

ATTITUDES TO HOMOSEXUALS IN RUSSIA: CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AND PREDICTORS

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Abstract

Despite the growth of negative attitudes to homosexuals in Russia the research into this topic has been extremely scarce. Based on the analysis of social discourse, we have created a pool of items and undertaken three empirical studies aimed to develop and validate the Russian Attitudes to Homosexuals Inventory (RAHI) and investigate the associations of homophobic attitudes with a range of demographic and psychological variables. In Study 1 we used an online sample (N = 1,007) and explored the structure of the item pool, finding 8 factors, 5 of which referred to different dimensions of perceived threat of homosexuals (to individuals, morals, society, Russian culture, and heterosexual lifestyle) and 3 described social strategies directed at homosexuals (criminal punishment, medical treatment, and discrimination vs. protection). The scales were highly reliable ($\alpha = .82-.91$) and formed a single second-order dimension, labelled general index of homophobia. Negative attitudes to homosexuals were stronger in males, religious respondents, and those heterosexuals who denied having experienced any feelings of same-sex attraction in their life. In Study 2 (paper-based sample, N = 292) we cross-validated the second-order structure of the RAHI. Using hierarchical multiple regression we found that homophobia was positively predicted by authoritarianism and negatively predicted by experience of same-sex attraction and social contact with homosexuals as friends. We also found weaker positive associations of homophobia with religiosity, social identification with gender, masculinity, extraversion, and social desirability, as well as a negative association with openness. In Study 3 we used contrast groups of neutral and anti-homosexual online community members (N = 330 and N = 107) to check the criterion validity of the RAHI. The findings are in line with the existing body of research from other countries, but reveal the culturally-specific features of the content of Russian homophobia (e.g., homosexuality is viewed as a result of Western influence). The RAHI emerged as a valid and reliable tool, which can be used for future Russian-language studies.

Keywords: attitudes to homosexuality, homo-negativity, homosexual prejudice, perceived threat of homosexuals, authoritarian personality.

Social context

The problem of negative attitudes to individuals with homosexual orientation is a global one. During the past centuries, in many countries around

the world homosexuality was condemned and homosexuals were systematically discriminated against. This situation of institutionalized homo-negativity undermined the life and social integration perspectives for individuals with homosexual orientation and induced

distress leading to mental health problems. Many research studies have shown that individuals facing homophobia experience higher levels of anxiety and depression and are less satisfied with their lives (Bachmann & Simon, 2014; Feinstein, Goldfried, & Davila, 2012; Frost, Parsons, & Nanin, 2007; Meyer, 2003; Wight, LeBlanc, de Vries, & Detels, 2012). Besides its direct negative effects on homosexuals, homophobia has a wide range of less obvious negative social outcomes that affect heterosexuals as well, such as declining social capital (Andersson, 2011), hate crimes (Alden & Parker, 2005), teenage suicides (Poteat, Meireish, DiGiovanni, & Koenig, 2011), and school shootings (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003), to name only a few.

During the past decades, the situation has been changing. In many developed countries of Europe and North America social movements advocating human rights have influenced the public opinion and legislation concerning homosexuals. As of 2015, 29 countries have legalized same-sex marriage or civil unions, 17 countries allow joint adoption by same-sex couples, and 62 countries have laws prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation in the professional sphere (Carroll & Itaborahy, 2015).

At the same time, Russia has been moving in the opposite direction. According to a Pew Research Center survey (2013) done in 39 countries, 74% of Russians believed that society should not accept homosexuality and only 16% reported a contrary opinion (down from 20% in 2007). This finding, showing that the attitude to homosexuality in Russia was the most negative among non-Islamic countries, is parti-

cularly surprising, given that Russia had a low religiosity index. The results of a Levada-Center study (Plotko, 2013) confirm the negative trend.

The deterioration of popular attitudes to homosexuals is happening in line with adoption of discriminatory legislation. Since 2013, the federal law prohibiting the distribution of information accessible to minors and aimed towards "promotion of non-traditional sexual attitudes" (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2013) effectively prevents any public messages presenting homosexuality in a non-negative way. A government order passed in 2014 forbade international adoption not only by individuals engaged in same-sex unions, but by any unmarried person coming from a country where such unions are legal (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2014).

The association of discriminatory laws with public position on homosexuality may go in two directions. On the one hand, discriminatory laws appear on the basis of existing negative attitudes to homosexuals in certain countries. On the other hand, they institutionalize homophobic attitudes and shape the environment which reinforces them. Research shows that when people face social norms reflecting a positive attitude to homosexuals, their own attitudes become more positive, whereas priming or perception of norms involving discrimination against homosexuals reinforces the negative attitudes towards them (Hall & LaFrance, 2012; Klein, Snyder, & Livingston, 2004; Pereira, Monteiro, & Camino, 2009; Worthen, 2014). Thus, apart from its specific purposes, the new Russian legislation regarding homosexuality serves as a source of explicit social norms directed against

homosexuals and reinforces the social attitudes.

However, even in countries where discrimination is a social and legal norm, there is always a range of individual opinions regarding homosexuality. In such countries individual attitudes toward homosexuals are strongly associated with individual psychological characteristics, such as personal values (Kuntz, Davidov, Schwartz, & Schmidt, 2015), in contrast to countries with positive norms regarding homosexuality. Thus, Russia provides an interesting research context for a study of individual differences associated with attitudes toward homosexuals.

Predictors of attitudes toward homosexuals

Contemporary social psychology presents two different perspectives on the factors explaining negative attitudes to social groups. One perspective suggests that certain personality types or characteristics are associated with a general proneness to exhibit prejudice (negative attitudes) based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, etc. A number of studies have found such individual characteristics serving as universal predictors of prejudice toward members of various groups (Akrami, Ekehammar, & Bergh, 2011; Altemeyer, 2003; Chambers, Schlenker, & Collisson, 2012; Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004; Grey, Robinson, Coleman, & Bockting, 2013; Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny, 2009; James, Griffiths, & Pedersen, 2011; Tadmor, Hong, Chao, Wiruchnipawan, & Wang, 2012). Another perspective puts emphasis on specific characteristics that only predict nega-

tive attitudes toward members of certain groups. Studies of attitudes toward homosexuals often include both general predictors of prejudice and those specific for sexual prejudice. We focused on three clusters of the predictors of attitudes to homosexuals: demographic characteristics, psychological characteristics, and experience of contact.

The demographic characteristics most often studied in relation to attitudes to homosexuals include gender, age, and education. Studies from different countries across Europe, North America, and Latin America indicate that negative attitudes to homosexuals are more often found in males, rather than females (Cannon, 2005; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2008; Herek & McLemore, 2013; Hooghe & Meeusen, 2012; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Poteat & Anderson, 2012; Sarac, 2012; Steffens & Wagner, 2004; West & Cowell, 2014), in respondents advanced in age, rather than younger ones (Baiocco, Nardelli, Pezzuti, & Lingiardi, 2013; Herek & Gonzales-Rivera, 2006; Steffens & Wagner, 2004), and in individuals with lower levels of education (Cannon, 2005; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2008; West & Cowell, 2015). Out of these three variables, gender emerges as the most universal predictor of negative attitudes to homosexuals across countries.

The psychological predictors of homophobic attitudes include general personality traits, political attitudes (right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation), religiosity, and gender identity. The personality trait studies carried out during the past two decades were mainly based on the Five-Factor Model of personality traits, generally finding openness to experience

and agreeableness to be weak negative predictors of prejudice toward homosexuals (Cullen, Wright, & Alessandri, 2002; Shackelford & Besser, 2007; Ekehammar & Akrami, 2007). However, recent studies suggest that the association of personality traits with attitudes toward social groups is mediated by general political attitudes, right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation (Ekehammar et al., 2004; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008).

