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A Study of Gender Identity: are Transsexuals More like Homosexuals or Heterosexuals?

BY TIM CHADWICK, JULIE BRINKER,
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Abstract

Objective: To do a comparative examination of perceived gender identity between transgender people, homosexuals, and heterosexuals. **Hypothesis:** Transgender people are more like heterosexuals than homosexuals in their perceived gender identity. **Method:** Evaluate masculinity and femininity traits as attributes of gender identities utilizing a modified version of the Bem Sex Role Index, the Stern et al. Sexual Identity Scale, and interviews. Due to time constraints, a snowball sampling method was utilized. **Results:** The indicators we utilized to measure masculinity and femininity traits as a function of gender identity indicate that transgender people perceive themselves more like heterosexuals than homosexuals. **Conclusions:** The results indicate a trend that may warrant the need for further study in this area.

In our society, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender individuals are viewed as one minority group by the dominant in-group, heterosexuals. As they work together to create rights equal to those of heterosexuals through political activism, these groups are forced into a sometimes-uncomfortable alliance for their very survival as a minority group. As a total group, they are faced with discrimination, misunderstanding, and ignorance concerning their sexuality and gender identity. We believe that gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender individuals as separate groups have different dynamics, social interactions, and in- and out-group attitudes towards each other, due in part to the differences in gender identity. It was our goal to show that there are differences between these groups concerning their perceived gender identity. By obtaining a clearer picture of the inner dynamics of individual members of these groups, we hope to aid in developing a better understanding of the similarities and differences between homosexuality and transgenderism. In addition, this understanding should also help to expand on the prevailing concepts of masculinity and femininity as gender traits. Consequently, it is our hope that a better understanding of these differences will lead to future studies that may aid in understanding how these differences may affect the groups as a whole.

Theory and Background

Gender Identity

William DuBay's *Gay Identity: The Self Under Ban* (1987) describes gay "conduct (as) the result...of the individual's unique ability to construct, configure, and manipulate his own environment for the purpose of maintaining biological identity." This attitude has been the prevailing opinion within our society for decades since the days of Freud (Freud 1953) and Alfred Kinsey (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948) on sexual behavior and later H.S. Becker (Becker, 1973) on deviance. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (1994) published by the American Psychiatric Association defines transsexualism as "severe gender dysphoria, coupled with persistent desire for the physical characteristics and social roles that connote the opposite biological sex." While the psychiatric community diagnostically views transsexuals as having gender identity disorder (GID) (DSM-IV), they do not define the term transgender. The term transgender is a recent word used by the "trans" community to more positively describe their gender identity. Jason Cromwell describes that emergence over the past decade of this term as a more positive way to describe people with varying levels of inner identities that directly conflict with their biological/physical sex. The term transsexual in the "trans" community, for obvious reasons, has a negative connotation; therefore transgender has become the preferred description. Therefore, for our purposes we have defined a transgender person as one who has assumed any number of social role combinations that opposes in some way their biological sex without the aim to have complete physical reassignment (Cromwell, 1999).

Some psychologists and sociologists have championed a movement towards a less abnormal and moralistic understanding of homosexuality and transgenderism. Milton Diamond, in "Self-Testing: A Check on Sexual Identity and Other Levels of Sexuality" (1997), defines gender identity as "...how one sees him- or her- self relative to society's expectations." "...masculinity or femininity is measured by comparing oneself with societal images provided by family, peers, media, educational and religious institutions, and other social forces." As Mr. Diamond implies, and as is our contention, gender identity should be viewed as a part of one's inner self-image and should be viewed in all its forms as part of normal being.

Gender Schema Theory

There are many approaches to understanding how individuals develop and maintain gender identity. One approach that employs the concept of self-schema refers to the self as a cognitive structure consisting of organized elements of information about the self (Markus, 1977). The function of the self-schema is to recognize, interpret, and process self-relevant information. In the case of gender, an individual acts, recognizes, and processes self-relevant information in a manner that is consistent with her or his gender self-schema. This concept comes out of an interpersonal approach

to self and identity, focusing on the mechanisms and processes within the self that influence an individual's behavior.

