid code. This measure is included to ensure that differences based on motivation for study participation do not impact the results.

*Controls Considered.* A variety of additional controls were considered, but excluded from the analysis due to lack of significance. These measures include sexuality, the number of LGB students the respondent knows, membership in a fraternity or sorority, participation on an athletic team (inter- and intramural), race, parents' education, region of residence, and if the respondent picked up the incentive.

Members of the Greek system are sometimes thought to be more heterosexist than non-Greeks, in part because of the group bonding that occurs in these organizations. However, Hinrichs and Rosenberg (2002) found that it was not

individual student's Greek affiliation that mattered, but whether there were fraternities and sororities at the school. Since this study was conducted at a single institution, there is no way to assess the school-wide impact of having a Greek system on campus. Instead, individual membership is considered. Respondents are coded as one if they are a member or pledge of a fraternity or sorority, zero otherwise. About one fifth of respondents are members of the Greek system.

Participation on an athletic team may also influence attitudes on sexual minority related policies, as "organized sports are a highly homophobic institution" (Anderson 2002, p. 860). Two types of athletic involvement are considered: intercollegiate and intramural. About one fifth of these students compete in intercollegiate sports, while about 17% play on intramural teams.

Race also appears to be associated with attitudes towards LGB persons (Herek and Capitanio 1999; Sherrod and Nardi 1998). The sample is 63% white, 27% Asian, 5% multiracial, 3% black, and 2% Latino. No racial differences in the analysis are statistically significant, although this may be due to small sample sizes.

Parents' education is included as a proxy for socioeconomic status (Sewell, Haller, and Portes 2001). The respondents are students so it is inappropriate to use their income or education. Students were not asked about their parents' income, because of difficulties in estimation and lack of knowledge. Education was measured categorically, with the categories recoded to represent years (e.g., less than high school is coded as 8, high school graduate is coded as 12, etc.). The average education for both parents is some graduate education.

Southerners are more likely than others to adhere to conservative viewpoints (Quillian 1996; Sears et al. 1997; Smith 1981; Stouffer 1955), but in some instances living in the Midwest may have an even greater impact (Bolzendahl and Myers 2004). Region is divided into the five categories of South, Midwest, Northeast, other U.S.,

and outside the U.S. Region of residence was examined at four time points: birth, age five, age ten, and age fifteen. It was not significant.

The final measure considered was if eligible respondents claimed their incentive (1 if they did, 0 otherwise). Of the 262 respondents who entered an eligible code (94%), only 50 (19%) picked up their incentive. Surprisingly, this had no impact on results.

### *Method*

The models are run with ordered logistic regressions, because of the categorical nature of the outcome measures. The analyses are restricted to respondents answering all of the relevant questions. The response rate is at least 98% or greater for the included measures and the sample size is 278.

## RESULTS

### *Marriage*

Table 4.4 presents order logits results for attitudes towards legalizing gay marriage. Model 1 is the baseline model with all control measures, but no threat measures; model 2 incorporates individual threat measures; model 3 is the same as model 2 except that the individual threat measures are replaced by group threat measures; and model 4 includes both individual and group threat measures.

Individual threat and group threat are each associated with attitudes towards legalizing gay marriage, when included in the models individually (models 2 and 3, respectively) and together (model 4). Someone who feels a strong group threat (the reference category) is more likely to oppose gay marriage than someone who feels less

**Table 4.4. Odds from Ordered Logistic Regression of Opposition to Legalizing Gay Marriage (N = 278)**

	1		2		3		4	
<i>Threats</i>								
Individual Threat								
Unlikely (pos.)			5.87**	(3.15)			4.36**	(2.40)
No opinion			2.48*	(0.97)			1.88	(0.76)
Group Threat								
Strongly disagree					53.46***	(41.95)	45.33***	(36.35)
Disagree					15.75***	(11.63)	13.99***	(10.56)
Agree					8.65**	(6.00)	7.20**	(5.07)
<i>Controls</i>								
Anti-LGB	0.67***	(0.06)	0.67***	(0.06)	0.76**	(0.07)	0.75**	(0.07)
Brother support	19.59***	(7.82)	10.28***	(4.71)	11.61***	(4.96)	7.29***	(3.52)
Brother no opinion	3.92**	(1.75)	2.74*	(1.30)	3.30*	(1.53)	2.68*	(1.30)
Politically conservative	0.54***	(0.06)	0.57***	(0.06)	0.64***	(0.08)	0.68**	(0.08)
Female	1.72	(0.49)	1.74	(0.50)	1.90*	(0.55)	1.88*	(0.55)
Jewish	4.14**	(1.89)	4.17**	(1.90)	4.40**	(2.08)	4.49**	(2.12)
No religion	3.40***	(1.06)	3.81***	(1.22)	3.09***	(0.99)	3.40***	(1.11)
Human Ecology								
Live alone	0.33**	(0.12)	0.34**	(0.12)	0.33**	(0.12)	0.34**	(0.13)
Valid code	3.42*	(1.80)	3.61*	(1.89)	2.97*	(1.57)	3.20*	(1.71)
<i>Cuts<sup>†</sup></i>								
sa vs. a, n, d, sd	-7.87	(1.47)	-7.44	(1.49)	-3.53	(1.68)	-3.33	(1.70)
sa a vs. n, d, sd	-6.22	(1.45)	-5.72	(1.47)	-1.55	(1.71)	-1.31	(1.72)
sa, a, n, vs. d, sd	-4.92	(1.44)	-4.39	(1.45)	-0.14	(1.70)	0.11	(1.72)
sa, a, n vs. d, sd	-2.65	(1.40)	-2.06	(1.42)	2.27	(1.68)	2.59	(1.70)
Log likelihood	-265.33		-259.64		-248.28		-244.56	
Df	10		12		13		15	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.32		0.34		0.37		0.38	
BIC	-955		-955		-972		-968	

Notes: Values less than 1 indicate support for legalizing gay marriage, values greater than 1 indicate opposition. Comparison groups are other religion; attend religious services less than weekly; and live with someone other than parents, spouse, or partner.