Right-wing authoritarianism is a combination of attitudes towards authority and existing social norms. It includes three components, a high level of submission to established authorities, uncritical approval of traditional social conventions, and high levels of aggression in the name of authority (Altemeyer, 1988). A related construct is social dominance orientation, which is a general attitudinal orientation reflecting a preference for hierarchy in intergroup relations (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). A large body of research indicates that authoritarianism and social dominance orientation are associated and are both strong positive predictors of prejudice toward members of various groups, including homosexuals (Chambers et al., 2012; Grey et al., 2013; Herek, 2000; Herek & Gonzales-Rivera, 2006; James et al., 2011; Jonathan, 2008; Poteat & Anderson, 2012; Poteat & Mereish, 2012; Rowatt, LaBouff, Johnson, Froese, & Tsang, 2009; Sibley, Robertson, & Wilson, 2006; Whitley & Lee, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004).

Religiosity is another universal predictor of prejudice. Strongly negative attitudes to homosexuals are characteristic of individuals with high levels of religious involvement, religious funda-

mentalism, and religious orthodoxy (Altemeyer, 2003; Cannon, 2005; Grey et al., 2013; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2008; Herek, 2000, 2009; Herek & Gonzales-Rivera, 2006; Herek & McLemore, 2013; Horvath & Ryan, 2003; James et al., 2011; Jonathan, 2008; Kirby & Michaelson, 2015; Leak & Finken, 2011; Maney & Cain, 1997; Miller & Chamberlain, 2013; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Papadaki, Plotnikof, & Papadaki, 2013; Poteat & Mereish, 2012; Rowatt et al., 2006; Rowatt et al., 2009; Sanabria, 2012; Sarac, 2012; Whitley, 2009; Wilkinson, 2004; Wood & Bartkowski, 2004). These associations are found across different confessions (different branches of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism).

Gender identity is a specific factor contributing to sexual prejudice. Higher levels of homosexual prejudice are typically found in males who strongly identify with their gender (Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny, 2009) and support a traditional view of masculinity, which includes beliefs that a male should be self-sufficient, tough and even aggressive, avoiding emotionality and femininity (O'Neil, 1981). Because homosexuals often do not conform to the rigid standards set by traditional gender roles, they provoke anxiety in males who strongly identify with heterosexual gender roles. Negative attitude to homosexuals may emerge as a result of coping with this conflict by enforcing traditional gender role standards, with authoritarianism and social dominance orientation contributing to this process (Goodnight, Cook, Parrott, & Peterson, 2014; Grey et al., 2013; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Parrott, 2009; Parrott, Peterson, & Bakeman, 2011).

Finally, attitudes to homosexuals are predicted by the experience of contact with members of this group. People who spend more time communicating with homosexuals on a regular basis or report having homosexuals among their close friends or relatives show lower levels of prejudice toward homosexuals (Cannon, 2005; Collier, Bos, & Sandfort, 2012; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2008; Herek & Gonzales-Rivera, 2006; Heinze & Horn, 2009; Herek, 2000, 2009; Hooghe & Meeusen, 2012; Horvath & Ryan, 2003; Papadaki et al., 2013; Smith, Axelton, & Saucier, 2009; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, Paolini, & Christ, 2007; Wood & Bartkowski, 2004). The negative effects of religious fundamentalism, authoritarianism, and heterosexual identity on attitudes to homosexuals tend to be weaker in individuals who have had positive experiences of contact with members of sexual minorities in the past (Cunningham & Melton, 2013; Hodson, Harry, & Mitchell, 2009). In short, heterosexuals who communicate with homosexuals tend to hold more positive views of them, regardless of their own attitudes and personality characteristics.

Measurement of attitudes to homosexuals

There are over 30 questionnaire measures (see Grey et al., 2013, for review) operationalizing various aspects of attitudes toward homosexuals. Most of these measures tap into negative attitudes under different labels (homophobia, homo-negativity, homosexual prejudice) and were developed by researchers from the USA and Canada, based on the discourse existing

in these countries. Despite the vast evidence of validity and reliability of these measures, their certain drawback is a dependence on the content and forms of social discourse regarding homosexuality specific to particular societies. The Russian discourse on homosexuality has its unique features (e.g., homosexuality is viewed as a result of a Western influence) hardly captured by existing English-language measures.

The aim of the present research was to develop and validate the first Russian-language comprehensive measure of attitudes to homosexuals. Study 1 was aimed to develop the instrument and investigate its structure and associations with demographic predictors, controlling for sexuality, in a large online sample. Study 2 was aimed to cross-validate the structure of the new instrument in an independent sample and to analyze the associations of attitudes to homosexuals with personality traits, and gender identity variables. Finally, Study 3 was aimed to check the criterion validity of the new instrument by using a contrast-group approach.

Study 1

Sample and procedure. The participants ($N = 1007$) were Internet users, 33.7% males and 66.3% females, aged 18 to 73 ($M = 31.5$, $SD = 10.0$). Most respondents had completed one (57.7%) or more university degrees (24.3%), only a minority had some college (11.1%) or high school (6.9%) diplomas. The questionnaire was placed on a dedicated online research website and advertised through social networks using snowball approach. The procedure was completely anonymous and used informed consent forms.

Instruments. We included instruments measuring prejudice to homosexuals and demographic characteristics.

Attitudes to homosexuals. To develop a measure sensitive to the Russian cultural context, we analyzed the content of online forums concerning homosexuality and formulated a list of themes relevant to the evaluation of homosexuality and possible ways of action with respect to homosexuals. In a series of group discussions, we formulated 48 items operationalizing these themes, 34 reflecting negative attitudes and 14 reflecting tolerant or positive attitudes to homosexuals (in line with the ratio of these attitudes in online discussions and in Russian society in general). The respondents were asked to evaluate each statement on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 “completely disagree” to 5 “completely agree”.

Demographics. The general variables included gender (1 – “male”, 2 – “female”), age, and education (1 – “incomplete secondary”, 2 – “secondary school”, 3 – “professional school”, 4 – “some university”, 5 – “university degree”, 6 – “two university degrees or a PhD”). The family variables included parental family type (1 – “two-parent family”, 2 – “one-parent family”, and 3 – “non-parental family”) and the presence of minors in one’s household (1 – “yes”, 2 – “no”). When listing their religious affiliation, respondents could choose a confession (8 options, including “other”, all coded 3) or two other answer options (2 – “I believe in a god, but do not consider myself a member of a confession” and 1 – “I do not believe in god (I am an atheist)”).

Sexuality. Two items tapped into respondents’ sexual experience: “Have

you ever experienced attraction (romantic feelings) to a person of your own sex?”, “Have you ever had a homosexual experience” (each with 4 answer options: 1 – “no, never”, 2 – “yes, once”, 3 – “yes, from time to time”, 4 – “prefer not to answer” treated as missing data). Finally, sexual identity was measured with the item “How would you characterize your sexual orientation?” (5 – “100% homosexual”, 4 – “mostly homosexual”, 3 – “bisexual”, 2 – “mostly heterosexual”, 1 – “100% heterosexual”; the two other options 6 – “not sure/other”, and 7 – “prefer not to answer” were treated as missing data).

Data analysis. To investigate the structure of the attitudes to the homosexuals questionnaire, we used a hierarchical clustering procedure (Ward’s method with a Squared Euclidean metric on standardized z-scores by variable) to find out parcels of items centered around a single idea. With complex and hierarchically structured datasets this approach reveals the structure more efficiently than the traditional exploratory factor analysis (Revelle, 1979). We proceeded by performing principal component analysis to ensure the unidimensionality of each parcel and retain 4–5 best indicator items based on their factor loadings. Finally, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis in Mplus 7.31 using robust maximum likelihood estimator with Satorra-Bentler chi-square estimator to establish the structure of the new measure. Because the chi-square test is overly sensitive in large samples, we relied on Hu and Bentler’s (1999) criteria of acceptable model fit (CFI close to .95 or greater, RMSEA close to .06 or below, SRMR close to .08 or below).

