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Gender-Role's Attitude, Perceived Similarity, and Sexual Prejudice against Gay Men

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Two hundred and twenty-six heterosexual participants (115 women and 111 men) were asked to indicate their attitude toward gender-roles, their perceived similarities with gay men, and their attitude toward gay men (i.e., sexual prejudice). As expected, male participants showed more sexual prejudice than female participants, and perceived dissimilarities were related to a greater sexual prejudice. Support for gender-roles was related to sexual prejudice for male participants, but not for female participants. More interestingly, the three-way interaction suggested that perceived similarities moderated the link between gender-roles and sexual prejudice among heterosexual men, but not among heterosexual women. Attitude in favor of traditional gender-roles was related to sexual prejudice for male participants who perceived gay men as different, but not for those who perceived gay men as similar. These findings are discussed in terms of the defensive function of men's attitude toward homosexuality as a result of threat to masculinity.

Keywords: gender-roles, sexual prejudice, intergroup differentiation.

En una muestra de 226 participantes heterosexuales (115 mujeres y 111 hombres) se ha medido la actitud hacia el rol de género, la similitud personal con los hombres homosexuales y la actitud hacia éstos (prejuicio sexual). Tal y como se esperaba, los hombres muestran más prejuicio que las mujeres, y la percepción de disimilitud está asociada a un mayor prejuicio. En los hombres, pero no en las mujeres, la actitud favorable hacia los roles tradicionales de género está relacionada con el prejuicio. Aún más interesante, la interacción triple sugiere que la percepción de similitud modera en los hombres, pero no en las mujeres, la relación entre la actitud hacia el rol de género y el prejuicio sexual. Una actitud más favorable hacia los roles tradicionales está asociada a un mayor prejuicio sexual en los hombres que perciben una mayor diferencia entre sí mismos y los homosexuales, pero no en aquellos que perciben una mayor semejanza. Estos resultados se discuten de acuerdo con la función defensiva de la actitud hacia la homosexualidad como resultado de la amenaza a la masculinidad.

Palabras clave: rol de género, prejuicio sexual, diferenciación intergrupo.

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Sexual prejudice is characterized as the negative attitude toward an individual because of her or his sexual orientation (Herek, 2000). Past research has consistently shown that sex-differences constitute an important correlate of sexual prejudice (e.g., Herek, 1988, 2002; Kite & Whitley, 1996; Schellenberg, Hirt, & Sears, 1999; cf. Oliver & Hyde, 1993). Heterosexual men hold more negative attitudes toward homosexuality than heterosexual women. Furthermore, heterosexual men's attitudes are also more negative toward gay men than toward lesbians, whereas heterosexual women's attitudes toward gay men and lesbians often do not differ. The present research was carried out in order to increase our understanding of the mechanisms underlying sex-differences in sexual prejudice in terms of *threat to masculinity*.

Some scholars consider that masculinity involves heterosexism and opposition to femininity (e.g., Kimmel, 1997; Plummer, 2005). Accordingly, hegemonic masculinity, rather than hegemonic femininity, means not being homosexual, and sexual prejudice would be the organizing principle in such a differentiation process. Heterosexism is linked to masculinity more than femininity because of the existent social *androcentrism*: 'masculine' attributes are more general and desirable than 'feminine' attributes, and masculinity is therefore more normative than femininity (Bem, 1993). Therefore, men are motivated to maintain the status quo by conforming to cultural beliefs and standards associated with gender identity, and by establishing a system of rewards and punishments (Bardwick, 1971; Connell, 1995; see also Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2002; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Since the male gender role emphasizes the importance of heterosexuality to masculinity, heterosexual men, as compared to heterosexual women, need more to affirm their masculinity (Bem, 1993). This suggests that sex-differences in sexual prejudice may be explained to some extent by the specific threat gay men introduce to overvalued masculinity (see also Herek, 1988, 2000; Kite & Whitley, 1996 1998).

Some support for this hypothesis is provided by research showing that sexual prejudice is related to gender identity, specifically for heterosexual men. For instance, as compared to tolerant male participants, those with high sexual prejudice rated themselves as more masculine and reported that masculinity was significantly more important to their self-concept than femininity (Kite, 1992; Kite & Deaux, 1986). In the same vein, sexual prejudice was also related to gender self-esteem among heterosexual men (i.e., the extent to which they were satisfied and proud to be a man), but not among heterosexual women (Falomir & Mugny, 2009). Finally, a threat to heterosexual male participants' masculinity (i.e., a bogus feedback on masculinity scores) resulted in a more aggressive behavior against a homosexual partner, as compared to a heterosexual partner (Talley & Bettencourt, 2008).