Sandra Bem extensively explored the development and existence of gender self-schemata. According to gender self-schema theory, gender identity development derives from cognitive processing relating to one's gender self-schema (Bem 1981). Gender identity development is a socialization process of transforming male and female into masculine and feminine. This process synthesizes information based on the sex-linked associations that make up the gender self-schema. In turn, it enables individuals to evaluate and assimilate new information according to their gender self-schema. According to Bem:

Gender schema theory contains two fundamental presuppositions about the process of individual gender formation: first, that there are gender lenses embedded in cultural discourse and social practice that are internalized by the developing child, and second, that once these gender lenses have been internalized, they predispose the child, and later the adult, to construct an identity that is consistent with them. (Bem 1993:138-139)

An individual who possesses a gender self-schema differs from another individual, according to Bem (1981), not in terms of how much masculinity or femininity his/her self-concept has, but rather the degree to which his/her self-concept is organized in terms of gender relevant information. The possession of a particular feminine or masculine trait does not imply that an individual has a feminine or masculine self-schema. It is when these traits are considered meaningful to them, affecting the perception and organization of their environment, that the individual is considered to have a gender self-schema. In order to test these theories, Bem (1974) conducted tests utilizing an index she devised called the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The BSRI consists of 60 adjective characteristics, 20 masculine, 20 feminine, and 20 neutral.

In 1987, Stern, Barak, & Gould created a scale which they formulated to evaluate the "person prototype," comparing it to Bem's concept of personality traits as the measurement of gender schema. Stern; et al. drew from early theoretical models of sexual identity proposed by Constantinople (1973) and refined by Locksley and Colten (1979). Locksley and Colten theorized that this global self included "physical appearance, occupation, social prestige, as well as behavioral dispositions and characteristics" (1979, p. 1023). Further development by Myers and Gonda (1982) tested four categories which Stern, et.al. drew upon in the creation of their Sexual Identity Scale (SIS) which we will also utilize in our study. These four characteristics, which imply a deeper multidimensional self-perception as a function of sexual identity, are gender reference, physical reference, personality or behavioral characteristics, and societal or biological reference. The scale, which will be described later in the operationalization portion of this paper, was derived from these characteristics.

Hypothesis

On the surface, one might infer due to closer group interaction that homosexuals and transgender individuals are more alike in gender identity than they are to heterosexual individuals. It was our contention that the differences between gay males and male to female transgender individuals, as well as lesbian females, and female to male transgender individuals, is much more complex than would be inferred. The aim of this exploratory study is to identify the independent variable, social sexual identity of gay, lesbian, and transgender people, which differentiates the dependent variable, gender identity from these respective groups. Our basic exploratory hypothesis was that transgender individuals are more similar to heterosexuals than homosexuals in their gender identity. In addition, it was our hope that ultimately any findings would result in the need for further empirical studies concerning gender identity and its relation to respective inner-group dynamics.

Sampling Methodology

By comparing transgender individuals to their gay male and lesbian female counterparts, as well as their respective male and female heterosexual counterparts, we hoped to uncover some perceived identity differences. The time frame of this study gave us the option of only studying a relatively small sample of gays ($n=24$), lesbians ($n=30$), and transgender individuals ($n=7$) to compare to a male and female heterosexual comparison group ($n=380/380$), which came from the aforementioned study (Stern, Barak, & Gould; 1987). We hoped to uncover interesting identity differences that would justify further study and a more in depth analysis.

To obtain participants we used the non-probabilistic method of snowball sampling, which was not representative of the entire population. For our purposes in this study, generalizability to the whole population was not an issue. Since we were conducting an exploratory study, the ability to generalize was not our goal. It was our hope to be able to observe a simple trend that might prompt further research.