Results and Discussion

The structure of negative attitudes. Based on the cluster model and the results of item selection using principal component analysis, we arrived at a set of 34 items (25 negative and 9 positive) grouped into 8 parcels reflecting different themes relevant to attitudes to homosexuals (the complete list of item formulations is given in Appendix).

The first five parcels referred to the evaluation of homosexuality, reflecting its perceived threat.

1. "Threat to morality", a view of homosexuality as a deviation from the natural and social norm, a perversion, an immoral way of life.

2. "Threat to individuals", beliefs that homosexuals may endanger individuals by molesting children, "converting" heterosexuals, and spreading contagious diseases.

3. "Threat to society", beliefs that homosexuals and homosexuality threaten the future of the society as a whole by challenging the social morals and the traditional family, as well as by undermining the birth rate.

4. "Threat to culture", a view of homosexuality as a fashion spread by mass media and resulting from Western influence, which is alien to Russian culture.

5. "Threat to heterosexual lifestyle", a view of homosexuals as an aggressive group, trying to attract universal attention and "impose" their norms and way of life on everyone.

Three other parcels referred to different social strategies for dealing with homosexuals.

6. "Punishment strategy", a view that homosexuality should be a punis-

hable crime and homosexuals must be prosecuted and isolated from society.

7. "Treatment strategy", a view that homosexuals should be "cured" or assisted in overcoming their homosexuality by means of medical treatment.

8. "Protection strategy", a view that discrimination of homosexuals is a negative phenomenon, homosexuals should be provided with equal rights and protected from hate crimes. Because this scale was the only one fully comprised by items reflecting positive attitudes to homosexuality, for simplicity we treated it as reverse-scored and labelled it "Discrimination strategy."

We used confirmatory factor analysis to investigate the fit of the 8-factor to the data. The initial model with a simple structure showed nearly acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2(499) = 1791.51$, $p < .001$; CFI = .934; RMSEA = .051, 90% CI: .048–.053; SRMR = .057). Based on analysis of modification indices, we added two error covariances, for a pair of items reflecting the idea that homosexuality is a crime, and for a pair of items reflecting the evaluation of homosexuality as a norm. The resulting modified measurement model showed a good fit ($\chi^2(497) = 1237.49$, $p < .001$; CFI = .962; RMSEA = .039, 90% CI: .036–.041; SRMR = .035). All the item factor loadings were significant and high (λ in the .61–.90 range).

To investigate whether a single factor reflecting negative attitude to homosexuals could explain the 8 scales, we proceeded by introducing a second-order factor. The practical fit indices for the resulting second-order model were still fairly good ($\chi^2(517) = 1544.06$, $p < .001$; CFI = .947; RMSEA = .044, 90% CI: .042–.047; SRMR = .045), and

the difference in their values from those obtained for the modified measurement model was small ($\Delta CFI = .015$, $\Delta RMSEA = .005$, $\Delta SRMR = .010$), suggesting that a one-dimensional model explains the structure of the Russian attitudes to homosexuality fairly well. The standardized loadings of the first-order factors on the general second-order factor ranged from .80 to .99. The resulting second-order model is shown on Figure 1; the first-order factor loadings are given in Appendix.

The scale scores were calculated as mean scores for each group of items. The descriptive statistics and internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's α) for the scales are presented in Table 1. All the 8 subscales and the total score showed sufficient reliability ($\alpha > .80$). The respondents tended to agree most with statements reflecting the threat posed by the activity of homosexuals as a group to the heterosexuals' way of life, followed by threat to Russian culture and society. The respondents tended to endorse discrimination strategy more than punishment or treatment. However, the overall level of homophobic attitudes was not high ($M = 1.83$, well below the scale mean of 3).

Predictors of attitudes to homosexuals. We used Spearman correlations to investigate the first-order associations of different dimensions of attitudes to homosexuals with demographics. The results are shown in Table 1. Negative attitudes to homosexuals are stronger in males, believers, and individuals with underage children at their household. Predictably, attitudes to homosexuality were more positive in individuals who do not see themselves as 100% heterosexual or have experienced attraction or had some sexual experience with members of their own sex. We found only marginal associations with parental family characteristics, suggesting that individuals from single-parent families tend to hold more positive attitudes to homosexuality. No significant associations were found with age or education. These associations were mostly uniform across the 8 scales.

When we performed the same analysis in the subsample of individuals who identified as 100% heterosexual ($N = 563$), we found the same set of significant associations. We also performed One-way ANOVA to compare attitudes to homosexuals in individuals who identified as completely heterosexual

Figure 1

Second-order structure of the Russian Attitudes to Homosexuals Inventory

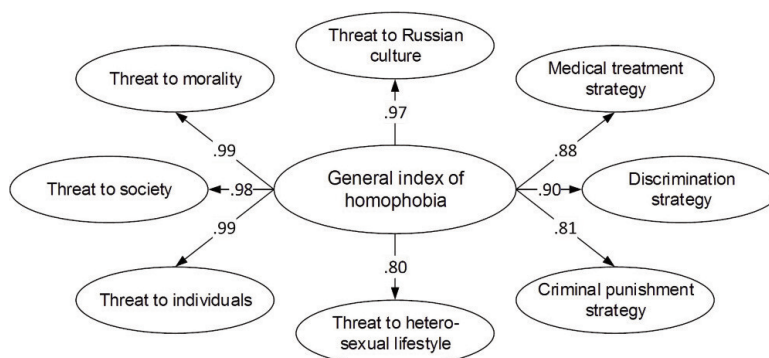


Table 1

Descriptive statistics and Spearman correlations of Russian Attitudes to Homosexuals Inventory with demographic variables (Study 1, N = 1007)

| | M | SD | α | Sex | Age | Education | Family type |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| General index of homophobia | 1.83 | 0.88 | .95 | -.10** | -.01 | -.03 | -.08** |
| Threat to morality | 1.91 | 1.08 | .90 | -.10** | .04 | .02 | -.11*** |
| Threat to individuals | 1.60 | 0.89 | .82 | -.09** | -.02 | .01 | -.05 |
| Threat to society | 1.82 | 1.13 | .89 | -.09** | -.03 | .00 | -.05 |
| Threat to culture | 1.97 | 1.14 | .87 | -.12*** | .04 | .00 | -.09** |
| Threat to heterosexual lifestyle | 2.77 | 1.34 | .90 | -.09** | .03 | -.03 | -.08** |
| Punishment strategy | 1.22 | 0.64 | .91 | -.09** | -.00 | .04 | -.02 |
| Treatment strategy | 1.46 | 0.82 | .91 | -.12*** | .04 | .02 | -.06 |
| Discrimination strategy | 1.89 | 0.97 | .84 | -.05 | -.07* | -.04 | -.08** |
| | | | | | | | |
| | Children | Religion | Sexual identity | Same-sex romantic attraction | Same-sex sexual experience | | |
| General index of homophobia | -.12*** | .20*** | -.28*** | -.28*** | -.23*** | | |
| Threat to morality | -.13*** | .21*** | -.33*** | -.33*** | -.27*** | | |
| Threat to individuals | -.09** | .20*** | -.24*** | -.20*** | -.17*** | | |
| Threat to society | -.08* | .19*** | -.26*** | -.24*** | -.23*** | | |
| Threat to culture | -.12** | .15*** | -.24*** | -.22*** | -.19*** | | |
| Threat to heterosexual lifestyle | -.09** | .16*** | -.25*** | -.28*** | -.21*** | | |
| Punishment strategy | -.07* | .15*** | -.17*** | -.20*** | -.18*** | | |
| Treatment strategy | -.10** | .20*** | -.23*** | -.21*** | -.23*** | | |
| Discrimination strategy | -.08* | .12*** | -.22*** | -.21*** | -.19*** | | |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

and reported no past homosexual experience or attraction (42.7% of the sample), those who identified as completely or mostly heterosexual and reported some homosexual experience or attraction in the past (32.2%), and those who identified as bisexual (9.6%) or homosexual (7.1%). The effect of the sexuality factor was significant ($F(3,918) = 79.90$,

$p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$), but Tukey's HSD post-hoc test showed that only the first group differed significantly from the other three ($p < .001$, Cohen's d was 0.56, 0.70, and 0.77, respectively), which, in turn, did not reveal any significant differences among each other.

