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The Political Divide Over Same-Sex Marriage: Mating Strategies in Conflict?

David Pinsof and Martie Haselton
University of California, Los Angeles

Abstract

Although support for same-sex marriage has grown dramatically over the past decade, public opinion remains markedly divided. Here, we propose that the political divide over same-sex marriage represents a deeper divide between conflicting mating strategies. Specifically, we propose that opposition to same-sex marriage can be explained in terms of (a) individual differences in short-term mating orientation and (b) mental associations between homosexuality and sexual promiscuity. We created a novel Implicit Association Test to measure mental associations between homosexuality and promiscuity. We found that mental associations between homosexuality and promiscuity, at both the implicit and the explicit levels, interacted with short-term mating orientation to predict opposition to same-sex marriage. Our model accounted for 42.3% of the variation in attitudes toward same-sex marriage, and all predictors remained robust when we controlled for potential confounds. Our results reveal the centrality of mating psychology in attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

Keywords

attitudes, evolutionary psychology, social cognition, stereotyped attitudes, sex, sexual orientation, morality, open data, open materials

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Attitudes toward same-sex marriage have changed dramatically throughout the past decade, culminating in the 2015 Supreme Court ruling in favor of legalization. Yet same-sex marriage is still a divisive issue among Americans; 39% are opposed to it, and 7% are undecided (Doherty, 2015). For many reasons, opposition to same-sex marriage is a puzzle for social scientists. Most puzzling, perhaps, is that opposition appears to be highest among individuals who most strongly support the institution of marriage (Brumbaugh, Sanchez, Nock, & Wright, 2008; McVeigh & Maria-Elena, 2009). This is difficult to explain because the most widely recognized goals of marriage—love, commitment, and children (Pew Research Center, 2010)—are attainable by gay men and women. Why, then, do the most vocal proponents of the institution of marriage tend to be the most vocal opponents of same-sex marriage?

Here, we offer a novel explanation for the political divide over same-sex marriage that draws from recent research on the relationship between mating strategies and political ideology (Kurzban, Dukes, & Weeden, 2010; Li, Cohen, Weeden, & Kenrick, 2010; Weeden, Cohen, & Kenrick, 2008; Weeden & Kurzban, 2014). Specifically, we argue that opposition to same-sex marriage arises primarily from sexually restricted individuals who believe, either implicitly or explicitly, that gay men and women are sexually promiscuous. As a result, these individuals oppose same-sex marriage out of fear that it will corrupt the institution of marriage.

Mating Strategies and Ideology

Social liberals and social conservatives exhibit stark differences in sexual attitudes, sexual behavior, parental investment, and family formation patterns. For instance, relative to social liberals, social conservatives have more negative attitudes toward casual sex (Rowatt & Schmitt, 2003), report fewer lifetime sexual partners (Brody et al., 1996), marry at higher rates (T. W. Smith, 2008), have

Corresponding Author:
David Pinsof, Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles, 2548 Franz Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90025
E-mail: david.pinsof@gmail.com

children at a younger age (Weeden et al., 2008), and rear more children throughout their lifetimes (Cahn & Carbone, 2010). Researchers have argued that these clusters of traits represent distinct mating strategies from which social and political conflicts of interest arise (Kurzban et al., 2010; Weeden et al., 2008; Weeden & Kurzban, 2014).

One such conflict of interest arises from the prevalence and acceptance of sexual promiscuity. For instance, early childrearing and large families hinder women's occupational attainment (Budig, 2003; Taniguchi, 1999), making them economically dependent on breadwinner husbands. Women who depend on male breadwinners incur higher costs of abandonment than their more self-sufficient counterparts; similarly, male breadwinners incur higher costs of cuckoldry than their less-contributive counterparts. Men and women in these unions may therefore feel particularly threatened by sexual promiscuity, which increases the risks of both cuckoldry and abandonment.

For people pursuing the mating strategies more typical of social liberals, by contrast, widespread sexual promiscuity poses less of a threat. Delayed family formation allows men and women to engage in sexual opportunities with multiple partners throughout youth and into adulthood. Moreover, women with fewer children and greater economic power are better equipped to abandon philandering husbands—or even to pursue extramarital sexual opportunities of their own (Lammers, Stoker, Jordan, Pollmann, & Stapel, 2011). Crucially, the two mating strategies entail distinct sociosexual orientations: The first strategy requires a firm rejection of short-term mating, whereas the second strategy entails a greater openness to short-term mating.