It is important to define our sample and how it was subdivided out of the whole of the GLBT population for comparison purposes. For this study, bisexuals, at least those people who consider themselves at the time of the study to be practicing bisexuals, were avoided due to the possible overlapping group status. Bisexuals can be perceived as belonging to either gay or lesbian groups as well as the in-group of heterosexuals. This fact might pose completely different individual trait dynamics than those inherent in-groups of exclusively gays, lesbians, and transgender individuals. In addition, it is important to note that the transgender group was divided into two sub groups, male to female transgenders (TMF) and female to male transgenders (TFM). We did not take into consideration the point in the transformation process, whether pre-op or post-op, that each transgender person has completed. They were simply considered as transgender for our purposes because they indicated that they were.

We asked available subjects in our immediate community and environment, that we knew to be gay, lesbian, or transgender, to participate in our study. We also asked those individuals if they knew of anyone within the GLBT community that would also like to participate in our study. In order to increase and diversify our sample we attended known alternative lifestyle establishments, like restaurants, bars, churches, and GLBT clubs. We selected some individuals from those that were present, and asked them if they would like to participate in our research.

The packet that each respondent completed included the following:

- A brief description indicating that we were interested in studying the attitudes within the GLBT community.
- A brief description of who we were as researchers.
- Our appreciation for their help with this study, due to the importance of studying attitudes within the GLBT community.
- A general description of the process that our study utilized followed by the informed consent form and the instruments to be completed by the respondent.

We do realize that our methods of obtaining a sample had some shortcomings, but for our exploratory study, we felt that we were able to get a rough idea or general trend of the comparison attitudes pertaining to gender identity.

Research Design and Instruments

We employed two major research methods to gather relevant data. Our quantitative method included an index and a scale, while we obtained qualitative data by conducting a few interviews utilizing open-ended questions. In addition, we gathered group demographic data, which was evaluated for any unusual relationships.

As referred to earlier, an index and a scale were administered to obtain quantitative data: The first is referred to as the *SIS, Sexual Identity Scale* (Stern et al. 1987). It computes sexual identity by averaging the midpoints of the measure's four designated sex dimensions. The dimensions include Feel/Sex, Look/Sex, Do/Sex, and Interest/Sex. These are the four scales that correspond to the four characteristics hypothesized by Myers and Gonda. Four statements are listed; participants must rank each on a scale ranging from very masculine to very feminine. Femininity and masculinity self-ascribed identity dimensions were measured using this self-assessment measurement scale.

In addition, previously designed indexes adapted from the modified Bem Sex Role Inventory instruments measuring sex-linked traits were used to determine an individual's gender identity. The *FTI, Femininity Trait Index* and the *MTI, Masculinity Trait Index* are each based upon 10 items, each which are self ascribed and scored by the participants with a scale from one (never or almost never true) to seven (always or almost always true). In their study, Stern, Barak, & Gould administered each index to their respective heterosexual gender groups. In order to gather more

objective data for our purposes we commingled the two scales and administered both indexes together as one. We hoped that this would better measure both gender possibilities for each participant. In the Stern et al model, the measurement indexes were assessed utilizing LISREL VI, and Cronbach's alpha analysis indicating high reliability. In addition, the SIS components' internal correlation indicated construct validity, while the comparison of the four components of the SIS components with the FTI and MTI scales indicated divergent validity. (Stern, 1987)

To complement the GIR and SIS scores of feminine and masculine traits, we also collected demographic data on this sample population. We obtained information on Age, Ethnicity, Employment Status, Level of Education, and Marital/Partner Status. We also asked a question as what age they felt that they were different from other children in order to evaluate early childhood awareness of gender identity.