In order to clarify the contribution of different variables to the attitudes

toward homosexuals, we performed a hierarchical (sequential) regression analysis using the combined score of negative attitudes to homosexuals as the dependent variable. The results are shown in Table 2.

Gender, age, education, children, parental family type, and religious affiliation entered at the first step explained 7% of the variance. Males, members of religious confessions, individuals who grew up in two-parent families, and individuals with children at their households showed stronger negative attitudes to homosexuals, suggesting that the effects of these variables are independent. Controlling for these, the three variables relevant to one's sexuality explained a further 9% of the variance at Step 2. The unique effect of homosexual experience was non-significant, suggesting that it may be fully explained by sexual identity. However, the effect of homosexual attraction remained significant, indicating that

those individuals who had experienced and acknowledged an attraction toward members of their own sex at some point in their lifetime were more tolerant of homosexuals, regardless of their own sexual orientation. Only the effects of gender and religion remained significant at Step 2, when sexuality variables were controlled for.

These data correspond to the findings of international studies, showing gender to be a more important predictor than age or education. Taken together, these demographic variables only explain a minor proportion of the variance in attitudes to homosexuals, suggesting that psychological variables may play a role in the process.

Study 2

Methods

Sample and procedure. The respondents (N = 292), 38.3% males and

Table 2

Demographic predictors of homophobia (Study 1)

| | Pearson <i>r</i> | Step 1 (β) | Step 2 (β) |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sex | -.11** | -.13*** | -.12** |
| Age | .03 | .02 | .01 |
| Education | -.02 | -.01 | -.04 |
| Family | -.08** | -.08* | -.04 |
| Children | -.12*** | -.09** | -.06 |
| Religion | .20*** | .21*** | .20*** |
| Sexual orientation | -.28*** | | -.16*** |
| Same-sex romantic attraction | -.29*** | | -.18*** |
| Same-sex sexual experience | -.24*** | | .01 |
| R^2 adjusted | | .07*** | .15*** |
| ΔR^2 at step | | .07*** | .09*** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

61.7% females aged 18 to 40 ($M = 22.2$, $SD = 5.70$), were university students and some adult volunteers. Most reported some tertiary study (61.8%) or university degree (28.7%), some (9.5%) had a high school diploma. Anonymous questionnaires using informed consent forms were administered on paper in a university setting. The students completed the questionnaires for course credit in paper-and-pencil format.

Instruments. We used the 34-item Russian Attitudes to Homosexuals Inventory (RAHI) developed in Study 1 supplemented by a set of measures tapping into criterion variables: personality traits, religiosity, authoritarianism, gender identity, and contact with homosexuals. We also used the same items for sex, age, education, and sexuality as in Study 1.

Personality traits. We used the Russian version of the BFQ-2 inventory (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Vecchione, 2007; Osin et al., 2015), which measures Big Five personality traits: Extraversion ($\alpha = .82$), Agreeableness ($\alpha = .80$), Conscientiousness ($\alpha = .85$), Stability ($\alpha = .88$), Openness ($\alpha = .79$), and includes a lie scale ($\alpha = .76$). Each scale is comprised by two facets omitted here for the sake of brevity (detailed results are available upon request).

Religiosity. Two items tapped into religious identity: «Do you consider yourself a believer?», «Do you consider yourself a follower of a religion, confession?» (both with 4 answer options, ranging from 1 “no” to 4 “yes”). Two other items tapped into religious practice: “How often do you visit a temple (church, mosque, ...)?” (6 answer options from 1 “once a week or more” to 6 “never”), “Do you turn with a prayer

to God or a higher power?” (7 answer options, from 1 “several times a day” to 7 “never”). Using principal component analysis, we found that the 4 items form a single index ($\alpha = .82$; items were inverted so that higher scores reflect higher religiosity).

Right-wing authoritarianism. We used a Russian version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (Altemeyer, 1988) developed by O.V. Mitina and A.I. Gorbunova (based on McFarland, Agee, & Abalagina-Paap, 1992), which includes 30 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale. We excluded four items which tapped into attitudes to homosexuality, in order to prevent the construct overlap. The remaining 26 items reflected the components of authoritarianism, such as obedience, aggression, and conventionalism, and formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .86$).

Gender identity. We used two instruments tapping into the gender role and in-group identification aspects of gender identity. The Gender Identity Inventory developed by V. A. Labunskaya and M. V. Burakova (Burakova, 2000) based on Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), following the original procedure in the Russian context includes 30 characteristics rated on a 7-point scale, 10 of which are perceived as masculine ($\alpha = .80$) and 10 as feminine ($\alpha = .79$) by Russian respondents.

The identification with one’s gender was measured by the Russian-language in-group identification inventory (Lovakov, Agadullina, & Osin, 2015; based on Leach et al., 2008). The instrument includes 14 items rated on a 7-point scale and grouped into two second-order dimensions, in-group self-investment ($\alpha = .84$), tapping into satisfaction and solidarity with in-group

and its subjective importance, as well as in-group self-definition ($\alpha = .82$), reflecting perceived in-group homogeneity and self-stereotyping as a member of in-group. The questionnaire had two different versions with in-group defined as “men” and “women” used for male and female respondents, respectively.

Contact with homosexuals. Two items tapped into personal contact with homosexuals: “Are there any homosexuals among your friends?” and “Are there any homosexuals among people you know personally, but don’t consider friends (acquaintances, colleagues, neighbours, etc.)?”, each with 4 answer options (1 “no”, 2 “maybe/not sure”, 3 “yes”, and 4 “prefer not to answer”, treated as missing data).

Results and Discussion

We used confirmatory factor analysis to test the structure of the Russian Attitudes to Homosexuals Inventory. The 8-factor measurement model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 1140.09$, $df = 497$, $p < .001$; CFI = .939; RMSEA = .054, 90% CI: .050–.058; SRMR = .046), and the model with a single second-order factor still fit the data acceptably ($\chi^2 = 1309.84$, $df = 517$, $p < .001$; CFI = .924; RMSEA = .058, 90% CI: .055–.062; SRMR = .053). The change in practical fit indices after the introduction of the second-order factor ($\Delta CFI = .015$, $\Delta RMSEA = .004$, $\Delta SRMR = .007$) was similar to Study 1. Overall, these findings indicate that the structure was successfully cross-validated.

The distributions of RAHI scale scores and the general index were close to normal, with skewness and kurtosis values well below 1, except for the

punishment strategy scale (skewness 1.37, kurtosis 1.51). Descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients are presented in Table 3. The scales were sufficiently reliable. The paper-based sample respondents showed higher levels of negative attitudes toward homosexuals (the difference ranged from 0.77 to 1.15 standard deviations for different scales).

We proceeded by investigating the correlations of attitudes to homosexuality with psychological variables. The associations with personality traits are presented in Table 3. Negative attitudes to homosexuality were associated with extraversion and conscientiousness, and showed inverse associations with openness. All of these associations were quite weak. We did not find any significant associations with agreeableness, but negative attitudes were positively related to social desirability (lie), suggesting that a negative stance to homosexuals is perceived as a social standard.