These differences in short-term mating orientation (STMO) may play a key role in explaining several political divides. For instance, whereas debates over the legality of recreational drugs are currently framed in terms of health and safety, recreational drugs may also be viewed as a feature of promiscuous lifestyles, making them a salient threat to sexually restricted individuals. Indeed, research indicates that opposition to short-term mating is the strongest predictor of opposition to recreational drugs across cultures, even when controlling for political orientation, social dominance orientation, and the Big Five personality traits (Kurzban et al., 2010; Quintelier, Ishii, Weeden, Kurzban, & Braeckman, 2013). Public disagreement over the legality of abortion may also reflect underlying differences in STMO. Without access to abortion and other forms of contraception, the prospect of an unwanted pregnancy may function as an effective deterrent against uncommitted sexual relationships. Without this deterrent in place, individuals may fear that society will run rampant with sexual promiscuity. Consistent with this notion, research indicates that sexual behavior and attitudes about promiscuity are stronger predictors of abortion attitudes than are views about the sanctity of life (Weeden, 2003; Weeden & Kurzban, 2014).

Current Research

Building from this line of research, we hypothesized that diverging concerns about sexual promiscuity might also underlie the left-right divide over same-sex marriage. This could be the case if individuals tended to view same-sex relationships, either implicitly or explicitly, as antithetical to sexually exclusive, family-oriented partnerships. Indeed, stereotypes of sexually promiscuous gay men have been prominent in antigay rhetoric (Ross, 2002), and other research suggests that some individuals hold stereotypes of lesbians as hypersexual (Geiger, Harwood, & Hummert, 2006). These stereotypes may be perpetuated by depictions of same-sex couples in the media. Whereas same-sex families have been historically underrepresented on scripted network television (Capsuto, 2000), other research indicates that gay and lesbian characters are more likely than straight characters to appear in sexual situations (Netzley, 2010).

If same-sex relationships are mentally associated with promiscuity, then same-sex marriage could be seen as incompatible with the goals of marriage—or perhaps even as a threat to the institution itself. That is, some people may fear that expanding the definition of marriage to include seemingly promiscuous relationships could weaken the link between marriage and monogamy. If this link became severed, marriage would offer no assurance of fidelity; like an outmoded currency, marriage would lose value as a social institution. Thus, individuals who are vigilant about protecting the institution of marriage (e.g., sexually restricted individuals) may feel threatened by same-sex marriage, particularly if they have strong associations between homosexuality and promiscuity. If this line of thinking is correct, it could explain the puzzling connection found between support for the institution of marriage and opposition to same-sex marriage.

In the current research, we measured participants' mental associations between homosexuality and promiscuity using the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). We also measured participants' explicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity using questionnaire items. We sought to test the hypothesis that STMO interacts with these measures of implicit and explicit mental associations to predict opposition to same-sex marriage. We were also interested in whether these mental associations differ depending on whether participants assess gay men or lesbians and, if so, whether these differences moderate the predicted interactions. To explore these possibilities, we included two conditions in which mental associations with promiscuity were measured with regard either to gay men or to lesbians.

We also included measures to examine alternative models. Research indicates that antigay attitudes are associated with general disgust sensitivity (Inbar, Pizarro, & Bloom, 2009; Inbar, Pizarro, Knobe, & Bloom, 2009; Terrizzi, Shook, & Ventis, 2010). Accordingly, one alternative model is that opponents of same-sex marriage are higher than proponents in general disgust sensitivity, which makes them more likely to associate homosexuality with promiscuity because they both elicit disgust. Another possibility is that opponents of same-sex marriage are motivated to ascribe to gay people just about any negative trait, including traits related to promiscuity. Finally, it could be that more conservative individuals are more likely to associate homosexuality with promiscuity because they both defy traditional sexual morality. For these reasons, we included measures of disgust sensitivity, negative-trait attributions to gay people, and political orientation for use as covariates.