Additional support for the threat to masculinity hypothesis comes from research showing that endorsement of traditional gender-roles is related to sexual prejudice (e.g., Kite & Whitley, 1996, 1998; Krulowitz & Nash, 1980; Newman, 1989; Whitley, 1987, 2002). Traditional gender-roles are shared beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that define hegemonic masculinity and femininity (e.g., Eagly, 1987; Zucker, 2001) and characterize a gender ideological system that supports a double standard for the sexes (MacDonald, Huggins, Young, & Swanson, 1973). A man learns to be different from women and similar to other men in order to become a 'real man', and a woman learns to be different from men and similar to other women in order to become a 'real woman'. Some scholars suggest that endorsement of traditional gender-roles reflects a motivation to maintain traditional gender-role distinctions and unambiguous category boundaries (e.g., Bosson, Prewitt-Freilino, & Taylor, 2005; Whitley, 2002), but homosexuals challenge this differentiation since they are perceived as similar to the opposite sex heterosexual (Kite & Deaux, 1987). According to the threat to masculinity hypothesis, this gender-role violation would be more threatening for male than female heterosexuals. In view of that, our first hypothesis was that endorsement of traditional gender-roles is related to sexual prejudice among heterosexual men rather than heterosexual women (Hypothesis 1).

In order to strengthen our understanding of sex-differences in terms of threat to masculinity, the present research also focused on the need for differentiation from gay men that would underlie the endorsement of traditional gender-roles. Indeed, perceived similarity between oneself and homosexuals constitutes an additional correlate of sexual prejudice, but this link may reflect at least three complementary theoretical understandings. First, one could argue that perceived similarity may be considered as threatening the need for identity differentiation need. Accordingly, perceived similarity should increase the need for such a differentiation, and men with high scores on perceived similarity will particularly show sexual prejudice in order to fulfill such an identity function. However, we think this alternative hypothesis applies in particular when men initially motivated to differentiation are lead to perceive high similarity with gay men in a given situation. For instance, our previous research showed that highlighting heterosexual men's biological similarities with gay men increased the heterosexual men's need to perceive gay men as psychologically different and sexual prejudice, since similarity is expected to be less threatening (Falomir & Mugny, 2009; Study 5). Since in our study we merely measured perceived similarity, we consider this perception to reflect internal motivations (i.e., the response to an existent threat; Pyszczynski et al., 1995) rather than to activate additional ones (i.e., creating or increasing a threat).

Second, and in agreement with the similarity-attraction hypothesis (e.g., Byrne, 1961; Doise, 1978; Rokeach, 1960;

Struch & Schwartz, 1989; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), sexual prejudice has proven to increase as perceived similarity between oneself and homosexuals decreases (e.g., Herek, 1988; Krulowitz & Nash, 1980; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). For instance, Talley and Bettencourt (2008; Study 1) observed that high prejudiced males reported less communalities with a gay partner than low prejudiced males. In the same vein, male heterosexuals with high sexual prejudice tend to perceive themselves as dissimilar in attitudes to homosexuals, even when these homosexuals were depicted as attitudinally similar (Pilkington & Lydon, 1997). Accordingly, our second hypothesis established that sexual prejudice will increase as heterosexual men's perceived similarity with gay men decreases (Hypothesis 2). However, predictions are less clear for women, given that the same link may either be predicted, according to the overall similarity-attraction hypothesis, or not, according to the threat to masculinity hypothesis.

Finally, perceived dissimilarity may also be considered in terms of a motivation to psychological distancing from homosexuals (Talley & Bettencourt, 2008; see Pyszczynski et al., 1995). Indeed, people are motivated to perceive themselves as similar to others who are positively valued, and dissimilar to those who are negatively valued. Psychological distancing is therefore a defensive mechanism in order to distance oneself from threatening others. Given that homosexuals threaten masculinity, heterosexuals may feel threatened because of the potential risk of misclassification (i.e., the likelihood of being, or being mistaken as homosexual; e.g., Bosson, Prewitt-Freilini, & Taylor, 2005; Morin, & Garfinkle, 1978). As compared to heterosexual women, heterosexual men are particularly concerned about not appearing to be feminine or homosexual (e.g., Herek, 1988; Kite & Deaux, 1986; Maccoby, 1987), and insults such as 'fag' and 'queer' are perceived as the worst offense to men (Burn, 2000; Preston & Kimberley, 1987).