Data Analysis

The instruments utilized aided in our determination of gender identity by measuring the attributes femininity and masculinity. The trait data gathered from the surveys was coded and entered into a statistical spreadsheet following as closely as possible the statistical analysis utilized by Stern et.al. This allowed for comparisons to be made between our homosexual/transgender data and their heterosexual data. For our data analysis, the MTI became the "Masculine Score"(MS), and the FTI, the "Feminine Score"(FS). The combination of these scores was labeled the "Gender Identity Rating" (GIR). Stern's Sexual Identity Scale became the "Sexual Identity Score" (SIS). Again, our study sample was comprised of Lesbian Females (LF) (n=30), Gay Males (GM) (n=24), Male to Female Transgenders (TMF) (n=3), and Female to Male Transgenders (TFM) (n=4), yielding a total sample size of n=61. These labels were utilized in order to simplify and identify the variables for comparison purposes in our computer analysis. By comparing these scale and index mean ranges and standard deviations for male to female transgenders and female to male transgenders, we found interesting comparisons to gay males and lesbian females, respectively, and the Stern et.al. heterosexual males and females, respectively.

For the Masculine Score, ten traits that measured Masculinity were added together to yield a value from 10 to 70 for each respondent. By dividing each individual's total by the number of traits (10), each respondent would then be assigned their Masculine Score, ultimately having a range from 1 to 7. A score of 1 would represent low masculinity and a score of 7 would represent high masculinity. The Feminine Score was computed and assigned to each respondent in the same manner as the Masculine Score, except the traits were considered to measure femininity. The total range remained the same, with a score of 1 representing low femininity, and a score of 7 representing high femininity. The Masculine Score and the Feminine Score for each individual was then combined by subtracting the FS from the MS to create a Gender Identity Rating (GIR). The GIR determined each individual's overall masculinity or femininity as a function of the group of adjective traits. A resultant posi-

tive score meant that the group was relatively more masculine than feminine, and a negative score indicated relatively more feminine than masculine. In addition, a total computation from the results of Stern's Sexual Identity Scale was created. The range of each respondent's total coded answers was from 4 to 20, since we had four questions with five possible answers. This total score was divided by four to create each respondent's Sexual Identity Score (SIS), with a range 1 to 5. Of course, a value of 1 represents "Very Masculine" and a 5 represents "Very Feminine". This scale was used to delve into the cognitive aspects of perceived gender identity compared to the adjective trait aspects of the GIR.

Results

MEAN SCORE ANALYSIS ON BOTH INSTRUMENTS
AVERAGE GROUP MASCULINITY SCORES, FEMININITY SCORES,
GENDER IDENTITY RATINGS, AND SEXUAL IDENTITY SCORES TABLE

Sexual Identity		Masculine Score	Feminine Score	Gender Identity Rating	Sexual Identity Rating
Lesbian Female N=30	Mean	5.18	5.95	-.77	3.09
	Std. Deviation	1.05	.69	1.08	.729
Gay Male N=24	Mean	4.90	5.68	-.77	2.53
	Std. Deviation	.89	1.14	1.15	.474
Transgender: Male to Female N=3	Mean	3.73	5.23	-1.50	4.41
	Std. Deviation	.90	1.05	.55	.52
Transgender: Female to Male N=4	Mean	5.75	5.05	.70	2.37
	Std. Deviation	.34	.54	.31	.43
Total N=61	Mean	5.0	5.75	-.71	2.88
	Std. Deviation	1.00	.926	1.12	.75

For the score of masculinity, the (LF) received a score of 5.18, (GM), 4.90, TMF, 3.73, and TFM, 5.75. A scoring continuum placed Female to Male Transgenders at the high end of Masculinity, the Lesbian Females and Gay Males in the middle of the high end of the scale, and Male to Female Transgenders at the high end.

The LF received a feminine score of 5.95, GM, 5.68, TMF, 5.23, and TFM, 5.05. This scoring continuum placed Lesbian Females higher on the Femininity scale, followed closely by Gay Males, Male to Female Transgenders, and Female to Male Transgenders respectively.

Our four groups taken as a whole had an average score of 5.03 on the Masculinity measurement and an average score of 5.75 on the Femininity measurement. The LF average GIR of -.77 and GM rating of -.77 indicated both groups to be slightly more feminine, while TMF -1.50 were more feminine, and TFM rated more masculine at .70. This continuum as we anticipated would put TMF at a higher feminine rating, with GM and LF more androgynous, and TFM being the most masculine.