The associations with other variables are presented in Table 4. Negative attitudes to homosexuality showed only marginal associations with gender roles in the combined sample. In male ($N = 110$) and female ($N = 182$) groups taken separately these associations were similar, but mostly failed to reach the level of significance. In males, masculinity was positively associated with approval of discrimination strategy ($r = .26$, $p < .01$) and perceived threat of homosexuality to individuals ($r = .22$, $p < .05$). In females, femininity showed weak positive associations with approval of treatment strategy and perceived threat of homosexuals to society (both $r = .17$, $p < .05$).

The associations of RAHI with social identification with one’s gender were

Table 3

**Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations of the Russian Attitudes to Homosexuals
Inventory with personality traits (Study 2)**

| | M | SD | α | Extraversion | Agreeableness |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| General index of homophobia | 2.85 | 1.10 | .94 | .15* | .07 |
| Threat to morality | 2.87 | 1.11 | .87 | .05 | .03 |
| Threat to individuals | 2.48 | 1.04 | .83 | .20** | .11 |
| Threat to society | 3.04 | 1.12 | .78 | .14* | .09 |
| Threat to culture | 3.11 | 1.11 | .82 | .12* | .08 |
| Threat to heterosexual lifestyle | 3.82 | 0.96 | .81 | .15** | .01 |
| Punishment strategy | 1.77 | 0.93 | .87 | .07 | .05 |
| Treatment strategy | 2.37 | 1.19 | .90 | .08 | .10 |
| Discrimination strategy | 2.89 | 0.93 | .78 | .19** | -.04 |
| | | | | | |
| | Conscientiousness | Stability | Openness | Lie | |
| General index of homophobia | .15* | .02 | -.12* | .16** | |
| Threat to morality | .14* | .05 | -.14* | .15* | |
| Threat to individuals | .17** | -.02 | -.07 | .19** | |
| Threat to society | .14* | -.06 | -.06 | .12* | |
| Threat to culture | .15* | -.05 | -.10 | .12* | |
| Threat to heterosexual lifestyle | .11 | .08 | -.02 | .07 | |
| Punishment strategy | .14* | .07 | -.13* | .19** | |
| Treatment strategy | .09 | .06 | -.11 | .15* | |
| Discrimination strategy | .08 | .07 | -.14* | .12* | |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

stronger and similar for both gender identification components. When gender groups were analyzed separately, the associations of general index of negative attitudes to homosexuals with gender self-definition and gender self-investment were stronger ($p < .05$) in the male group ($r = .40$ and $.44$, respectively, $p < .001$) than in the female group ($r = .19$ and $.21$, $p < .01$).

Predictably, authoritarianism emerged to be the strongest correlate of negative attitudes toward homosexuals; this association was somewhat stronger ($p < .05$) in males ($r = .74$, $p < .001$) than in females ($r = .60$, $p < .001$). The association of religiosity with negative attitudes to homosexuals did not differ significantly between males ($r = .43$, $p < .001$) and females ($r = .27$,

Table 4

Pearson correlations of attitudes to homosexuality with gender and social variables (Study 2)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|----------------------------------|-------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| General index of homophobia | .14* | .04 | .32*** | .29*** | .33*** | .66*** | -.30*** | -.43*** |
| Threat to morality | .08 | .03 | .23*** | .28*** | .33*** | .58*** | -.32*** | -.44*** |
| Threat to individuals | .13* | .06 | .27*** | .21*** | .33*** | .54*** | -.26*** | -.35*** |
| Threat to society | .11 | .10 | .29*** | .28*** | .29*** | .61*** | -.30*** | -.37*** |
| Threat to culture | .08 | .03 | .26*** | .27*** | .26*** | .59*** | -.24*** | -.36*** |
| Threat to heterosexual lifestyle | .13* | -.03 | .21*** | .12* | .15*** | .46*** | -.15* | -.34*** |
| Punishment strategy | .11 | -.02 | .26*** | .30*** | .32*** | .54*** | -.27*** | -.34*** |
| Treatment strategy | .14* | .10 | .27*** | .28*** | .28*** | .52*** | -.21*** | -.32*** |
| Discrimination strategy | .18** | -.03 | .28*** | .18** | .23*** | .52*** | -.17** | -.34*** |

Note. 1 – Masculinity, 2 – Femininity, 3 – Gender group self-investment, 4 – Gender group self-definition, 5 – Religiosity, 6 – Authoritarianism, 7 – Contact: personal acquaintance, 8 – Contact: friends.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

$p < .001$). The experience of contact with homosexuals was inversely associated with negative attitudes to homosexuals in males ($r = -.48$ and $-.42$ for friends and acquaintances, $p < .001$) and in females ($r = -.38$, $p < .001$ for friends and $r = -.20$, $p < .01$, for acquaintances; only the latter was significantly different across genders, $p < .05$).

In order to separate the individual contribution of different predictors, we performed a hierarchical (sequential) regression analysis. Gender, age, and education were entered at Step 1, followed by sexuality variables at Step 2, personality traits at Step 3, gender identity at Step 4, ideology at Step 5, and experience of contact with homosexuals at Step 6. We focused on the contributions of variables entered at steps 3 to 6, controlling for demograp-

hics and sexuality. Because the sample was relatively small, we did not model the interactions between the variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

At Step 1, education accounted for a small proportion of the variance in homo-negativity, suggesting that higher levels of education are associated with lower levels of negative attitudes to homosexuals. At Step 2, additional 13% of the variance were explained by sexual orientation and homosexual attraction. Regardless of their sexual orientation, individuals who report having experienced romantic feelings towards a member of their own sex at some point in their life tend to be less homophobic. Interestingly, the effect of homosexual experience does not seem as important and is, most likely, completely

Table 5

Correlations and hierarchical regression model of psychological predictors of negative attitudes to homosexuals (Study 2)

| | Pearson r | Step 1 (β) | Step 2 (β) | Step 3 (β) | Step 4 (β) | Step 5 (β) | Step 6 (β) |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Sex | -.06 | -.08 | -.03 | -.05 | -.07 | -.19** | -.18** |
| Age | -.08 | -.01 | .00 | -.01 | -.01 | .07 | .08 |
| Education | -.16** | -.16* | -.14* | -.09 | -.09 | -.02 | .00 |
| Same-sex sexual experience | -.26*** | | -.06 | -.05 | -.02 | .05 | .10 |
| Same-sex romantic attraction | -.32*** | | -.18* | -.19** | -.18** | -.16** | -.16** |
| Sexual orientation | -.33*** | | -.20** | -.17* | -.17* | -.11 | -.07 |
| Extraversion | .16** | | | .14* | .12 | .11 | .11 |
| Agreeableness | .07 | | | .12 | .02 | -.07 | -.04 |
| Conscientiousness | .12* | | | .09 | .08 | .00 | -.02 |
| Stability | .02 | | | -.10 | -.10 | -.09 | -.09 |
| Openness | -.12* | | | -.19** | -.15* | .00 | .00 |
| Social Desirability | .16** | | | .09 | .07 | -.04 | -.02 |
| Masculinity | .14* | | | | .00 | -.02 | -.01 |
| Femininity | .06 | | | | .05 | .09 | .07 |
| Gender self-investment | .32*** | | | | .17* | .06 | .07 |
| Gender self-definition | .27*** | | | | .09 | .03 | .02 |
| Religiosity | .32*** | | | | | .12* | .09 |
| Authoritarianism | .65*** | | | | | .58*** | .52*** |
| Homosexual friends | -.42*** | | | | | | -.21*** |
| Homosexual acquaintances | -.29*** | | | | | | -.05 |
| R^2 adjusted | | .02 | .14 | .19 | .23 | .49 | .53 |
| ΔR^2 at step | | .03* | .13*** | .06** | .05** | .25*** | .04*** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

explained by sexual orientation. At Step 3, personality traits explained a further 6% of the variance, revealing a significant positive effect of extraversion and a negative effect of openness on homophobic attitudes. Controlling

for the variables at previous steps, gender identity variables explained a further 5% of the variance at Step 4, indicating that subjective importance of gender identity is associated with higher levels of negative attitudes to homosexuals. At

Step 5, religiosity and authoritarianism revealed significant and independent effects on homophobic attitudes, with a much stronger effect of authoritarianism. Finally, at Step 6 experience of personal contact with homosexuals explained a further 4% of the variance, indicating that individuals having homosexuals among their friends are less likely to hold homophobic attitudes, regardless of their own sexual orientation, religiosity, etc.