<sup>†</sup>sa = strongly agree, a = agree, n = neither, d = disagree, sd = strongly disagree

\* p < .05

\*\* p < .01

\*\*\* p < .001

of a threat. In fact, group threat is one of the strongest factors associated with opposition to legalizing gay marriage. People feeling personally threatened are also more likely to oppose legalizing gay marriage. When individual threat and group threat are included in the same model (model 4) almost all of the threat measures

retain the same significance as when they are alone in the models. This provides support for hypothesis 3 that both individual threat and group threat are associated with attitudes towards legalizing gay marriage.

After controlling for threat, political conservatism and negative views of LGB persons are associated with opposition to legalizing gay marriage, while holding positive views of a brother's same-sex relationship is one of the strongest non-threat indicators of support for legalizing gay marriage. Being female, Jewish, no religion, or studying human ecology are all associated with greater support for legalizing gay marriage. Those who live alone are less supportive of legalizing gay marriage.

Comparison of BIC scores leads to a slightly different conclusion than that deduced from the coefficients. For hypothesis 3 to be supported, we would expect the smallest BIC to be the one for model 4. Instead, the smallest BIC is -972 (13 df) for model 3. This indicates that the model with group threat alone fits the data better than the other three models. Also, the baseline model is better than the individual threat model, since the BIC is equivalent and the baseline model has fewer degrees of freedom. Finally, although the model with both threats is an improvement over the baseline and individual threat models, it is not an improvement over the group threat model. This leads to the conclusion that group threat is the only threat associated with attitudes towards legalizing gay marriage.

The results do not provide a strong indication of a relationship between the threats. The threat odds decline slightly from the single threat model to the dual threat model. However, there is no concurrent decline in the significance of these measures, except for one level of individual threat significance going from weakly significant to not significant. There is also no significant interaction between the two threats.

*Job Benefits*

Table 4.5 presents results for attitudes towards providing same-sex couples with job benefits. The models are the same as for gay marriage, with model 1 the baseline model, model 2 the baseline model with individual threat, model 3 the baseline model with group threat, and model 4 the baseline model with both threats.

**Table 4.5. Logits from Ordered Logistic Regression of Opposition to Providing Job Benefits (N = 278)**

	1		2		3		4	
<i>Threats</i>								
Individual threat								
Unlikely			3.86*	(2.25)			2.86	(1.69)
No opinion			1.93	(0.84)			1.45	(0.65)
Group threat								
Strongly disagree					16.53***	(12.61)	14.27**	(11.04)
Disagree					10.20**	(7.30)	9.50**	(6.90)
Agree					7.56**	(4.88)	6.8**	(4.44)
<i>Controls</i>								
Anti-LGB	0.67***	(0.06)	0.67***	(0.06)	0.70***	(0.06)	0.70***	(0.06)
Brother support	13.60***	(6.04)	8.65***	(4.39)	7.87***	(3.74)	6.10**	(3.20)
Brother no opinion	3.39*	(1.64)	2.64	(1.37)	2.33	(1.15)	2.07	(1.08)
Politically conservative	0.57***	(0.06)	0.60***	(0.07)	0.65**	(0.08)	0.68**	(0.08)
Age	0.80*	(0.08)	0.78*	(0.08)	0.78*	(0.08)	0.77*	(0.08)
Attend often	0.23**	(0.11)	0.23**	(0.11)	0.24**	(0.12)	0.24**	(0.12)
Attend rare	0.57	(0.21)	0.54	(0.21)	0.52	(0.20)	0.49	(0.19)
Attend some	0.51	(0.21)	0.48	(0.20)	0.50	(0.21)	0.48	(0.20)
Attend weekly	0.31*	(0.16)	0.34*	(0.18)	0.31*	(0.16)	0.33*	(0.17)
Dual degree	0.01*	(0.01)	0.01*	(0.02)	0.00*	(0.01)	0.00*	(0.01)
<i>Cuts<sup>†</sup></i>								
sa vs. a, d, sd	-15.77	(2.67)	-15.74	(2.69)	-13.41	(2.73)	-13.59	(2.76)
sa & a vs. d, sd	-13.96	(2.64)	-13.91	(2.66)	-11.21	(2.72)	-11.38	(2.75)
sa, a, d, vs. sd	-10.62	(2.56)	-10.53	(2.59)	-7.83	(2.66)	-7.98	(2.68)
Log likelihood	-208.59		-205.81		-201.36		-199.55	
Df	10		12		13		15	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.31		0.32		0.33		.34	
BIC	-1074		-1068		-1071		-1064	

Notes: Values less than 1 indicate support for providing same-sex couples with job benefits, values greater than 1 indicate opposition. Comparison groups are male, attend religious services not more than sometimes, college is other than human ecology or dual degree program.

<sup>†</sup>sa = strongly agree, a = agree, d = disagree, sd = strongly disagree

- \* p < .05
- \*\* p < .01
- \*\*\* p < .001

The key result is that group threat alone is associated with support for providing job benefits when both threats are considered simultaneously (model 4), but individual threat is significant when it is the only threat in the model (model 2). These findings provide support for hypothesis 2 that group threat alone is associated with negative views of sexual minorities.

Comparison of fit statistics, however, suggests a somewhat different story. The baseline model has the smallest BIC of the four models. This indicates that while the threat measures are significant the model that best fits the data, and therefore provides the most explanatory power, is the model without either threat (model 1). In other words, this evidence supports hypothesis 4 that neither threat is associated with attitudes towards LGB persons.

As with the marriage analysis, there is some evidence of a relationship between individual threat and group threat. The significance of individual threat when it is alone (model 2) and its when coupled with group threat (model 4) suggest that individual threat might be acting as a proxy for group threat, when group threat is excluded from the analysis. However, as with the marriage analysis, there is no indication of an interaction between individual and group threat.

## DISCUSSION

Results from the models and comparisons of the fits statistics provide conflicting information, as do the analyses themselves. The marriage analysis suggests that both individual and group threats are associated with opposition to legalizing gay marriage, while the job benefits analysis indicates that group threat alone is associated with opposition to providing same-sex couples with job benefits. The fit statistics, in contrast, suggest that group threat is relevant to opinions about gay marriage, while

neither threat is related to views on job benefits. Can this seemingly contradictory information be reconciled? The answer is yes.