The SIS scoring for the LF was 3.09, GM, 2.53, TMF, 2.37, and TFM, 2.37. Again, as anticipated, the continuum for the SIS put TMF at the highest feminine score, LF, an androgynous score, GM, a slightly masculine score, and TFM receiving the most masculine score.

Analysis of Response Percentages for the SIS

The following table was constructed to show the percentages of respondents that answered in a particular way on the Stern's Sexual Identity Scale for both our sample population (homosexuals) and Stern's sample population (heterosexuals).

It is important to note that between 92 and 97 percent of LF and GM respondents answered in the middle ranges of masculine, neither/nor, and feminine. The TMF all responded neither/nor or to the very feminine extreme. Not one response from the 3 TMF respondents was on the masculine side. The TFM all responded to neither/nor or to the masculine extreme except two responses that were in the feminine range. As for the Stern heterosexual sample, 79.8 to 92.1 percent of heterosexual females (HF) answered feminine or very feminine, while 82.9 to 95.3 percent of heterosexual males (HM) answered masculine or very masculine. The perceived correlative trend between these percentages indicates in this analysis very clearly that TMF and TFM are more like HF and HM than their androgynous GM and LF counterparts. Even taking into consideration our small sample size, this analytical trend should warrant future study.

In addition, one-way ANOVAs were run to compare each group's sets of responses on the modified Bem Sex Role Inventory and Stern's Sexual Identity Scale as compared to each other group respectively.

The following are the results:

- Comparison of TMF and TFM showed a significant difference in both Gender Identity Rating ($P=.046$) and Sexual Identity Score ($P=.000$).
- Comparison of LFs and Transgender TMFs demonstrated a significant difference in Sexual Identity Score ($P=.004$), but not in Gender Identity Rating.
- Comparison of LFs and GMs showed a significant difference in Sexual Identity Score ($P=.008$), but not in Gender Identity Rating.

Observational interviews were conducted to gain qualitative data as well. The interviews ranged in time from one half hour to two hours. A total of six interviews were administered, consisting of two lesbians, two gay males, one female to male transgender, and one male to female transgender. The questions were designed in

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES ON THE SEXUAL IDENTITY SCALE

	Very Masuline (%)	Masculine (%)	Neither Masculine Nor Feminine (%)	Feminine (%)	Very Feminine (%)
Lesbian Female (N=30)					
Feel/sex	3	10	43	40	3
Look/sex	3	20	27	47	3
Do/sex	3	27	43	27	0
Interest/sex	3	33	37	27	0
Gay Male (N=24)					
Feel/sex	4	46	46	4	0
Look/sex	8	84	8	0	0
Do/sex	4	38	54	4	0
Interest/sex	0	16	67	13	4
Transgender: Male to Female (N=3)					
Feel/sex	0	0	33.3	0	66.6
Look/sex	0	0	0	66.6	33.3
Do/sex	0	0	0	33.3	66.6
Interest/sex	0	0	0	66.6	33.3
Transgender: Female to Male (N=4)					
Feel/sex	0	75	25	0	0
Look/sex	25	75	0	0	0
Do/sex	0	75	0	25	0
Interest/sex	0	25	50	25	0
Heterosexual Female (N=380)					
Feel/sex	0.8	1.1	9.2	60	28.9
Look/sex	0.8	1.3	5.8	66.6	25.5
Do/sex	0.8	3.4	17.4	62.4	16.1
Interest/sex	1.1	5.5	23.7	53.2	16.6
Heterosexual Male (N= 380)					
Feel/sex	30	62.1	5.8	1.3	0.8
Look/sex	26.1	69.2	3.4	0.8	0.5
Do/sex	21.6	66.8	10.5	0.8	0.3
Interest/sex	20	62.9	12.9	3.7	0.5

order to gain more insight concerning their gender identity and concepts of masculinity and femininity. Our first question dealt with the subject verbalizing their perceptions of masculine and feminine traits. Other questions dove into self-perceived masculinity and femininity. Traits from the Bem Sex Role Inventory were also discussed.