Method

Participants

A total of 1,437 participants were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Of these, 177 did not complete the survey, and 175 were excluded either for failing our attention check or because more than 10% of their IAT response times were below 300 ms (following the method of Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003). The final sample consisted of 1,085 participants, 523 men and 562 women. Ages ranged from 19 to 73, with a median of 33 ($M = 35.6$, $SD = 11.3$). Regarding sexual orientation, 91.6% of the participants reported that they were heterosexual, 5.4% reported that they were bisexual, and 3% reported that they were homosexual. Restricting the sample to heterosexuals did not alter the pattern of results presented here. The Supplemental Material available online reports analyses in which we restricted the sample to heterosexuals.

Materials and procedure

Study design. Participants were randomly assigned to either the gay-men condition or the lesbians condition. In the gay-men condition, the implicit and explicit attitudinal measures referred to gay men. In the lesbians condition, the implicit and explicit attitudinal measures referred to lesbians.

Implicit associations. Using software at SocialSci.com (http://www.socialsci.com), we created a customized IAT using the categories "gay," "straight," "monogamous," and "promiscuous." Aside from this customization, our IAT methodology was identical to that used in previous IAT research (Greenwald et al., 2003). For two of the recorded trials, the words "gay" and "promiscuous" appeared on one side of the screen, and the words "straight" and "monogamous" appeared on the other side. For the other two recorded trials, the word pairings were switched so that "gay" and "monogamous" were on one side of the screen, and "straight" and "promiscuous" were on the other side. In all four of the recorded trials, five words related to either promiscuity ("casual sex," "hookup," "horny," "one-night stand," and "lustful") or monogamy ("married," "devoted," "faithful," "loving," and "matrimony") and five images of either same-sex or opposite-sex couples were presented in the middle of the screen. In the gay-men condition, same-sex couples were represented by images of two men, and in the lesbians condition, the same-sex couples were represented by images of two women. Participants were instructed to press one of two buttons to categorize the stimuli as belonging to either the left side or the right side of the screen. If response times were faster when the words "gay" and "promiscuous" were paired than when the words "gay" and "monogamous" were paired, then the concepts surrounding "gay" and "promiscuous" were considered to be mentally associated at the implicit level (Greenwald et al., 1998). Higher scores on the IAT indicate stronger mental associations between "gay" and "promiscuous."

Explicit associations. Explicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity were assessed with four questionnaire items. The items referred either to gay men or to lesbians, depending on the condition to which participants were assigned. The four items were as follows: "Gay men [lesbians] tend to have more sexual partners throughout their lives than straight men [women]," "Gay men [lesbians] tend to have more casual sex (i.e., 'one-night stands') than straight men [women]," "In general, gay men [lesbians] tend to be less interested in lifelong, romantic commitment than straight men [women]," "In general, gay men [lesbians] tend to be less interested in settling down and getting married than straight men [women]." Participants rated their agreement with the statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach's αs were .90 for both conditions.

Attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Participants rated their agreement with five statements: "Marriage is between a man and a woman," "Same-sex marriage undermines the meaning of the traditional family," "I oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage," "I support a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage," and "Same-sex couples should have the same legal rights to get married as heterosexual couples" (reverse coded). Participants rated their agreement with the statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach's α was .96.

STMO. Participants rated their agreement with four statements (Jackson & Kirkpatrick, 2007): "Sex without love is OK," "I can easily imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying 'casual sex' with different partners," "I could easily imagine myself enjoying one night of sex with someone I would never see again," and "I could enjoy sex with someone I find highly desirable even if that person does not have long-term potential." Participants rated their agreement with the statements on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach's α was .93.

Political orientation. Participants rated their political orientation on a scale ranging from 1 (*extremely liberal*) to 7 (*extremely conservative*).

Ascriptions of negative traits to gay people. Participants rated the degree to which they thought either gay men or lesbians are competent, intelligent, good-natured, sincere, independent, confident, tolerant, and warm. We selected these adjectives because they constitute fundamental dimensions of person perception (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) and because they are plausibly orthogonal to traits associated with promiscuity. Participants rated their attitudes on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Cronbach's α was .94 for each condition.

Disgust sensitivity. We used a shortened, eight-item version of the standard disgust scale (Haidt, McCauley, & Rozin, 1994; for details on the shortened version, see D. M. Smith, Loewenstein, Rozin, Sherriff, & Ubel, 2007). Sample items include "I try to avoid letting any part of my body touch the toilet seat in a public restroom, even when it appears clean," and "Even if I was hungry, I would not drink a bowl of my favorite soup if it had been stirred by a used but thoroughly washed fly-swatter." Cronbach's α was .77.