Recall that the study sample does not represent the U.S. population. The sample is young, highly educated, politically liberal, predominantly from the Northeast, and of low religiosity. All of these factors are independently associated with greater tolerance and more accepting views of sexual minorities (Herek 2000; Sherrod and Nardi 1998; Simon 1998). With a sample more tolerant than the general population we expect our findings to be weaker than for the population as a whole; thus it is surprising that there is any statistically significant relationship between either threat and policy attitudes. It is even more startling that both threats show some association with policy attitudes. The incongruity of the fit statistics and the significant threat measures could be a consequence of sample composition. Because the sample consists of respondents more tolerant than the average American, the impact of threat on model fit might be weaker than for the population at large. Thus, both threats could be associated with policy attitudes even though they are not strong enough to improve model fit.

The difference in fit statistics for the two policy issues is intriguing in its own right. As previously noted, the model with only group threat best fits the data for same-sex marriage, while the model without either threat provides the best fit for job benefits (even though threats are significant independently). This may suggest that the idea of gay marriage is more disturbing than the idea of providing same-sex couples with job benefits. If this is the case, then we would expect a stronger association between the threats and opposition to legalizing gay marriage than between the threats and opposition to providing job benefits. This is what we see with the fit statistics. The correlations between the threats and the policy measures provide further evidence for

this argument, as the correlations are greater for marriage than job benefits. However, since this analysis utilizes a convenience sample this conclusion requires verification.

## CONCLUSION

The results demonstrate a relationship between students' feelings of threat and their opposition to LGB civil rights. The relationship is stronger for gay marriage than job benefits. In other words, people who feel threatened are more likely to oppose legalizing gay marriage than they are to oppose providing same-sex couples with job benefits. This suggests that law makers striving for LGB equality will have greater success passing legislation providing same-sex couples with job benefits than in legalizing same-sex marriage.

The significance of both individual threat and group threat brings into question how the two threats could simultaneously relate to policy attitudes. Gender role and masculinity theories incorporate individual and group threats, but they do not provide a comprehensive argument explaining how the threats may relate to attitudes concurrently.

Although both threats are significant for the marriage analysis, it appears that group threat is the stronger of the two, as demonstrated by the fit statistics. At this point it is unclear how group threat functions, whether as described by hegemonic masculinity arguments, gender role perspectives, or according to some other paradigm. Further exploration is necessary to determine the specifics of the relationship between group threat and policy opposition.

The existence of a statistically significant relationship between individual threat, group threat, and policy attitudes is somewhat surprising since the sample is considerably less politically conservative, less religious, and younger than the general

U.S. population. This provides some evidence that the relationship does actually exist. However, this should be verified using a nationally representative sample.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This research attempts to address the question of how threat is related to biased attitudes. The issue is important for scholars, policy makers, and citizens alike. One of the goals of bias scholars is to understand the factors and mechanisms associated with biased attitudes. Policy makers, in contrast, can directly use information about threat and attitudes to design policies promoting equality that better address the concerns of their constituents and opponents. Moreover, legislators on the other side of the issue sometimes use threat to advance policies that exacerbate inequalities. For instance, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 law makers latched onto public fears and passed legislation infringing on civil rights that has been used to target Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent (CAIR 2005). These legislators recognized people's worries and exploited them to successfully pass legislation. That this example involves the use of threats to move away from equality highlights the need for pro-equality legislators to draft bills that promote equality and address both individual and group threats.

The project considers the relationship between individual threat, group threat, and policy attitudes in the three domains of gender, race, and sexual orientation. The three sets of analyses utilized the same framework, which enables comparisons of the results. The analyses for gender, race, and sexual orientation all used two policy questions for outcome measures, individual threat and group threat, and the same basic set of controls. The specifics of which control measures are employed in each analysis depend on the models. For instance, insignificant background measures were excluded from the heterosexism models due to limitations imposed by small cell sizes. The analyses also differ by year and data source. The gender and race data are both drawn from the General Social Survey (1996 for the gender analysis and 1994 for the race

study). No available dataset included the measures needed for the sexual orientation analysis, so the necessary information was obtained through a survey of college students administered in the winter of 2006-2007.

Comparison of the results from the three analyses reveals similar patterns in the relationships between the threats and policy attitudes. In all three cases both threats are associated with policy attitudes; although not with all policy measures. The results demonstrate that people who feel threatened are more likely than others to oppose policies aimed at helping the group posing the threat. This was expected, but had not been previously demonstrated for attitudes relating to women or sexual minorities. There also appears to be a relationship between individual threat and group threat. This result was not predicted by the theoretical models or previous research. It appears as though the relationship between the threats and attitudes may be stronger for group threat than for individual threat. These findings lead to two important questions. First, why might both threats be associated with policy opposition? And second, what implications do these results have for existing theoretical arguments? However, before addressing these questions, it is important to consider the limitations of this research.

## LIMITATIONS

Although the results from the three analyses show similar patterns, there are serious limitations to consider before drawing any conclusions. The first set of issues relate to the use of survey data. The second concern the extent to which the analyses are comparable. Questions of comparability arise because of methodological differences in the analyses and the different social positions of the groups.

### *Survey Data*

The decision to use survey data was based on the precedent, particularly in the racial prejudice literature, of utilizing survey data to assess attitudes (Alwin et al. 1992; Huber and Spitze 1981; Huddy et al. 2000; Lewis 2003; Schuman et al. 1985; Schuman et al. 1997; Spitze and Waite 1981; Steeh and Krysan 1996; Stouffer 1955; Thornton et al. 1983) and the availability of appropriate measures for two of the analyses. Although cross-sectional survey data offer many advantages, they do not permit assessment of causality. Consequently, it is impossible to conclude from this endeavor whether feelings of threat lead to policy opposition or vice versa.<sup>22</sup>

An additional problem is the use of a convenience sample for the sexual orientation analysis. This portion of the investigation was conducted using a survey to maintain methodological consistency across the three portions of the project. Unlike the gender and race studies, however, there was no existing data set that contained all of the necessary measures. Consequently, data were collected from a convenience sample of college students. Results from convenience samples are not generalizable, which is the greatest weakness of the sexual orientation analysis.

There are some further limitations imposed by the choice of employing survey data instead of data collected using other methodological approaches, which will be discussed in the next section.