Coding yielded a trend among all subjects. The basic consensus by all participants was that masculinity/femininity is a societal creation that influences one's perceptions of their gender. Therefore the subjects all were uncomfortable with having to choose and conceptualize their gender identity. Androgynous responses were consistent with the quantitative data gathered.

This quote by subject 1 (a female to male transgender) represents the trend we encountered:

“...gender is created, you know, and it's, in this particular culture and society, there's this dichotomy that exists and a socialization that exists. I do believe that there are innate differences amongst people because I've raised a child that is very gender neutral, the other side of the family does not raise him gender neutral, but especially this past year he's been with me the majority of the time, but he's very masculine and masculine identity most of the time, so I think there are some innate thrusts, but I think if people had the opportunity to be more open there would be more understanding. I mean, I just bought this game for my aunt and uncle *Men Are from Mars, Women are From Venus*, and I just think there would be a lot more stuff like that if people were just more able to flow, and when you're in the gay and lesbian and trans community as opposed to the non-trans straight community, you see so much more variation in regards to gender roles and masculinity and femininity and they flow in different ways to different people.”

Subjects 2 through 6 spoke of the socialization and creation of gender as well.

Future empirical research may need to take into account that members of the GLBT community are overall not comfortable with labeling themselves as strictly masculine or feminine. Subject 4 nicely reiterated this idea by stating that “my concepts of what is masculine or feminine are just that, mine. I see myself as a person neither masculine nor feminine and at the same time I am both masculine and feminine...”

Discussion

GENERAL

One of the first trends that seemed unusual is that our respondents as a whole scored higher on the Femininity Trait Score than on the Masculinity Trait Score, with values of 5.75 and 5.03, respectively. This may mean that Lesbian, Gay, and Transgender individuals are all simply more feminine in their perceived gender identity than the heterosexual population. More research should be done on this area to

determine if we have found a trend. There is also the possibility that the traits taken from Bem's Sex Role Inventory are outdated for our population today. The world has changed since Bem created the scale in 1974, and since Stern modified it in 1987. Traits like "compassionate" and "understanding" that may have been seen as purely feminine in the past may now be seen as more universal in navigating within our world. There is also the concern that Bem's scale was designed for application among heterosexual individuals and is not equally applicable to homosexual and transgender individuals. We applied this scale to the homosexual community with the assumption that it would apply to them as well as it has been proven to apply to heterosexual subjects, thus allowing us to make some comparisons. It is quite possible that the

Demographic Data

AGE			LEVEL OF EDUCATION		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
20 - 39	37	60.7	High School - Less	14	23.0
40 - 59	23	37.7	Some College	26	42.6
60 - 80	1	1.6	Some Grad School	18	29.5
Total	61	100.0	No Response	3	4.9
			Total	61	100.0

ETHNICITY			MARITAL STATUS		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
White	51	83.6	Married/ Cohabiting	36	59.0
African-American	4	6.6	Single	22	36.1
Hispanic	3	4.9	No Response	3	4.9
Native American	1	1.6	Total	61	100.0
Other	2	3.3			
Total	61	100.0			

EMPLOYMENT STATUS			AGE OF "DIFFERENCE"		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Employed Full Time	44	72.1	5 - years	22	36.1
Employed Part Time	5	8.2	6 - 10 years	14	23.0
Student	4	6.6	11 - 15 years	15	24.6
No Response	8	13.1	16 - 20 years	7	11.5
Total	61	100.0	21+ years	3	4.9
			Total	61	100.0

Bem adjectives are really not a good measure of gender traits as applied to gender identity among the homosexual community, and that some other scale may need to be created and tested. Responses within our observational interviews also supported this. There was a consensus among the subjects who were interviewed that measuring gender identity as a function of simple adjective traits implied societal stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. Several subjects indicated feeling uncomfortable describing themselves in those contexts.