These findings suggest that the contribution of authoritarianism to negative attitudes toward homosexuals remains strong even after controlling for demographic variables, personality traits, and religiosity. Besides authoritarianism, experience of homosexual attraction and contact with homosexuals have emerged as relatively strong negative predictors of homophobia.

Study 3

Methods

Sample and procedure. The study used two contrast groups of respondents.

The control group was comprised by 330 social network users recruited in online communities that did not have any explicit reference to homosexuality. This group included 38.5% males and 61.5% females aged 18 to 59 ($M = 26.1$, $SD = 7.70$). A majority of respondents had a university degree (51.0%), some reported having incomplete university degree (24.8%) or high/professional school (24.2%).

The comparison group was comprised by 107 social network users recruited in online communities focused on fighting or overcoming homosexuality.

This group included 63.6% males and 36.4% females aged 18 to 62 ($M = 31.2$, $SD = 9.10$). Most of these respondents had university degrees (57.9%), some reported high/professional education (26.2%) or incomplete university degree (15.9%).

Instruments. Both groups completed the Russian Attitudes to Homosexuals Inventory with 34 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale and responded to the same set of items tapping into religiosity, sexuality, and experience of contact with homosexuals as that used in Study 2.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the two contrast groups are presented in Table 6. The groups demonstrate strong differences in negative attitudes. Predictably, visitors of anti-homosexual communities report stronger negative attitudes, with emphasis on views of homosexuality as a threat to society, culture, and heterosexual way of life. Visitors of anti-homosexual websites were also more religious and less likely to report having homosexuals among their friends and personal acquaintances (with a stronger effect size for friends). Predictably, they were also less likely to report any same-sex acts or romantic feelings.

Because the two groups differed in demographics, we performed a hierarchical multiple regression to control for sex, age, education, and sexual orientation, and investigate whether the differences in attitudes to homosexuality between the two groups could be explained by religiosity.

Controlling for self-identified sexual orientation, males and older respondents

Table 6

Descriptive statistics for the Study 3 samples

| | Neutral community visitors | | Anti-homosexual community visitors | | t(435) | Cohen's d |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|--------|-----------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | |
| General index of homophobia | 2.15 | 1.28 | 4.05 | 1.14 | 13.76 | 1.53 |
| Threat to morality | 2.17 | 1.43 | 4.28 | 1.28 | 13.64 | 1.52 |
| Threat to individuals | 1.98 | 1.29 | 3.75 | 1.14 | 12.60 | 1.41 |
| Threat to society | 2.17 | 1.49 | 4.26 | 1.29 | 13.01 | 1.45 |
| Threat to culture | 2.28 | 1.41 | 4.29 | 1.22 | 13.19 | 1.47 |
| Threat to heterosexual way of life | 2.78 | 1.48 | 4.35 | 1.10 | 10.10 | 1.13 |
| Punishment strategy | 1.68 | 1.28 | 3.50 | 1.40 | 12.46 | 1.39 |
| Treatment strategy | 1.84 | 1.30 | 3.88 | 1.33 | 14.03 | 1.56 |
| Discrimination strategy | 2.29 | 1.38 | 4.13 | 1.17 | 12.43 | 1.39 |
| Religiosity | 8.69 | 4.51 | 14.28 | 5.39 | 10.45 | 1.18 |
| Same-sex sexual experience | 1.71 | 0.90 | 1.10 | 0.41 | 6.69 | 0.76 |
| Same-sex romantic attraction | 1.87 | 0.95 | 1.21 | 0.58 | 6.69 | 0.76 |
| Homosexual friends | 2.20 | 0.89 | 1.37 | 0.72 | 8.65 | 1.03 |
| Homosexual acquaintances | 2.51 | 0.73 | 2.10 | 0.87 | 4.79 | 0.51 |

Note. All the differences are significant at $p < .001$.

turned out to be more homophobic. However, when religiosity was introduced at Step 2, the effect of age became non-significant suggesting that the variance of these two variables overlaps. Both the effects of religiosity and visiting anti-homosexual community were significant, suggesting that despite their higher religiosity, individuals visiting anti-homosexual communities may hold negative attitudes to homosexuals for non-religious reasons. These effects remained at Step 3, when contact and sexuality variables were included into equation. Similar to Study 2, having homosexual friends and same-sex attraction in the past were associated with more positive attitudes toward homosexuals.

Discussion

Studies conducted around the world reveal the existence of prejudice toward homosexuals in many countries. However, the existence and extent of prejudice is dependent on the social context. More specifically, in countries with more liberal legislation, where the rights of homosexuals are protected, the negative attitudes tend to be less pronounced (Kuntz et al., 2015). Contemporary Russia can be viewed as a conservative country, where discrimination of sexual minorities is gaining increasing legal codification. We expected this specific cultural context to

Table 7

**Hierarchical regression model of psychological predictors of negative attitudes to homosexuals
(Study 3)**

| | Pearson r | Step 1 (β) | Step 2 (β) | Step 3 (β) |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sex | -.24*** | -.17*** | -.11** | -.04 |
| Age | .20*** | .12** | -.02 | -.01 |
| Education | .10* | .03 | .03 | .02 |
| Sexual orientation | -.60*** | -.55*** | -.41*** | -.16** |
| Religiosity | .53*** | | .29*** | .26*** |
| Anti-homosexual community | .56*** | | .27*** | .19*** |
| Same-sex sexual experience | -.53*** | | | .08 |
| Same-sex romantic attraction | -.61*** | | | -.16** |
| Homosexual friends | -.71*** | | | -.38*** |
| Homosexual acquaintances | .41*** | | | -.08* |
| R^2 adjusted | | .38 | .56 | .68 |
| ΔR^2 at step | | .39*** | .18*** | .12*** |

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$, **** $p < .001$.

influence the content, structure, and the set of predictors of negative attitudes toward homosexuals in Russia.

The present research has revealed the structure of Russian homosexual prejudice. We found that negative attitudes toward homosexuals include a perception of threat originating from homosexuals viewed as an active group. Individuals with high levels of prejudice see homosexuality as a deviation from a natural and moral norm that may threaten social morals, unless it is contained. Homosexuality is seen as a fashion, spreading due to Western influence, which is alien to Russian culture and threatens indigenous Russian values. In addition to that, homosexuals are perceived as a source of threat to individuals (as they are believed to be inclined to molest children and “convert” “normal” heterosexual adults

to homosexual ways) and to the Russian society as a whole (as they do not contribute to the national birth rate, bringing nearer the extinction of the nation). Finally, Russian people with high levels of prejudice believe that homosexuals have become too active, forcing heterosexuals to adopt a homosexual way of life as a universal norm. Despite the fact that all of these beliefs have very little ground in reality, they tend to form a coherent whole in the minds of homophobic Russian respondents. Predictably, these individuals with high levels of prejudice also tend to endorse social action strategies aimed to eliminate homosexuals and their influence by criminalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults, by referring to medicine to “help” homosexuals overcome their condition, and, finally, by preventing the society

from providing homosexuals with equal civil rights and legal protection on par with heterosexuals.