### *Group Comparability*

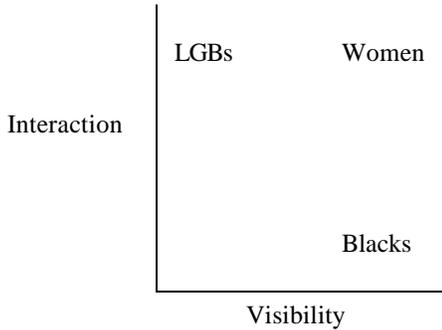
The structure of the project, comparing attitudes towards three different groups, implies that the analyses and groups are comparable. Until now, there has been no discussion as to whether this assumption is valid. The point of similarity that motivated this research is that all three groups are at the bottom of their respective

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<sup>22</sup> A third possibility is that there is no causal relationship at all.

social hierarchies and the objects of bias. Beyond this similarity there are important analytic and substantive issues to consider. First is the extent to which the categories of gender, race, and sexual orientation are similar. In particular, what are the positions of the groups relative to one another and how salient are the respective group identities? Second, the use of surveys from different years and with different measures means that the samples are not identical and the analyses may address different questions.

*Group Position.* Women, blacks, and sexual minorities were selected for this study because they are each the lowest group in their respective category. However, it is unclear how the three groups are positioned relative to one another. (This is part of the reason why research on the intersection of categories is so important.) When the groups' visibility and level of interaction are considered it becomes clear that the groups occupy very different positions in the social system (see figure 5.1).



**Figure 5.1. Social position of women, blacks, and sexual minorities**

Visibility and interaction are two dimensions that help elucidate the position of groups relative to one another. Visibility refers to the ease of visually identifying group members, while interaction is the level of interaction between members of the

in-group and the out-group. Blacks are often readily identifiable by their skin color, so they have high visibility; however many have minimal contact with nonblacks, and especially whites. For instance, a high number of blacks live in segregated communities, limiting their direct interaction with others (Blank 2001; Massey 2001; Massey and Denton 1993). (Alternatively, many whites live in neighborhoods with few blacks.) Also, racial intermarriage is still fairly rare (Qian 1997), so few white families knowingly contain black members. Women, in contrast, interact regularly with men because the majority of families are integrated with respect to gender, and like blacks, are generally easy to recognize, placing them high with respect to both visibility and interaction. Sexual minorities, like women, interact routinely with the sexual majority, in part because families are integrated. However, LGBs are not readily recognizable, meaning that they are high for interaction and low for visibility. Women, blacks, and sexual minorities have varying levels of visibility and interaction, suggesting that the three groups have different experiences relative to their respective out-groups.

*Salience of Group Identity.* A significant limitation of using survey data is the lack of information on the salience of each identity. The stronger an actor's attachment to a group, the more likely she is to perceive and react to a threat to that group (Maass et al. 2003). The stronger the group identification the more likely it is that a threat will be associated with opposition to helping the out-group. However, if the group's identity is not salient, then the link between threat and attitudes will be broken (i.e., actors may recognize a threat without reacting to it.) The surveys utilized for this project contain no measures of group identification, so it is impossible to determine if one category is more salient than another. Without this measure, we assume that all three groups are equally salient; however, we have no way to know if this is true.

*Data Issues.* Although the data used was as consistent as possible across the three analyses, there were some differences that may impact comparability. First, the surveys were conducted in different years and consequently contain different samples. During the inter-survey period there could have been sociopolitical changes or events that altered opinions. As a result, members of the 1994 GSS sample may have answered the same questions very differently if they had been asked again in 1996. We do not and cannot know. The heterosexism segment makes the situation worse, because the survey was conducted after more than ten years elapsed and contains an entirely different set of respondents (college students versus the general population).

The studies may also address different questions, because the three segments do not use the same threat and policy attitude measures. The outcome measure for the race and gender studies both focus on employment, but the heterosexism questions pertain to family relations; two subjects that are substantively very different. Moreover, the threat measures differ for all three studies to ensure that they are salient to the subject of interest. As a result, however, the three studies may differ in ways we cannot ascertain.

#### POSSIBLE DUAL RELEVANCE OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP THREATS

There is consistent evidence that both threats are often associated with policy opposition, but it is not clear why. A logical explanation is that there is a relationship between individual threat and group threat. The analyses considered two basic types of relationships: interaction and proxy.

All three analyses suggest the existence of a relationship between the two threats. This is seen by the coefficients' declining magnitudes and significances when the models go from single threat to dual threat. As there is little to no evidence of an interaction between the two threats, this instead suggests the possibility of a proxy

relationship. Additionally, in one of the sexual orientation models individual threat was significant when it was alone in the model, but not significant once group threat was added. This also suggests that there might be a proxy relationship between the two threats. A proxy relationship would mean that threats in a single threat model spuriously capture the effect of the omitted threat, and consequently overstate the effect of the included threat. But why might the threats be related?

The most obvious answer is that people who feel threatened for one reason may be more likely to feel threatened for another reason. In other words, people who identify an individual threat would be more likely to identify a group threat than people who do not identifying an individual threat and similarly people discerning a group threat would be more likely to feel personally threatened than people not identifying a group threat. This explanation is consistent with the moderate correlations found between the two threats.

An alternative account is that one threat leads to the other. As Blumer (1958) argues, a strong group attachment may influence individual level views. If this is true, then people who identify a group threat may extrapolate and say “because group A is threatened and I’m a member of group A, I am therefore threatened.” This logic would also easily apply in the reverse direction – if someone feels personally threatened because they are a member of group A, that might increase her awareness of the issues surrounding group A, and consequently influence her perceptions of any danger facing the group. This argument relies on an actor’s recognition of personal threat caused by group membership. It is more difficult to conceive of a scenario where an actor’s feelings of personal threat (unaffected by group affiliation) lead to awareness of group threat. However this approach of one threat leading to the other would suggest an interaction between the two threats rather than a proxy relationship.

Determining whether there is a relationship between individual threat and group threat was one of the goals of this research. The results suggest the possibility of such a relationship, but they are inconclusive about the type of relationship. The inability to precisely confirm the existence and type of relationship between individual threat and group threat is largely due to limitations imposed by small sample sizes. A stronger test of the relationship will require larger samples and longitudinal data.

#### RECONCILING EXISTING THEORIES WITH THE FINDINGS

The analyses demonstrate that individual threat and group threat are both associated with policy attitudes vis-à-vis women, blacks, and sexual minorities. This raises two questions. First, can existing theories accommodate both forms of threat? Second, can any of the theories cover all three types of bias? It is certainly possible that no theory can adequately encompass both threats and all forms of bias; however the similarities in results suggest that the idea of an encompassing theory is at least worth exploring.