Accordingly, heterosexual men's perceived differences between oneself and gay men may reflect motivation to differentiate from gay men (Herek, 1988; Krulowitz & Nash, 1980; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). For instance, Falomir and Mugny (2009; studies 3 & 4) showed that heterosexual men's sexual prejudice was related to gender self-esteem in particular when perceived dissimilarity was high. This result suggests that gender self-esteem constitutes a correlate of sexual prejudice, specifically when motivation to psychological distancing from homosexuals is high (i.e., when perceived dissimilarity is high). This is to say that sexual prejudice may fulfill a defensive function for heterosexual men, but not for heterosexual women, as it would reflect the existence of a specific motivation to maintain a positive and distinctive masculine identity (e.g., Herek, 1992, 2002; Hegarty, Pratto, & Lemieux, 2004).

Following these considerations, we tried to extend the Falomir and Mugny's findings on the interplay between perceived similarity and gender self-esteem to another gender-identity related factor, namely endorsement of gender-roles. We expected that perceived similarity will moderate the link between gender-roles endorsement and sexual prejudice among heterosexual men, but not among heterosexual women (i.e., a three-way interaction; Hypothesis 3). More specifically, endorsement of traditional gender-roles is expected to be more strongly related to sexual prejudice among heterosexual men than among heterosexual women (Hypothesis 1). However, we reasoned that this pattern should appear specifically when motivation for psychological distancing is high (i.e., when perceived dissimilarity is high). Accordingly, the highest sexual prejudice was expected in particular when both endorsement of traditional gender-roles and perceived dissimilarity are high. Both endorsement of gender-roles and perceived similarity are expected to accomplish to a lesser extent a defensive function for heterosexual women, and the predicted pattern should be observed to a lesser degree among women.

Method

Participants and procedure

Participants were 226 heterosexuals, 115 women and 111 men (age: $M = 24.98$, $SD = 9.52$). Sixty-eight percent of the sample comprised university students and 32% comprised university staff members who were contacted by students. Participants indicated their attitude toward traditional gender-roles, the similarities they perceived between themselves and gay men, and their attitudes toward gay men.¹ At the end, participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, and sexual orientation. Only participants who defined themselves as heterosexuals and who reported not having had sexual intercourse with a same-sex person were retained for the study.

Endorsement of traditional gender-roles

Gender-role attitudes were assessed using the Gender-Role subscale of the Liberal Feminist Attitude and Ideology Scale (LFAIS; Morgan, 1996). The first and tenth items were replaced by items 7 and 11 of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP, 2002) to adapt the subscale to the Swiss sample (e.g., "Both men and women should take care of their children"). Scales ranged from 1 'strongly disagree' to 7 'strongly agree'. Higher scores indicated more traditional attitudes toward gender-roles ($\alpha = .78$, $M = 3.24$, $SD = .83$).

Perceived similarity

Seven items measured perceived similarities between participants and gay men regarding emotions, needs,

wishes, intimate relationships, friendships, professional relationships, as well as a general assessment of similarity (“To what extent do you think you are similar to gay men with regard to each of the following aspects?”; from 1 ‘absolutely not’ to 7 ‘absolutely’). An average score was computed ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.42$).

Sexual prejudice

A 24-item scale was used to assess sexual prejudice (Falomir & Mugny, 2009). Items were adapted to focus on male homosexuality with regard to *morality* (e.g., “Male homosexuality is in opposition to family values”, “Male homosexuality is a natural expression of affection and sexuality”), *feelings* toward gay men (e.g., “I feel sympathy for gay men”, “I feel contempt for gay men”), *civil rights* endorsement (e.g., “Gay couples should have the right to inherit in the event of the death of a partner”, “Gay couples should have the right to get married”), and accepting different types of *contact* with gay men (e.g., accepting “to have gay men as close friends” and “to share an apartment with a gay man”). Scales ranged from 1 ‘not at all in agreement’ to 7 ‘absolutely in agreement’. A score for sexual prejudice toward gay men was computed by averaging the scores for the 24 items ($\alpha = .94$, $M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.21$; higher scores indicate higher sexual prejudice).

Results

Correlation analyses showed that sexual prejudice was negatively related to perceived similarity, $r(224) = -.59$, $p < .001$, and positively related to endorsement of gender-roles, $r(225) = .30$, $p < .001$. However, perceived similarity and endorsement of gender-roles were not correlated, $r(224) = .05$, $p = .41$. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between factors separated by participant sex are presented in Table 1. Additional analyses showed that female participants perceived more similarity with gay men ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.40$) than male participants ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(222) = 3.44$, $p < .001$, but that

they did not differ on their endorsement of gender-roles ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .90$) from male participants ($M = 3.18$, $SD = .75$), $t(224) = 1.21$, $p = .23$.