Results

All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS (Version 22). We first measured implicit and explicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity. We examined differences by condition, differences between male and female respondents, and their interaction. Then, we performed regression analyses that provided key tests of our prediction that STMO will predict opposition to same-sex marriage, and that this relationship will be qualified by interactions with implicit and explicit mental associations between homosexuality and promiscuity. We show that results were robust to the inclusion of possible confounds and other variables implicated by alternative theoretical models.

Implicit associations

The mean IAT score across both conditions was 0.59 (SD = 0.42), which indicates that participants' reaction times were, on average, 0.59 standard deviations faster when "gay" and "promiscuous" were paired than when "gay" and "monogamous" were paired. Participants in the lesbians condition showed slightly greater implicit associations between "gay" and "promiscuous" (M = 0.62, SD = 0.42) than participants in the gay-men condition did (M = 0.56, SD = 0.41), $t(1083) = 2.56$, $p < .05$. Follow-up analyses revealed that this effect was qualified by a significant interaction with gender, $F(1, 1081) = 7.42$, $p < .01$. Among men, IAT scores were significantly higher in the lesbians condition (M = 0.67, SD = 0.39) than in the gay-men condition (M = 0.53, SD = 0.40), $F(1, 1081) = 13.61$, $p < .001$, whereas among women, there was no significant difference in IAT scores between the two conditions, $F(1, 1081) = 0.01$, $p = .92$.

Explicit associations

The mean explicit-association score across both conditions was 3.38 (SD = 1.58). This value is just below the midpoint of the scale, which indicates that, on average, participants tended to slightly disagree with statements asserting a relationship between homosexuality and promiscuity. Participants in the gay-men condition had significantly higher explicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity (M = 3.57, SD = 1.57) than did participants in the lesbians condition (M = 3.19, SD = 1.56), $t(1083) = -4.04$, $p < .001$. Follow-up analyses revealed that there was no significant interaction with gender, $F(1, 1068) = 0.26$, $p = .61$.

Correlation between implicit and explicit associations

IAT scores were significantly correlated with explicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity, $r = .20$, $p < .001$. The magnitude of this correlation is in line with results from previous studies that have assessed the relationship between implicit and explicit attitudes (Greenwald et al., 2003).

Do STMO and implicit associations between "gay" and "promiscuous" interact to predict negative attitudes toward same-sex marriage?

We found the predicted interaction. First, there was a significant main effect of STMO, $b = -0.34$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% confidence interval (CI) = [–0.39, –0.28], $p < .0001$; individuals lower in STMO (i.e., sexually restricted individuals) exhibited stronger opposition to same-sex marriage.

There was also a significant main effect of IAT score, b = 1.5, SE = 0.06, 95% CI = [1.23, 1.79], $p < .0001$; higher IAT scores corresponded to stronger opposition to same-sex marriage. Consistent with predictions, these main effects were qualified by a significant two-way interaction between IAT score and STMO, b = –0.33, SE = 0.07, 95% CI = [–0.46, –0.19], $p < .0001$. Simple-slopes tests revealed that among individuals with IAT scores 1 standard deviation above the mean, there was a significant negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, b = –0.47, SE = 0.04, 95% CI = [–0.57, –0.37], $p < .0001$. Among individuals with IAT scores 1 standard deviation below the mean, there was a significant (albeit markedly weaker) negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, b = –0.20, SE = 0.04, 95% CI = [–0.30, –0.10], $p < .0001$ (see Fig. 1). The exploratory three-way interaction between condition (gay men or lesbians), explicit-association score, and STMO was not statistically significant, b = –0.17, SE = 0.14, 95% CI = [–0.45, 0.11], p = .23.