Six theoretical approaches were presented in the three analyses: gender identity, gender norms, masculinity, split labor market, power threat, and group position. Table 5.1 describes how the models were used in the analyses, their original applications, and the threats they identify. The threat columns show that only the gender norms and masculinity arguments incorporate individual threat and group threat. The other models would all require expansion to incorporate the excluded threat. The gender norms and masculinity perspectives are also the only two arguments that have previously been utilized for more than one type of bias (both have been applied to sexism and heterosexism). So can the single threat theories incorporate the second threat? And which models, if any, can encompass all three types of bias?

**Table 5.1. Theoretical Models' Threat Type, Analysis, and Original Application**

Model	Individual		Analysis	Original Application
	Threat	Group Threat		
Gender identity	x		Gender	Gender
Gender norms	x	x	Sexual orientation	Gender, sexual orientation
Masculinity	x	x	Sexual orientation	Gender, sexual orientation
Split labor market	x		Race	Ethnicity
Power threat		x	Race	Race
Group position		x	Race	Race

### *Gender Norms and Gender Identity Perspectives*

The gender norms and gender identity arguments both focus on gender roles. The gender norms model contends that people who espouse traditional gender role beliefs oppose people who deviate from traditional gender roles. The threats posed by gender role “deviants” apply at both the individual and group levels: “deviants” may threaten the mental well-being and perceived social position of “traditionalists,” and they also pose a threat to the gender hierarchy. This argument applies equally well for attitudes towards feminist women and sexual minorities, especially those who display characteristics stereotypically associated with the other gender.

The gender identity perspective takes a slightly different approach, concentrating on how people view themselves. It asserts that actors are often hostile to people portraying a gender identity different from their own. This means that adherents of traditional gender roles are likely to be unfriendly towards feminists (regardless of gender) and sexual minorities, while those who adopt nontraditional gender role identities will tend to oppose people with traditional gender identities. Threat emerges when two people’s gender identities conflict. For instance, an assertive woman embodies masculine traits, which threatens a masculine man’s sense of masculinity and a feminine woman’s sense of femininity. There is no sense of group threat and it is difficult to incorporate it into the argument because identity is an individual level characteristic.

Both of these approaches can apply to discussions of sexism and heterosexism; although I am unaware of any attempts to apply the gender identity argument to sexual minorities. Additional groups can be accommodated by the gender norms model if the idea of roles applies to the relevant groups in question. For instance, if whites have roles A, B, C and blacks have roles 1, 2, 3, then if blacks try to do A, B, or C they are adopting the roles of whites and there may be conflict. This argument does not seem to apply well for racial hostility as there are few race specific roles; however, it might do better for ethnic conflict as there is a tradition of occupational ethnic homogeneity (see the discussion of split labor markets for more on this subject).

Extension of the gender identity argument to race or ethnicity requires that individuals identify as part of the group, group affiliation is denoted through various group specific behaviors, and a group's position is threatened if their group specific behavior is adopted by an out-group. The first factor is not problematic as many people readily identify with at least one racial or ethnic group. Second, are the various indicators that signal group membership. Many times these markers are physical attributes such as skin color, hair texture, or nose shape that are difficult to replicate without sophisticated make-up or surgery. These types of identifying symbols do not fit well within the identity model framework. Markers that are fairly easy to replicate such as vocal mannerisms and costumes are more in line with the model.

The final issue is whether racial or ethnic identity can be threatened as easily as gender identity. Are there behaviors characteristic of one group that members of another group might emulate? Part of what makes the gender identity argument convincing are the concepts of masculinity and femininity. A man's status depends not only on his biological attributes, but also on his masculinity. The highest status men are generally both masculine and male. Racial and ethnic identification do not

generally require this dual approach at least from the perspective of the out-group.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, even if someone adopts behavior identified with a different racial or ethnic group, she retains her own racial/ethnic status. For example, the hip hop style associated with inner city black ghettos has been widely embraced by youth from other socio-economic and racial backgrounds. These youths may have adopted the fashions of the black inner city, but few people believe they are trying to “become” black.<sup>24</sup>

### *Masculinity Arguments*

Masculinity arguments are one of the two theoretical approaches, along with the gender norms perspective, that includes both individual threat and group threat. These models also apply equally well to sexism and heterosexism. Masculinity arguments contend that there is a distinction between men and women. The genders are currently situated with women subordinate to men. Moreover, the dominance structure requires that the superordinate group be not just biologically male, but also masculine. Men who are not appropriately masculine are not considered “real men.” According to these strictures, men who have sex with other men are not masculine, and are therefore subordinate to “real men.” The desire to preserve this hierarchical system and one’s place in it, leads to both personal and group threats.

By design, the arguments address sexism and heterosexism, but it is less clear that they can be extended to incorporate racism. At the most basic level, masculinity arguments are about defending a social hierarchy. The U.S. has a racial hierarchy with

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<sup>23</sup> There are some reports of in-groups rejecting members who do not satisfactorily demonstrate group affiliation. One example is Chicano children being labeled “white” for being too successful academically (Portes and Zhou 2001).

<sup>24</sup> The phenomenon of “wiggers” may prove a contradiction; however I am not convinced that these individuals truly want to become black, rather than simply adopting those characteristics that they think are desirable. My thanks to David Harris for mentioning this possibility.

whites at the top and blacks on the bottom (Charles 2001, p. 248), so that component of masculinity arguments applies. A second aspect of masculinity arguments is the importance of dominant group members embodying the ideal characteristics of the dominant group. This leads some men to actively prove their masculinity. There does not appear to be a parallel for race relations, because there are not behaviors that distinguish whites from blacks. Whites cannot “lose” their whiteness, nor do whites need to prove their whiteness to ensure that they retain their status. This issue makes it difficult to extend masculinity arguments to race relations.

### *Split Labor Market*

The split labor market argument contends that conflict emerges between people in various employment classes, when a cheaper labor force enters the market (Bonacich 1972). Individual outcomes are paramount; group membership matters only so far as it impacts individuals. Incorporation of group threat into the model would imply that although individuals want to project their jobs, they also want to preserve their group’s position. This is certainly reasonable.