The discrimination approach received more approval than did medical treatment or punishment and isolation. The respondents tended to endorse more strongly the beliefs reflecting the perceived threat of homosexuals to the rights and way of life of heterosexuals, as well as to the society as a whole and Russian culture. This perception of the threat of homosexuals implies a view of them as a socially active and well-organized group, which is particularly surprising, given how little real influence the Russian LGBT community has (Kon, 2009). The threat of homosexuals to individuals was rated lower by respondents from all samples, including the anti-homosexual community visitors. Thus, homosexuals are viewed as a source of symbolic threat, rather than that of realistic threat.

Confirmatory factor analyses have revealed that all these beliefs about homosexuality and corresponding action strategies can be modelled as a single dimension, indicating that attitudes to homosexuality in Russian society are extremely polarized. Prejudiced individuals tend to paint homosexuals in black, ascribing to them simultaneously a whole range of negative properties in manner reminiscent of 1930s' German anti-semitism. One can expect that in future, with changing social context, the structure of Russian attitudes to homosexuals may become more differentiated. Another specific feature of Russian homophobia is its "anti-Western" character acknowledged earlier by Kon (2009). Homosexuals and LGBT agenda are seen as manifestations of "harm-

ful" Western influence, along with non-government organizations, the human rights movement as a whole, and Western democracy (as opposed to Russian "sovereign" democracy). This "besieged fortress" view of reality has many adherents among Russian politicians and is even promoted by some social scientists through supposedly peer-reviewed research outlets (Ustin-kin, Rudakova, & Eminov, 2016).

We found some demographic characteristics to be weak predictors of homosexual prejudice. Gender and religious affiliation emerged as relatively strong predictors, with males and religious respondents showing higher levels of homophobia. Age and education showed weaker associations, which one can expect to detect with sufficient statistical power only in large and representative samples. This pattern is in line with Western studies (Sarac, 2012; West & Cowell, 2015). Respondents with children and those who grew up in complete families reported somewhat higher homophobia, in line with the content of Russian homophobic social discourse, which emphasizes the threat of homosexuals to children and traditional family. Altogether, the contribution of these demographic variables was rather small.

A number of individual psychological characteristics emerged as predictors of attitudes to homosexuals. Negative attitudes are more likely to be found in individuals with low openness to experience, high subjective importance of gender identity, and high authoritarianism. Thus, we separated the contribution of the variables that serve as general predictors of prejudice toward various outgroups (personality

traits, authoritarianism, intergroup contact) and those peculiar to homosexuality (gender identity, one's past romantic attraction and sexual experiences). Identification with homosexuals (self-identified sexual orientation), authoritarianism, and personal communication with homosexuals emerged as the strongest predictors.

The studies of authoritarian personality typically find that authoritarian individuals tend to hold negative views of outgroups (Altemeyer, 1988). These individuals also tend to obey the powers in an uncritical manner, adhere to social conventions, and are intolerant of transgressors. Because Russian discriminatory legislation originates from the authorities and because homophobic discourse is promoted through Russian high-status state media, one can only expect homophobic views to have a particularly strong influence on authoritarian individuals. The effect of religiosity was weaker, but independent of authoritarianism.

Predictably, individuals who identify themselves with non-heterosexual orientation demonstrated lower levels of negative attitudes to homosexuality. This can be explained within social identity framework (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) showing that individuals who identify with a group tend to evaluate their in-group more positively than out-groups. Depending on one's sexual identity, homosexuals can be viewed either as an in-group or an out-group, explaining the differences in prejudice.

Interestingly, however, past homosexual romantic attraction did show a unique effect on homophobic attitudes, independently of sexual identity, in all three samples. In Study 1, the level of homophobia in individuals who identi-

fy as heterosexuals but reported having had same-sex romantic attraction in the past was nearly as low as in bisexuals and homosexuals. This is in line with the findings showing that higher homophobia is associated with incongruence between explicit and implicit sexual orientation (Weinstein et al., 2012). Negative attitudes to homosexuals may result from defensive processes triggered by one's own feelings of same-sex attraction which conflict with the heterosexual norm imposed by controlling social environments (Ibid.). This suggests that educational interventions promoting the idea that romantic feelings towards members of one's own sex are not only acceptable, but also do not necessarily indicate that one is a gay or a lesbian may help to tackle homophobia.

The findings concerning the communication with homosexuals are in line with the intergroup contact hypothesis (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). According to this hypothesis, personal communication with outgroup members on a regular basis tends to improve one's attitude toward the outgroup as a whole and specific individuals belonging to it. Our data support this hypothesis, showing that having homosexual friends is predictive of lower homophobia even after the other variables are controlled for. The effect of having homosexual close friends is stronger than the effect of being personally acquainted with homosexuals as colleagues, neighbours, etc. First, this suggests that those homosexuals who are open about their orientation to their close friends may encounter significantly lower levels of homophobic attitudes. Second, it suggests that interventions addressing homophobia

and based on intergroup contact might be effective in the Russian context.

This study was the first to investigate the relative contribution of demographic and psychological predictors to homophobia in Russian samples. Its limitations include the use of non-representative samples. However, future studies can draw from the pool of items tapping into different aspects of

homophobia, choosing a set of RAHI items / subscales depending on specific research purposes. The new instrument has strong face and criterion validity. We hope that the present attempt will facilitate future Russian-language research of homophobia, leading to development of interventions that could tackle this phenomenon at microsocial, as well as macrosocial level.

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Russian Attitudes to Homosexual Inventory (translated)

The statements in this questionnaire describe different attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexuality as a social phenomenon. Different people hold different opinions on these matters. It is important that you express your own opinion here.

Please rate your agreement with each statement using the following scale:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Completely disagree | Mostly disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Mostly agree | Completely agree |
| 1. | If homosexuals want to be treated well, they should stop attracting attention to their sexual orientation. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. | Homosexuals are a threat to the traditional family. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. | Homosexuality is a way of life that must be condemned. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. | Homosexuals should stop complaining about the way they are treated in the society and live their own lives. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. | Homosexuals increase in their number as a result of spreading Western values. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. | Hatred toward homosexuals is a sign of poor moral climate in the society. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. | It's time for homosexuals to stop thrusting their way of life on other people. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. | Homosexuals must be cured. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. | Homosexuals are particularly dangerous, because they spread sexually transmitted diseases. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. | Homosexuals have no place in our society. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. | A homosexual should do anything to overcome the attraction to members of his/her own sex. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. | Homosexuality is an expression of laxity. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. | Homosexuals need to work with a therapist to change their sexual orientation. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. | A punishment for homosexuality needs to be introduced in the criminal code. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. | Existence of homosexuals does not cause any harm to people with traditional sexual orientation. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. | Homosexuality is a crime that must be prosecuted by law. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. | Homosexuality is a natural form of human sexuality. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. | Fighting homosexuality in a society does not lead to any good outcomes. | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. | Spreading of homosexuality leads to extinction of the nation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | Existence of homosexuals harms the ethical climate in the society as a whole. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Homosexuality is a normal variant of sexual orientation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Homosexuals need legal protection from oppression and discrimination. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | Homosexuality is a sexual perversion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | Homosexuals pose a threat to children, because they can molest them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | Increasing numbers of homosexuals indicates a decay of social mores. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | Homosexuals must be isolated from the society. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | Homosexuals do not threaten the society in any way. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | The danger of homosexuals is that they can convert people with traditional sexual orientation to homosexuals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | In their strife for their rights homosexuals have become too aggressive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | Police must protect homosexuals from assaults and aggression of those who hate them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | Homosexuals need help to become "normal". | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | Homosexuality is a completely alien phenomenon to Russian culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | Homosexuality is a fashion spread by mass media. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | Life will be better if the society offers equal rights to homosexuals and heterosexuals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Scale | Item numbers with factor loadings | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Threat to morality | 3 (.81) | 12 (.81) | 23 (.85) | 17 (-.71) | 21 (-.78) |
| Threat to culture | 5 (.80) | 25 (.90) | 32 (.64) | 33 (.83) | |
| Threat to individuals | 9 (.61) | 24 (.84) | 28 (.78) | 15 (-.73) | |
| Threat to society | 2 (.85) | 19 (.84) | 20 (.90) | 27 (-.71) | |
| Threat to heterosexual lifestyle | 1 (.84) | 4 (.80) | 7 (.84) | 29 (.88) | |
| Punishment strategy | 10 (.86) | 14 (.82) | 16 (.75) | 26 (.87) | |
| Treatment strategy | 8 (.82) | 11 (.82) | 13 (.87) | 31 (.84) | |
| Discrimination strategy | 6 (-.63) | 18 (-.65) | 22 (-.75) | 30 (-.66) | 34 (-.85) |

Note. The numbers in parentheses indicate standardized loading of each item on its respective factor in the Study 1 sample (N=1007). Negative loadings correspond to reverse-scored items, which need to be inverted. The general index of homophobia is calculated as a mean of the 34 items.