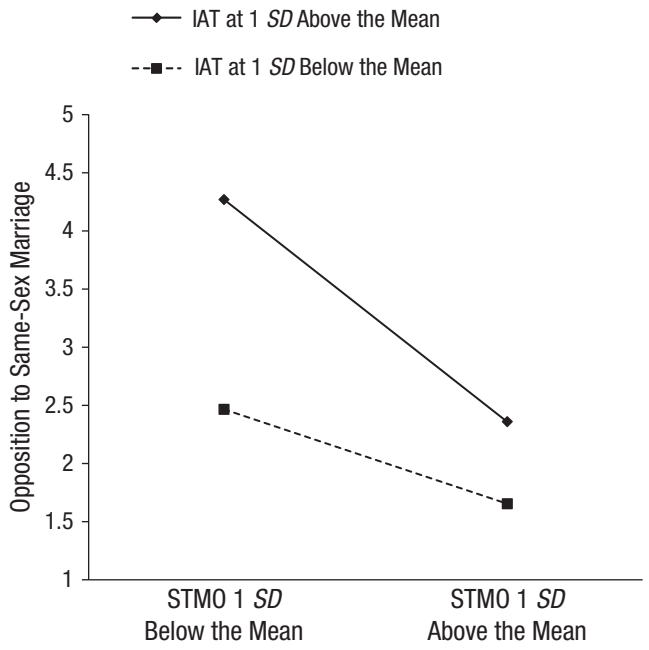

Fig. 1. Relationship between short-term mating orientation (STMO) and opposition to same-sex marriage for participants with Implicit Association Test (IAT) scores 1 standard deviation above and 1 standard deviation below the mean.

Do STMO and explicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity interact to predict negative attitudes toward same-sex marriage?

First, there was a significant main effect of STMO, b = –0.31, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [–0.36, –0.26], $p < .0001$; individuals who were more sexually restricted expressed stronger opposition to same-sex marriage. There was also a significant main effect of explicit-association score, b = 0.64, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [0.57, 0.70], $p < .0001$, such that individuals with stronger explicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity expressed stronger opposition to same-sex marriage. Consistent with predictions, these main effects were qualified by a significant two-way interaction between explicit-association score and STMO, b = –0.07, SE = 0.02, 95% CI = [–0.10, –0.04], $p < .0001$. Simple-slopes tests revealed that, among individuals with explicit-association scores 1 standard deviation above the mean, there was a significant, negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, b = –0.42, SE = 0.04, 95% CI = [–0.50, –0.34], $p < .0001$. Among individuals with explicit-association scores 1 standard deviation below the mean, there was a significant (albeit markedly weaker) negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, b = –0.19, SE = 0.04, 95% CI = [–0.27, –0.11], $p < .0001$ (see Fig. 2). The exploratory three-way interaction between condition (gay men or lesbians), explicit-association score, and STMO was not statistically significant, b = –0.02, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [–0.08, 0.05], p = .62.

Do interactions involving implicit and explicit associations independently predict opposition to same-sex marriage?

To assess whether implicit and explicit associations had distinct effects on opposition to same-sex marriage, we included both in the same model, along with STMO score and the two interaction terms (i.e., STMO × IAT Score and STMO × Explicit-Association Score). All three main effects—STMO, IAT score, and explicit-association score—were significant in the predicted direction, b = –0.27, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [–0.32, –0.22], $p < .0001$; b = 1.06, SE = 0.13, 95% CI = [0.81, 1.3], $p < .0001$; and b = 0.59, SE = 0.03, 95% CI = [0.52, 0.65], $p < .0001$, respectively. In addition, both interactions—STMO × IAT Score and STMO × Explicit Association Score—were significant, b = –0.19, SE = 0.06, 95% CI = [–0.32, –0.07], $p < .01$, and b = –0.06, SE = 0.02, 95% CI = [–0.09, –0.03], $p < .0001$, respectively.

Simple-slopes tests revealed that the directionality of the two interactions did not differ relative to the interactions found in the previous two regression models. Among individuals with IAT scores at 1 standard deviation above the mean, there was a significant negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, b = –0.35, SE = 0.04, 95% CI = [–0.43, –0.27], $p < .0001$. Among individuals with IAT scores at 1 standard deviation below the mean, there was a significant (albeit markedly weaker) negative relationship between