The model does not extend as well to other forms of bias. The model works for ethnic conflict, because there is a history of members of ethnic groups collectively entering certain markets, such as Jews in the garment industry (Portes and Manning 1986) and Irish in law enforcement (Lieberson 2001). As women’s labor market participation increased, employers in certain fields began to displace male employees with female workers who could be paid less, and various occupations became increasingly feminized (Jackson 1998; Reskin 2001). Although sexual minorities stereotypically gravitate towards select professions, I am unaware of any evidence indicating that they displaced or undercut workers already in those jobs. So the

argument may apply to gender, but it does not appear to accommodate sexual orientation.

A further limitation of the split labor market argument is that it is inherently an economic model. Since economic competition is only one source of threat, this model cannot be used to explain other forms of threat. For instance, the split labor market cannot account for threats of pollution caused by intergroup marriages or fears of neighborhood decline.

### *Power Threat Hypothesis*

Blalock (1967) conceived of the power threat hypothesis as a way to explain whites' hostility towards blacks. He asserts that as the population of a subordinate group grows relative to the dominant group, members of the dominant group will fear a threat to their political power. The model focuses on group threat and race relations, and considers neither individual threat nor relations between non-racial groups.

The inclusion of individual threat would be somewhat problematic for Blalock's argument, because individual actors are not considered. To incorporate individual level threat the model would first have to recognize individuals. Then the model could propose that increases in the relative size of the in-group increase the probability that individuals will interact with members of the out-group and consequently face a greater chance of being harmed by a member of the out-group.<sup>25</sup> This would require either a complete overhaul of the model or the recognition that the model in its original form accounts for only one aspect of racial prejudice.

Extending the model to other types of bias is also not straightforward, because the argument asserts that changes in relative population proportions lead to increased

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<sup>25</sup> This is an inversion of the contact hypothesis (Allport 1958; Charles 2001; Kane and Sanchez 1994; Quillian and Campbell 2003) which argues that contact between members of difference groups will lead to greater tolerance.

threat. To extend the argument to nonracial groups two things must occur. First, there must be a change in population proportions; second, the change in relative group sizes must result in a potential threat to the dominant group. The proportion of women in the population has not changed substantially; however women's rate of employment has risen. This suggests that while the power threat hypothesis cannot extend to sexism generally, it could be used to explain attitudes towards women in the workplace. With respect to sexual minorities, it is unclear how we could chart changes in the actual LGB population, because we do not have accurate estimates of current or past populations (Berrill 1992; Green et al. 2001). However, we could probably safely argue that sexual minorities are more public now than at almost any time in U.S. history, so they have a stronger presence now than previously. This increase in visibility could be equated with a perceived increase in population proportion. In other words, because sexual minorities are more visible, it appears as though there are more of them.

The model was designed to explain political and economic threats. This may seem to be particularly problematic for heterosexism, as sexual minorities do not pose an economic threat. They could, however, pose a political threat. If sexual minorities and their supporters gain enough political power, then they can implement policies that "threaten the moral foundation of American society."

### *Group Position Model*

Blumer's group position model, like Blalock's power threat hypothesis, focuses on racial group threat. However, the group position model is more flexible and better able to accommodate individual threat and nonracial forms of bias. Individual threat can be incorporated into Blumer's argument with only a modest weakening of group threat as the primary source of prejudice. The group position model contends

that four factors are associated with racial prejudice: the perception that the out-group poses a threat to the in-group, the conviction that the in-group is superior to the out-group, the feeling that the out-group is fundamentally different or alien, and the belief that the in-group is entitled to certain privileges (Blumer 1958). These four factors are necessary for the emergence of prejudice, which is fundamentally a group level phenomenon. The addition of individual threat has no direct impact on the four original components, assuming that the threat involves awareness of group affiliation. (For example, when an actor feels she is in danger because she is a member of a certain group.) Furthermore, the three non-threat factors might help explain why an individual threat could lead to group prejudice, instead of anger directed solely at the specific source of the threat. If the actor believes that her group affiliation is the reason she is under threat, then her conviction in the in-group's superiority and entitlements, along with her belief that as a member of her group she is fundamentally different from the out-group could lead her to hold negative views of the out-group as a whole. One strength of this argument is that it shows how there could be a relationship between individual threat and group threat. Furthermore, Blumer himself argues that a strong sense of group affiliation may influence individual level views (1958). This supports the contention of a relationship between the threats. The argument does not appear to apply if the actor believes she is threatened for her own sake and not because of her group membership.

Blumer's discussion is ostensibly about race prejudice, but there is no reason that it cannot be extended to gender prejudice or sexuality prejudice. The four feelings that Blumer associates with racial prejudice apply equally well to sexism and heterosexism. First, as described in the gender and sexual orientation analyses, women and sexual minorities may pose a threat to men and non-LGB persons. Dominant group members also often believe that members of subordinate groups are

fundamentally different or alien. This is amply demonstrated for gender by the well know book title “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” (Gray 1992). Sexual minorities are considered different because they are outside the “naturally” “dichotomized sexual world” (Connell 1987, p. 248). Furthermore, adherents to gender hierarchies dictate that men are superior to women and heterosexuals superior to nonheterosexuals; they also contend that those atop the hierarchies are entitled to certain privileges. These are the third and fourth of Blumer’s four preconditions for prejudice. Thus, both sexism and heterosexism can fit into Blumer’s group position model.

#### FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The question of how feelings of threat relate to policy attitudes is an important one and it deserves further attention. The first thing to do to expand this research is to run the heterosexism analysis with a nationally representative sample. This will provide a more accurate assessment of how threat relates to anti-LGB policy attitudes.

Next, the models should be examined in additional contexts to determine how well they apply. Two contexts worthy of study are immigration and religion. Xenophobia and religious bias are two of the most universally relevant forms of bias. Religion and religious difference have incited (or at been presented as motivating) such historic conflicts as the Crusades and the Holocaust, and the conflicts in Sudan, Northern Ireland, and India/Pakistan, to name a few (See 1986; Wellman and Tokuno 2004). Xenophobia probably has an even longer history, but its current relevance is primarily due to migration. The debate over illegal immigration in the U.S. is one reason for studying xenophobia as is the intense scrutiny it receives in Europe. (This is partly due to a difference in semantics—what we in the U.S. study as racism, Europeans often study as xenophobia. It does, however, go beyond language, as the

European approach to xenophobia generally incorporates ethnicity, language, and potentially religion (e.g., Aronowitz 1994; Krueger and Pischke 1997; Semyonov et al. 2004).