We followed suggestions of Aiken and West (1991) for examining interaction effects with continuous variables in multiple regressions. Sexual prejudice was regressed on participants’ sex (-1 = men and +1 = women) as a between-subjects factor, attitude toward gender-roles and perceived similarity as continuous factors (standardized values), as well as all the possible interactions between the three factors ($R^2 = .518$), $F(7, 216) = 33.10$, $p < .0001$. The main effect of participants’ sex was significant ($\beta = -.21$), $t(216) = 4.35$, $p < .001$; heterosexual women showed less sexual prejudice ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.01$) than heterosexual men ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.25$). The gender-roles main effect ($\beta = .19$), $t(216) = 3.97$, $p < .001$, and the perceived similarity main effect ($\beta = -.52$), $t(216) = 10.61$, $p < .001$, were also significant. Sexual prejudice decreased as perceived similarity increased, and increased as support for traditional gender-roles increased. The participants’ sex by perceived similarity interaction was not significant ($\beta = .06$), $t(216) = 1.41$, $p = .16$, but the participants’ sex by gender-roles interaction was ($\beta = -.11$), $t(216) = 2.33$, $p = .021$. As illustrated in Figure 1, the expected three-way interaction was also significant ($\beta = .12$), $t(216) = 2.55$, $p = .011$.

For male participants, the gender-roles main effect ($\beta = .24$), $t(216) = 4.67$, $p < .001$, and the perceived similarity main effect ($\beta = -.40$), $t(216) = 8.31$, $p < .001$, were significant. More interestingly, the perceived similarity by gender-roles interaction was also significant ($\beta = .24$), $t(216) = 4.67$, $p < .001$. Slope analyses showed that gender-roles endorsement was related to men’s sexual prejudice for low conditional levels (-1SD) of perceived similarity ($\beta = .47$), $t(216) = 6.66$, $p < .001$, but not for high conditional levels (+1SD) ($\beta = .16$), $t(216) = 1.50$, $p = .13$. Furthermore, sexual prejudice was higher for men than for women only when perceived similarity was low and gender-roles endorsement was high, $t(216) = 5.60$, $p < .001$. For female participants, the perceived similarity

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Men and Women

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	2	3
Men					
1. Gender-Role	3.31	.90	.81	.00	.40 *
2. Perceived similarity	4.27	1.37	.86	-	-.58 *
3. Sexual prejudice	3.30	1.25	.94	-	-
Women					
1. Gender-Role	3.18	.75	.76	-.08	.14
2. Perceived similarity	4.91	1.40	.85	-	-.55 *
3. Sexual prejudice	2.46	1.01	.91	-	-

* $p < .001$

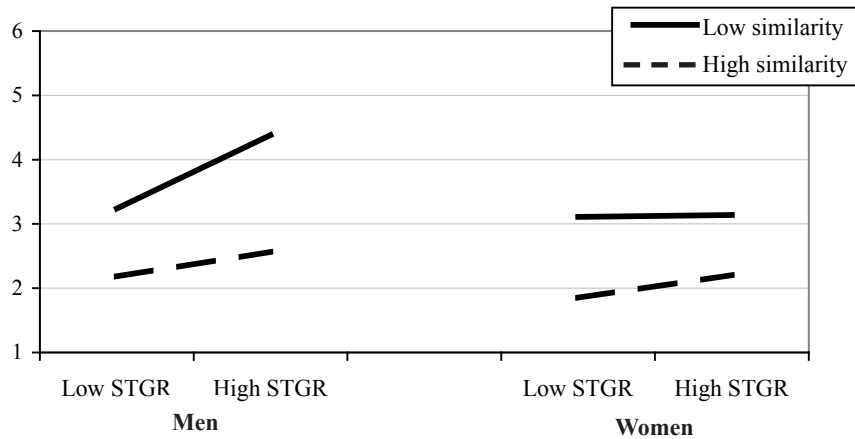


Figure 1. Estimated means of sexual prejudice as a function of participants' sex, support for traditional gender-roles (STGR; ±1SD), and perceived similarity to gay men (±1SD).

main effect was significant ($\beta = -.32$, $t(216) = 6.66$, $p < .001$, but neither the gender-roles ($\beta = .05$, $t(216) = 1.11$, $p = .27$, nor the gender-roles by perceived similarity interaction ($\beta = .05$, $t(216) = 1.08$, $p = .29$, were significant.

