



WHY are political and religious figures who campaign against gay rights so often implicated in sexual encounters with same-sex partners?

In recent years, Ted Haggard, an evangelical leader who preached that homosexuality was a sin, resigned after a scandal involving a former male prostitute; Larry Craig, a United States senator who opposed including sexual orientation in hate-crime legislation, was arrested on suspicion of lewd conduct in a men's bathroom; and Glenn Murphy Jr., a leader of the Young Republican National Convention and an opponent of same-sex marriage, pleaded guilty to a lesser charge after being accused of sexually assaulting another man.

One theory is that homosexual urges, when repressed out of shame or fear, can be expressed as homophobia. Freud famously called this process a "reaction formation" — the angry battle against the outward symbol of feelings that are inwardly being stifled. Even Mr. Haggard seemed to endorse this idea when, apologizing after his scandal for his anti-gay rhetoric, he said, "I think I was partially so vehement because of my own war."

It's a compelling theory — and now there is scientific reason to believe it. In this month's issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, we and our fellow researchers provide empirical evidence that homophobia can result, at least in part, from the suppression of same-sex desire.

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