Prejudice on the basis of age and disability are two other areas worth exploration. Ageism is becoming increasingly important with longer life expectancies and the growing population of older individuals. Treatment of people with disabilities is different. Here it is less an issue of a population and more an issue of increased awareness that people with disabilities are as worthy of respect and deserve to be treated equally. (Of course, it could also be that lobbies for people with disabilities have become more powerful.)

These two areas may yield fundamentally different results than those for the gender, race, and sexual orientation analyses presented here. Any disparity may be due to the nonascriptive nature of age and disability status. If we live long enough we will all be old and if we are unlucky we could end up in a wheelchair. This suggests that ageism and bias against people with disabilities may be less associated with threat and more contingent on feelings of pity or revulsion. However, threat could also be relevant if people somehow believe that these “conditions” are contagious.

Another area that requires more work is the opinions of subordinate groups towards dominant groups and other subordinate groups. This matters not only because as social scientists we should study subordinate groups as well as dominant ones, but also because these relationships are important to the groups involved, shape their interactions, and can potentially have a national impact. For instance, we need more papers like Lee’s (2002) to help understand why Korean and Jewish merchants are targets of racial conflict. There is also little work done that explores how sexual minorities view other sexual minorities and the sexual majority.

APPENDIX A  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR HETEROSEXISM ANALYSIS

Note: Because the questions are not numbered in the questionnaire, there is no way to show skip patterns.

**Study of Student Life, Experiences, and Attitudes** [Exit this survey >>](#)

**Consent Form**

**Student Life, Experiences, and Attitudes Survey**

You are invited to take part in a research study designed to assess the experiences and attitudes of Cornell students. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

**What the study is about:** The purpose of the study is to learn about the life, experiences, and attitudes of Cornell students. You must be an undergraduate 18 or older to participate in the study.

**What we will ask you to do:** If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to take a survey. The survey includes questions about what you have experienced since coming to college and what you think about certain subjects. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

**Risk and benefits:** There is the risk that you will find some of the questions to be sensitive. While there is no personal benefit to you, the results of the study may help improve the condition of life for you fellow students.

**Compensation:** Upon completion of the survey you will receive a number that you will take to the sociology office in Uris Hall to receive a coupon for a drink at Collegetown Bagels.

**Taking part is voluntary:** Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions in the survey that you do not wish to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with Cornell University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

**Your answer will be kept private:** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the

records. However, your answers are not being submitted over a secure server, so it is possible that they will be intercepted.

**If you have questions:** The researcher on the study is Judy Rosenstein. Please ask any questions you have before you take the survey by contacting Judy Rosenstein at [jer33@cornell.edu](mailto:jer33@cornell.edu). If you have any questions later, you may contact Judy at the above e-mail address. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the University Committee on Human Subjects (UCHS) at 607-255-5138 or access their website at <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/Compliance/UCHS/homepageUCHS.htm>

You may print a copy of this form for your records or request a copy from Judy Rosenstein at [jer33@cornell.edu](mailto:jer33@cornell.edu).

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the UCHS on September 10, 2006.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions that I have asked. I am 18 years old and consent to participate in the study.

\*

I consent

I do not consent

## Introduction

Thank you for participating in a study of student life, experiences, and attitudes. Your participation is voluntary. I will endeavor to keep your responses confidential, so do not write your name anywhere in the survey. Please be aware, however, that your answers are not being submitted over a secure server. You may skip any questions you do not feel comfortable answering.

Instructions: For each question, please mark the appropriate box or write in your answer, as indicated.

**\* Are you a Cornell student?**

Yes

No

**\* Are you an undergraduate?**

Yes

No

**\* Are you 18 years old or older?**

Yes

No

## Student Life and Activities

**What is your classification (year in school)?**

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year
- Other (please specify)

**What is your college?**

- Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Architecture, Art and Planning
- Arts and Sciences
- Engineering
- Hotel Administration
- Human Ecology
- Industrial and Labor Relations
- Other (please specify)

**Which of the following best describes your current living arrangements while at school?**

- Residence hall
- Off-campus house/apartment
- Fraternity or sorority house
- University cooperative
- Parents' house
- Other (please specify)

**With whom do you live while attending Cornell? (Please check all that apply.)**

- Alone
- Parent(s)
- Spouse
- Boyfriend/Girlfriend
- Children
- Roommate(s) -- if not included in one of the above categories
- Other (please specify)

**Are you a member of an intercollegiate or club athletic team?**

- No
- Yes, an intercollegiate team
- Yes, a club team

**Are you a member of an intramural athletic team?**

- No
- Yes

**Are you a member or pledge of a fraternity or sorority?**

- No
- Yes

## Attitudes

Now we are going to switch gears and ask about your attitudes towards two groups of people who have both been in the news a lot in the past few months: people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual and people who are Muslim. We believe it is important to hear what you think about these groups and the often sensitive issues surrounding them.

**Thinking about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, sometimes wrong, or not wrong at all?**

- Always wrong
- Almost always wrong
- Sometimes wrong
- Not wrong at all

**Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement "people of the same sex should have the right to marry."**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither disagree nor agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Do you favor or oppose same-sex couples getting the same job benefits as are now given to married couples, such as insurance and pension benefits?**

- Strongly favor
- Favor
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

**Do you think being homosexual is something people choose to be or do you think it is something they cannot change?**

- Something people choose to be
- Something they cannot change

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

**If I saw two men holding hands in public, I would be more disgusted than if I saw a man and a woman holding hands.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Gay men are not a threat to the safety of children.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**If a member of my sex made an advance toward me, I would be flattered.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Gay men tend to act like women.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Lesbians tend to act like men.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**If a member of my sex made an advance toward me, I would feel angry.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Gay men and lesbians should be allowed to teach in elementary schools.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Allowing gay and lesbian couples to legally marry would undermine the traditional American family.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Gay and lesbian couples can be as good parents as heterosexual couples.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Now we are going to present you with a scenario that we would like to get your opinions on:

It is the end of November and you gather with the rest of your family for Thanksgiving dinner. Your older brother Sam, with whom you are very close, has brought home a male friend Mike. While everyone is seated around the table, Sam announces that he and Mike are in love and plan to spend their lives together and raise a family.