Discussion

In a sample of heterosexual participants, the present research examined sex-differences in sexual prejudice as a function of support for traditional gender-roles and perceived similarity between participants and gay men. Results showed that sexual prejudice is higher for male than for female participants, and increases as support for traditional gender-roles increases for male participants, but not for female participants. This finding is consistent with past research which has shown that gender-role attitude mediates the effect of sex differences on sexual prejudice (Kite & Whitley, 1996). Given that traditional gender-roles presumably contribute to maintain a positive and distinctive gender identity, this finding provides indirect support for our first hypothesis, and to our overall contention that sexual prejudice constitutes a response to the threat homosexuals introduce to masculinity.

Furthermore, the present research also showed that sexual prejudice increases as perceived similarities between participants and gay men decreases. This finding was consistent for both male and female participants, and provides support for the overall similarity-attraction hypothesis (e.g., Byrne, 1961; Doise, 1978; Rokeach, 1960). With greater interest to the present study, results also showed that male participants' gender-role attitude is related to sexual prejudice when gay men are perceived as different, but not when they are perceived as similar. This finding was not observed for female participants. These results confirm our third hypothesis, and extend our

understanding of the nature of the link between gender-roles' attitude and sexual prejudice, and more generally of the sex differences in sexual prejudice. Indeed, our reading for this interaction is that male and female participants actually differ in sexual prejudice only when endorsement of traditional gender-roles is coupled with motivation to psychological distancing from gay men. This suggests that support for traditional gender-roles contributes to explain sexual prejudice only when the meaning of masculinity motivates some heterosexual men to differentiate from gay men. However, when heterosexual men do not need to differentiate from gay men, their support for traditional gender-roles does not necessarily result in higher sexual prejudice.

Before concluding, several limitations of this research should be highlighted. First, the most important limitation likely lies on the correlational nature of the data that does not allow us to consider causality effects. Indeed, our statistical effects ought not to be confused with direct support for psychological causal effects, and alternative models could be proposed to account for the observed effects. For instance, past research showed that sexual prejudice may affect reactions to anticipated encounters with homosexual partners (Kite, 1992), and even perception of similarity with them (Kite & Deaux, 1986). Accordingly, we could approach our data by examining whether endorsement of gender-roles moderates the link between sexual prejudice and perceived similarity. In sum, complex interactions between perceived similarity, gender identity and sexual prejudice may be expected (see also Talley & Bettencourt, 2008; p. 662), and experimental research is therefore needed in order to examine more compellingly the causal nature of the observed links.

Second, the present research reduced its focus of interest to prejudice against gay men because past research showed that sex differences appear mainly when examining

prejudice against gay men rather than lesbians¹. What could be expected regarding prejudice against lesbians? On the one hand, overall intergroup processes (e.g., Doise, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987) would justify observing a similar pattern of findings for heterosexual women's prejudice against lesbians. On the other hand, our main hypothesis regarding the threat to masculinity rooted on androcentrism (Bem, 1993) and the social construction of masculinity and femininity (e.g., Hereck, 1988, 2000; Kimmel, 1997; Plummer, 2005), suggest that the perceived similarity between heterosexual and gay men does not have the same identity function as the perceived similarity between heterosexual women and lesbians. Future research is needed in order to examine these concerns.

Third, we operationalized sexual prejudice and perceived similarity regarding gay men as a group. On the one hand, this methodological approach is similar to previous research (e.g., Herek, 1988; Falomir & Mugny, 2009), but different from that used in other researches (e.g., Talley and Bettencourt, 2008; Pilkington & Lydon, 1997). Accordingly, future research should examine the implication of these differences for the identity-related needs examined in the present research. On the other hand, this comparison means that men and women likely rated different constructs. For instance, male participants may rate the extent to which gay men approached masculinity, whereas female participants may rate whether gay men approached femininity. It is worth noting that in both cases perceived similarity implies that participants are psychologically approaching gay men, and reduce therefore sexual prejudice, as we found for both female and male participants. However, we have to assume that perceived similarity with gay men may have different psychological consequences for male and female participants. An alternative would be to ask both male and female participants to compare gay men to heterosexual men. Whereas this intergroup comparison may also be sensitive to assess a motivation to psychological distancing from gay men, additional concerns related to gender and sexual orientation stereotypes may not be excluded.