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Отношение к гомосексуалам в России: Содержание, структура и предикторы

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Резюме

Несмотря на рост негативного отношения к гомосексуалам в России, эта тема остается крайне малоисследованной. Опираясь на анализ социального дискурса, мы сформулировали набор утверждений и провели три эмпирических исследования, посвященных разработке и валидации Российского опросника отношения к гомосексуалам (РАНИ), а также изучению связей этого отношения с демографическими и психологическими переменными. В исследовании 1 с использованием онлайн-выборки (N = 1007) мы выделили структуру из 8 факторов, 5 из которых отражали различные аспекты воспринимаемой угрозы со стороны гомосексуалов (угроза индивидам, нравственности, обществу, российской культуре, правам гетеросексуалов), а 3 – одобрение социальных стратегий по отношению к гомосексуалам (наказание, лечение, дискриминация/защита). Шкалы показали высокую надежность ($\alpha = .82-.91$) и в конфирматорной факторной модели образовали единое измерение, обозначенное как общий показатель гомофобии. Негативное отношение к гомосексуалам было сильнее выражено у мужчин, религиозных респондентов и гетеросексуалов, никогда не испытывавших романтических чувств к представителям своего пола. В исследовании 2 (бумажная выборка, N = 292) факторная структура опросника была успешно воспроизведена. По данным иерархической множественной регрессии авторитаризм оказался наиболее сильным позитивным предиктором гомофобии, а наличие гомосексуалов среди друзей и романтические чувства – ее негативными предикторами, вклад которых сохранялся при контроле сексуальной ориентации. Более слабыми оказались положительные связи гомофобии с религиозностью, социальной идентификацией со своим гендером, маскулинностью, экстраверсией и социальной желательностью, а также отрицательная – с открытостью опыту. В исследовании 3 мы использовали контрастные группы посетителей нейтральных и антигомосексуальных онлайн-сообществ (N = 330 и N = 107 соответственно) для проверки критериальной валидности опросника. Результаты трех исследований не только соответствуют имеющимся данным из других стран, но и раскрывают культурно-специфичные особенности гомофобии в России (например, гомосексуальность рассматривается как следствие влияния Запада). Опросник РАНИ является валидным и надежным русскоязычным инструментом, который может быть использован для будущих исследований отношения к гомосексуалам.

Ключевые слова: отношение к гомосексуальности, гомонегативность, предрассудки по отношению к гомосексуалам, воспринимаемая угроза гомосексуалов, авторитарная личность.

Приложение

Российский опросник отношения к гомосексуалам (РАИ)

Утверждения этой анкеты описывают различные варианты отношения к гомосексуалам и к гомосексуальности как к общественному явлению. Разные люди занимают разные позиции по этим вопросам. Для нас важно именно Ваше собственное мнение.

Пожалуйста, оцените, насколько Вы согласны с каждым из следующих утверждений:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---|---|---|
| | Совершенно не согласен | Скорее не согласен | Нечто среднее (не уверен) | Скорее согласен | Совершенно согласен | | | |
| 1. | Если гомосексуалы хотят, чтобы к ним хорошо относились, пусть перестанут привлекать внимание к своей сексуальной ориентации. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Гомосексуалы представляют угрозу для традиционной семьи. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Гомосексуальность — это образ жизни, который следует осуждать. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Гомосексуалам пора перестать жаловаться на то, как к ним относятся в обществе, и просто жить своей жизнью. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Гомосексуалов становится всё больше в результате распространения западных ценностей. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Ненависть к гомосексуалам свидетельствует о плохом нравственном климате в обществе | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Гомосексуалам пора прекратить навязывать другим людям свой образ жизни. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Гомосексуалов необходимо лечить. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | Гомосексуалы особенно опасны потому, что они распространяют венерические заболевания. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | Гомосексуалам нет места в нашем обществе. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | Гомосексуал должен сделать все возможное, чтобы преодолеть сексуальное влечение к представителям своего пола. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Гомосексуальность — это проявление распущенности. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Гомосексуалам нужно работать с психотерапевтом, чтобы изменить свою сексуальную ориентацию. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | Необходимо ввести в уголовный кодекс наказание за гомосексуальность. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Существование гомосексуалов не наносит никакого вреда людям с традиционной сексуальной ориентацией. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Гомосексуальность — это преступление, которое должно преследоваться законом. | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. | Гомосексуальность — это одна из естественных для человека форм сексуальности. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | Борьба с гомосексуальностью в обществе не приведет ни к чему хорошему. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Распространение гомосексуальности приводит к вымиранию нации. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | Существование гомосексуалов вредит нравственному состоянию общества в целом. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Гомосексуальность — это один из нормальных вариантов сексуальной ориентации. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Гомосексуалы нуждаются в законодательной защите от притеснения и дискриминации. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | Гомосексуальность — это сексуальное извращение. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | Гомосексуалы представляют опасность для детей, потому что могут совратить их. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | Увеличение количества гомосексуалов свидетельствует об упадке нравов. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | Гомосексуалов необходимо изолировать от общества. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | Гомосексуалы никак не угрожают обществу. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | Опасность гомосексуалов в том, что они могут превращать людей традиционной ориентации в гомосексуалов. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | В борьбе за свои права гомосексуалы стали слишком агрессивны. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | Полиция должна защищать гомосексуалов от нападений и проявлений агрессии со стороны тех, кто ненавидит их. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | Гомосексуалам нужно помочь стать «нормальными». | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | Гомосексуальность — это совершенно чуждое явление для российской культуры. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | Гомосексуальность — это мода, которую распространяют средства массовой информации. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | Жизнь станет лучше, если в обществе будут равные права для гомосексуалов и гетеросексуалов | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Шкала | Номера пунктов и их факторные нагрузки | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Угроза нравственности | 3 (.81) | 12 (.81) | 23 (.85) | 17 (-.71) | 21 (-.78) |
| Угроза культуре | 5 (.80) | 25 (.90) | 32 (.64) | 33 (.83) | |
| Угроза индивидам | 9 (.61) | 24 (.84) | 28 (.78) | 15 (-.73) | |
| Угроза обществу | 2 (.85) | 19 (.84) | 20 (.90) | 27 (-.71) | |
| Угроза правам гетеросексуалов | 1 (.84) | 4 (.80) | 7 (.84) | 29 (.88) | |
| Стратегия наказания | 10 (.86) | 14 (.82) | 16 (.75) | 26 (.87) | |
| Стратегия лечения | 8 (.82) | 11 (.82) | 13 (.87) | 31 (.84) | |
| Стратегия дискриминации | 6 (-.63) | 18 (-.65) | 22 (-.75) | 30 (-.66) | 34 (-.85) |

Примечание. Числа в скобках отражают стандартизованные нагрузки каждого утверждения на фактор по данным исследования 1 (N=1007), отрицательные нагрузки даны для обратных пунктов, которые необходимо инвертировать. Общий показатель гомофобии рассчитывается как среднее по всем 34 утверждениям.

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