**How do you feel about Sam's relationship? Do you ...**

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

**When you think of Sam's announcement, what impact do you think it would have on your relationship with him?**

- Very positive impact
- Positive impact
- No impact
- Negative impact
- Very negative impact

**Now please think about if Sam and Mike had children together. Do you think you would feel the same or differently about these children as compared to children that came from Sam partnering with a woman?**

- Same
- Differently
- Don't know

We are now going to switch gears and ask your thoughts on Muslims.

**Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of Muslims?**

- Very favorable
- Somewhat favorable
- Somewhat unfavorable
- Very unfavorable
- No opinion

**Some people have expressed concern about the rise of Islamic extremism in this country. What about you, are you at all concerned about a possible rise of Islamic extremism in our country these days?**

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not too concerned
- Not at all concerned

**Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right: "The Islamic religion is more likely than other religions to encourage violence among its believers," or "The Islamic religion does not encourage more violence than other religions."**

- The Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers
- The Islamic religion does not encourage more violence than others

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

**All Muslims should not be required to register their whereabouts with the federal government.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Muslim places of worship, such as mosques, should be closely monitored and surveilled by U.S. law enforcement agencies.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**U.S. government agencies should not profile citizens as potential threats based on being Muslim or having Middle Eastern heritage.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Muslim civic and volunteer associations should be infiltrated by undercover law enforcement agents to keep watch on their activities and fundraising.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**There will be another terrorist attack in the United States within the next 12 months.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**I am not personally in danger of being a victim of a terrorist attack.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## Background

### Your sex:

Male

Female

### Your age:

### Your race or ethnic group (mark all that apply):

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

### Your citizenship status:

United States citizen

U.S. permanent resident (green card holder) and citizen of another country

Citizen of another country with a student visa or other non-immigrant visa

In contemporary times, some people move around a lot. Please indicate the state or country in which you lived at various points in your life. If you lived outside the U.S. please select "other".

**Where were you born?**

**Please specify where you were born.**

**Where did you live when you were 5 years old?**

**Please specify where you lived when you were 5 years old.**

**Where did you live when you were 10 years old?**

**Please specify where you lived when you were 10 years old.**

**Where did you live when you were 15 years old?**

**Please specify where you lived when you were 15 years old.**

People's identities are shaped by many different things. Sometimes experiences influence how a person views him or herself, sometimes they don't. We would like to know about both your experiences and your identity. We'll start with your experiences.

**Are you currently involved in a romantic relationship?**

Yes

No

**Since the age of 16, have you ever been sexually active (with opposite or same sex partner)? By sexually active we mean not only intercourse, but any form of genital contact.**

Yes

No

**If yes...**

**Have you been sexual active within the past year?**

Yes

No

**If you have been sexually active, has it been with...?**

- Opposite sex partner(s) only
- Sometimes have sex with people of the same sex, but primarily have sex with people of the opposite sex
- Sometimes have sex with people of the opposite sex, but primarily have sex with people of the same sex
- Same sex partner(s) only

Now we would like to know about how you identify yourself.

**On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is heterosexual or straight and 10 is gay or lesbian, where would you put yourself?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

**How many Cornell undergraduates do you know who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual?**

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-9
- 10 or more

**We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Where would you place yourself on a scale ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative?**

- Extremely liberal
- Liberal
- Slightly liberal
- Moderate, middle of the road
- Slightly conservative
- Conservative
- Extremely conservative

**Do you belong to a political party? If so, which one?**

- No, belong to no political party
- Yes, Democrat
- Yes, Republican
- Yes, Independent
- Other (please specify)

**What is your religious preference?**

- Protestant
- Catholic
- Jewish
- None
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Orthodox Christian
- Native American
- Inter-nondenominational
- Other
- No religious affiliation

**If Protestant:**

**What is your denomination?**

**If other:**

**What is your religious affiliation?**

**How often do you attend religious services?**

- Never
- Less than once a year
- About once or twice a year
- Several times a year
- About once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Nearly every week
- Every week
- Several times a week

**What is the highest level of education achieved by each of your parents?**

Mother

Father

**Personal Code**

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Below you are going to be asked to create a code that is unique to you. You will use this code to receive certificate for a free drink. You cannot receive the certificate without the code. Your identity cannot be determined from the code.

**\* To generate your unique code please enter the following in the space below in the order given and as it appears on your student id (when appropriate):**

- The first letter of your first name**
- The last letter of your last name**
- Your day (not date) of birth (use 2 digits)**
- The first letter of the place you were born**
- The last 3 digits of your student id number**

**For instance, John W. Smith who was born on June 8, 1986 in Albany, NY with student id number 123456 would be:**

**JH08A456**

**IMPORTANT: Record this code.**

**To obtain your Collegetown Bagels gift card take the code and your student id to the SOCIOLOGY office on the 3rd floor of Uris Hall. Go in Monday through Friday from 10:30 - 12:30 or 1:30 - 3:30. Please wait at least one full business day before going to the sociology office to ensure that your gift card is available. You CANNOT take the code directly to Collegetown Bagels. You MUST receive a coupon from the sociology office first.**

APPENDIX B  
RECRUITMENT POSTER



Want a free drink from Collegetown  
Bagels?

Just take a quick soc. survey!

Go to:

[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/jer33/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/jer33/survey.html)

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

Soc. Survey – Collegetown Bagels drink  
[www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html](http://www.people.cornell.edu/pages/xxx/survey.html)  
limited to one per person

APPENDIX C  
 QUESTIONS USED FOR ATTITUDE SCALE AND THEIR FACTOR LOADINGS

Question	Factor Loading
Thinking about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, sometimes wrong, or not wrong at all?	-.64
If I saw two men holding hands in public, I would be more disgusted than if I saw a man and a woman holding hands.	.77
Gay men and lesbians should be allowed to teach in elementary schools.	.63
Gay and lesbian couples can be as good parents as heterosexual couples.	.68
If a member of my sex made an advance toward me, I would be flattered.	.65
If a member of my sex made an advance toward me, I would feel angry.	-.72

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