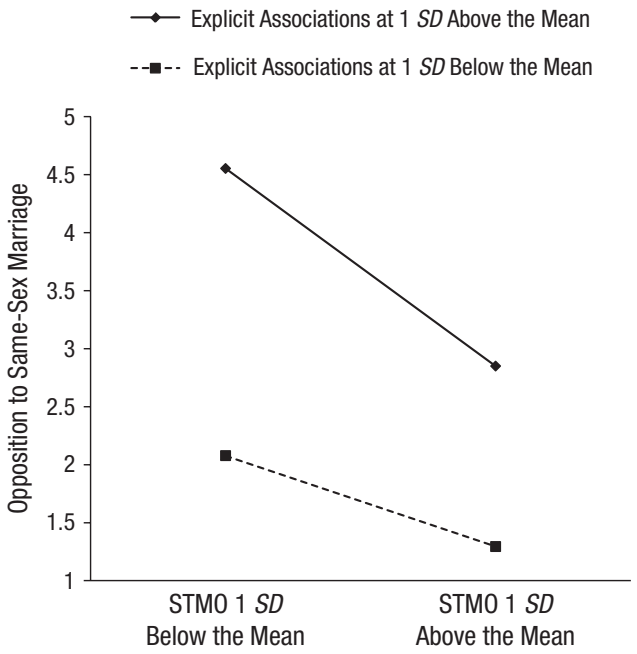

Fig. 2. Relationship between short-term mating orientation (STMO) and opposition to same-sex marriage for participants with explicit-association scores 1 standard deviation above the mean and 1 standard deviation below the mean.

STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, $b = –0.19$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI = [–0.27, –0.11], $p < .0001$. Among individuals with explicit-association scores 1 standard deviation above the mean, there was a significant negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, $b = –0.38$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI = [–0.46, –0.30], $p < .0001$. Among individuals with explicit-association scores 1 standard deviation below the mean, there was a significant (albeit markedly weaker) negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, $b = –0.17$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI = [–0.25, –0.09], $p < .0001$. The overall model accounted for 42.3% of the variance in attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

Alternative models for hierarchical regression testing

To investigate whether possible confounds might explain the interactions of both implicit- and explicit-association scores and STMO score, we added disgust sensitivity, political orientation, and ascription of negative traits to gay people to the previous model. Step 1 was identical to the previous model. In Step 2, we added disgust sensitivity, political orientation, and ascription of negative traits to gay people. Together, disgust sensitivity, political orientation, and ascription of negative traits to gay people explained an additional 14.3% of the variance in attitudes toward same-sex marriage. In support of our model, the inclusion of these variables did not eliminate the three main effects or either of the interactions from Step 1. The main effect of STMO remained significant; $b = –0.15$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI = [–0.20, –0.11], $p < .0001$; the main effect of IAT score remained significant, $b = 0.82$, $SE = 0.11$, 95% CI = [0.60, 1.0], $p < .0001$; the main effect of explicit-association score remained significant, $b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI = [0.29, 0.42], $p < .0001$; the STMO × IAT Score interaction remained significant, $b = –0.22$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI = [–0.33, –0.11], $p < .001$; and the STMO × Explicit-Association Score interaction remained significant, $b = –0.05$, $SE = 0.01$, 95% CI = [–0.08, –0.03], $p < .001$.

Simple-slopes tests revealed that, among individuals with IAT scores at 1 standard deviation above the mean, there was a significant negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, $b = –0.24$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI = [–0.32, –0.16], $p < .0001$. However, among individuals with IAT scores 1 standard deviation below the mean, there was no significant relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, $b = –0.06$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI = [–0.13, 0.03], $p = .24$. Among individuals with explicit-association scores 1 standard deviation above the mean, there was a significant negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, $b = –0.23$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI = [–0.32, –0.16], $p < .0001$. Among individuals with explicit-association scores 1 standard deviation below the mean, there was a substantially weaker, marginally significant negative relationship between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage, $b = –0.07$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI = [–0.15, 0.01], $p = .05$. For additional tests of alternative models, in which we allowed the covariates to interact with STMO, see Supplemental Analyses in the Supplemental Material.