We have also to admit that perceived similarity merely constitutes a proxy of threat. Previous research suggested that psychological distancing is an overall defense mechanism against threat (Pyszczynski et al., 1995), and specifically against threat to masculinity (Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). Furthermore, since people may not be aware of this mechanism, or ready to show it, psychological distancing may constitute an appropriate indirect and unconscious

indicator of threat. However, Talley and Bettencourt's research assessed psychological distancing through an indirect measure (i.e., participants rated both themselves and targets on the same traits), in addition to a more direct measure of perceived similarity comparable to that used in the present study. Despite that their direct and indirect measures are correlated and produce ostensible comparable results, they also produced several different findings (Talley & Bettencourt, 2008; study 1). Thus, research should focus further attention on the different effects of direct and indirect operationalizations of psychological distancing from gay men.

Despite these important limitations, we would like to highlight that the present research may be of relevance for future research. Considering hegemonic masculinity may imply that all heterosexual men should be motivated to differentiate themselves from gay men. Therefore, one remaining question is whether, and then under what conditions, heterosexual men do not need to differentiate themselves from gay men. Several factors seem to influence motivation to psychological distancing. For instance, previous attitude seems to influence perceived similarity (Pilkington & Lydon, 1997), suggesting that intolerant heterosexuals are specifically motivated to psychological distancing from gay men. Falomir and Mugny's (2009) research also contributed to show that heterosexual men's perceived dissimilarity with gay men increased as gender self-esteem increased. This finding suggests that only heterosexual men who feel satisfied with the hegemonic meaning of masculinity are mainly motivated to psychological distancing. Thus, research is needed in order to compare the effect of different gender identities (i.e., more or less hegemonic masculinities) on motivation to psychological distancing.

Our findings may also be of relevance for our understanding of perceived similarity. We observed that perceived similarity may both be related to more positive attitudes, according to the similarity-attraction hypothesis (e.g., Byrne, 1961; Doise, 1978; Rokeach, 1960), and be considered as a proxy of motivation to differentiate from threatening outgroups (Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). This last consideration seems particularly useful to examine specific hypotheses for participants who are motivated to differentiate from gay men, as illustrated both in the present research and in previous research (Falomir & Mugny, 2009; studies 3 & 4). Furthermore, we think that perceived similarity may also adopt a different function according to other factors. For instance, Talley and Bettencourt

¹ Because of time restrictions, we focused on one of the two target groups of sexual prejudice. Since sex differences are most prominent toward gay men (e.g., Herek, 2002; Kite & Whitley, 1996), and past research often failed to find differences in prejudice against gay men and lesbians (e.g., Kite, 1992), we considered that evaluating prejudice against lesbians was less informative and less relevant for studying the mechanisms underlying the sex differences contributing to sexual prejudice.

(2008; study 1) observed that heterosexual men's positive attitude toward gay men work partners was related to a greater perceived similarity when psychological distancing (i.e., an indirect measure of perceived dissimilarity) was paradoxically high. In a similar vein, Falomir and Mugny (2009) observed that heterosexual men rated themselves as more similar to gay men only when they were previously informed that heterosexual men and homosexual men were biologically different. Furthermore, these similarity ratings were related to more positive attitudes towards homosexuals. In sum, even if complex, these findings suggest that perceived similarity accomplishes different functions according to individuals' motivation and contextual factors. Achieved differentiation at one level may reduce both individuals' threat and the need for differentiation. As a consequence, this may paradoxically result in greater perceived similarity, or in higher correlations between similarity and positive attitudes. Future research is welcome in order to examine this compensatory effect more deeply.

Finally, the present findings are also consistent with the attitude function approach, since they suggest that different needs may be fulfilled by sexual prejudice as a function of the social meaning of masculinity and femininity. We argued that heterosexual men's endorsement of traditional views of women and men would predict sexual prejudice as far as they are motivated to protect masculinity from the threat introduced by gay men (e.g., Kimmel, 1997; Plummer, 2005). Accordingly, endorsement of traditional gender-roles and sexual prejudice seems to accomplish a defensive function for heterosexual men who are motivated to protect a positive masculine identity differentiated from that of women and gay men (e.g. Bosson et al., 2005; Hereck, 1988, 2000). However, women would show less sexual prejudice and would be less motivated to distancing from homosexuals because the social meaning of femininity involves to a lesser extent opposition to masculinity and homosexuality, which is even frequently eroticized (Louderback & Withley, 1997). Future research should examine functions accomplished by women's sexual prejudice.

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