Upon analyzing both the Gender Identity Rating and the Sexual Identity Score we noticed another trend, that Male to Female Transgenders scored higher Feminine Scores, and Female to Male Transgenders scored higher Masculine scores, while Lesbian Females and Gay Males scored androgynous scores, more in touch with both feminine and masculine traits. On the Gender Identity Rating, the Lesbian Females were slightly less feminine than Gay Males, while on the Sexual Identity Score the Lesbian Females were more feminine than Gay Males. This leads us to believe that each scale measures different aspects of gender identity. A correlation was done comparing the two scales and a correlation of $r=.220$ was found with a significance of $p=.089$, indicating that they are marginally related to one another. This finding is quite understandable given the fact that the SIS data from the previous analysis section seems to better compare perceived gender identity than the aforementioned modified Bem adjectives did. An increase in sample size may correct this shortcoming, but it seems more likely that the cognitive SIS is a better measure of sexual traits than the adjectives on the Bem scale are.

When comparing the average responses to Stern's Sexual Identity Scale for both our sample population (homosexuals) as well as for his sample population (heterosexuals) we were able to see how homosexuals related to heterosexuals. The previous analysis seems to indicate a polarization between the two heterosexual sexes as well as the small groups of transgender subjects in our sample group. One important statistic to note was the fact the TMF subjects in our study showed even greater femininity than HF subjects in the Stern sample did. This may be due to the fact that since TMF are must work harder to fit into a female physical perception; they typically try much harder to be more feminine. It is also possible that this finding may also be due to the fact that our sample size was very small for transgender individuals.

Demographic Discussion

When our demographics were analyzed, we noticed that our sample group came mainly from individuals that were in the age ranges of 20-39 and 40-59. We only had one individual from the age group of 60-80. Thus our findings can only give us an idea about the younger and middle-aged populations. Future studies should include members from the upper age group so that the results may be better generalized to the whole population.

Another issue that makes our sample population difficult to generalize was the lack of diversity. Eighty three percent of the sample identified themselves as white,

leaving us with under seventeen percent of the population identifying themselves as being from a different ethnic background. Future studies should include a more diverse population, to get a more complete picture of how gender identity might also be affected by ethnic background.

An extremely interesting trend was apparent when individuals were asked about their first recollection of "being different" from their peers. Over 55% of our respondents reported that they felt different prior to the age of 10. Over 75% of our sample felt that they were different by the age of 15. This information may assist in leading us to believe that genetics does play a role in the determination of homosexuality. Early childhood psychological theory has indicated that children have a strong need to belong and be accepted by their peers. It is hard to believe that a child would choose to be "different" or homosexual at an age when conforming is so important.

Conclusion

Through using a modified version of the Bem Sex Role Inventory and Stern's Sexual Identity Scale, we found that indeed there are differences among the groups. There seems to be a continuum of masculinity/femininity with TMF being the most feminine, LF and GM being the most androgynous, with some femininity and masculinity mixed together in their identity, with TFM being the most masculine of our four groups. It is only when comparing our sample population to Stern's heterosexual population that we see, for the most part, the GLBT community falls inside the scores of heterosexuals on perceived gender identity. In one case, the TMF were even more "Feminine" than the HF, but otherwise there were no exceptions to the trend. This one exception may also be an error on our part as our sample size was very small, therefore giving us large percentages compared to Stern's sample population. These differences may mean that future studies should be done to understand how these differences may affect the group as a whole, as well as our concepts of masculinity and femininity.

In the future, additional more detailed gender identity analysis can only aid in furthering the understanding of the social and personality dynamics of homosexuals and transgender people. While the debate rages on in our society over human rights for social and legal equality, further empirical studies of this type can only contribute to a deeper analytical understanding of existing gender schema theories as they relate to homosexuals and transgender individuals. These types of psychological and sociological analyses along with additional biological and genetic data may assist in overcoming the moralistic negative stereotypes that are engrained into the fabric of our society. The ultimate purpose of conducting this type of research should be to assist the GLBT community and society in general to come to a better understanding of the inherent similarities and differences between human beings of different gender identities. We would hope that by coming to this kind of more comprehensive understanding and recognition of individual and group differences based on perceived gender identity, a more cohesive and stronger GLBT community may result as well.

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