Discussion

The results provide support for the hypothesis that opposition to same-sex marriage is related to individual differences in mating strategies interacting with mental associations between homosexuality and promiscuity. We found a robust correlation between STMO and opposition to same-sex marriage; consistent with our predictions, we found that this correlation was qualified by significant interactions with both implicit and explicit mental associations between homosexuality and promiscuity. By combining a measure of mating strategies with judgments of homosexuals' mating strategies, we were able to account for 42.3% of the variance in attitudes toward same-sex marriage, which highlights the potential importance of mating psychology for understanding attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

One finding we did not anticipate was that participants had higher implicit associations between homosexuality and promiscuity in the lesbians condition relative to the gay-men condition. This pattern was reversed for explicit associations. One possible explanation is that depictions

of lesbians in pornography, which may lack any pretext of monogamy, underlie some individuals' greater implicit associations between lesbians and promiscuity. This explanation is consistent with the observed interaction between condition and gender: Men—who are more frequent consumers of pornography than women (Hald, 2006)—exhibited an increase in IAT scores in the lesbians condition relative to the gay-men condition, whereas women's IAT scores did not differ between the two conditions. Despite these differences in mental associations, however, condition did not influence the predicted interactions.

Given the correlational nature of our design, it remains possible that other, unmeasured processes influenced our results. Although we were able to control for several plausible confounds—including political conservatism, domain-general disgust sensitivity, and ascriptions of negative traits to gay people—we may have overlooked other important variables. For instance, mental associations with promiscuity are likely to elicit an array of negative feelings about homosexuals, particularly among sexually restricted individuals. These feelings may include moral outrage, perceived threats to community values, and fears of unwanted sexual interest. Such factors could play a role in opposition to same-sex marriage as well as in antigay prejudice in general. Examining the possible influence of these factors remains a task for future research.

The ideas guiding this research have implications for our understanding of opposition to other nontraditional relationships. If sexually restricted individuals are concerned about protecting the institution of marriage, they will have similar concerns about open marriages, in which both spouses are permitted to have extramarital sex. Because open marriages would be perceived as weakening the link between marriage and monogamy, our model predicts that attitudes toward open marriage will be closely related to attitudes toward same-sex marriage. It is also possible that other kinds of nontraditional relationships (e.g., childless marriages, female-breadwinner families) could trigger similar feelings of threat among people pursuing the mating strategies typical of social conservatives.

In addition, our ideas may shed light on the unusually rapid increase in support for same-sex marriage that has occurred throughout the past decade. If early state legalizations of same-sex marriage increased the visibility of monogamous gay couples, this could have challenged individuals' implicit and explicit beliefs that same-sex relationships are promiscuous, which in turn could have increased support for additional state legalizations of same-sex marriage, and so forth, creating a positive feedback loop. This account remains speculative; however, it is consistent with the timeline of events leading up to the 2015 Supreme Court ruling: The first state legalization of same-sex marriage occurred in 2004, and attitudes first showed signs of change in 2005 (Masci, Lupu, Elwood, & Davis, 2012).

Compared with the wealth of research on the influence of personality traits on political attitudes, relatively little research attention has been devoted to the influence of mating strategies on ideology. Given the centrality of sexuality and family in everyday life, combined with the deep biological significance of reproduction throughout human evolutionary history, it would be surprising if variation in mating strategies did not profoundly shape our views of the social world. Our results suggest that the intersection of mating and one set of social views, our morals, remains rich terrain for future research. Alternative mating strategies, however, represent only one of many possible strategic conflicts that could shed light on political differences. Our findings are therefore consistent with an emerging body of research suggesting that self-interest—defined not in terms of immediate monetary benefit but in terms of evolved strategies and motives—plays an important role in shaping individuals' political attitudes (Aarøe & Petersen, 2013; Kurzban, Dukes, & Weeden, 2010; Li et al., 2010; Petersen, Sznycer, Sell, Cosmides, & Tooby, 2013; White, Kenrick, Neel, & Neuberg, 2013).

Author Contributions

D. Pinsof developed the study concept. Both authors contributed to the study design. Testing and data collection were performed by D. Pinsof under the supervision of M. Haselton. D. Pinsof drafted the manuscript, and M. Haselton provided critical revisions. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared that they had no conflicts of interest with respect to their authorship or the publication of this article.

Supplemental Material

Additional supporting information can be found at http://pss.sagepub.com/content/by/supplemental-data

Open Practices

All data and materials have been made publicly available via Open Science Framework and can be accessed at https://osf.io/t9c52/. The complete Open Practices Disclosure for this article can be found at http://pss.sagepub.com/content/by/supplemental-data. This article has received badges for Open Data and Open Materials. More information about the Open Practices badges can be found at https://osf.io/tvyxz/wiki/1.%20View%20the%20Badges/ and http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/1/3.full.

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