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THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER-STEREOTYPED INTERESTS
ON RATINGS OF A PERCEIVED HOMOSEXUAL

A Thesis
by
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Submitted to the Graduate School
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ON RATINGS OF A PERCEIVED HOMOSEXUAL

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ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER-STEROTYPED INTERESTS ON RATINGS
OF A PERCEIVED HOMOSEXUAL. (August 1985)

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This study was conducted to examine the effects of the label "homosexual" and gender of subjects on personality ratings of a man possessing typically masculine, feminine, or neutral interests. One hundred forty-four undergraduate psychology student volunteers, 72 males and 72 females, viewed one of six videotapes containing an interview with a confederate. Using a factorial combination of interview cards, the confederate revealed possessing either traditionally masculine, feminine, or neutral interests and associated himself with either a homosexual or neutral social group. The same confederate appeared in all interviews. At the conclusion of each tape subjects rated the confederate on 20 personality traits and perception of similarity of interests. It was hypothesized that males would rate the confederate less favorably and more stereotypically than would females when he was

labeled homosexual, particularly when he possessed traditionally feminine interests. It was also hypothesized that both male and female subjects would rate the homosexually labeled confederate least favorably when he was viewed as most similar in interests to the subjects doing the rating. Results indicated that, while female subjects rated the perceived homosexual more favorably than the nonhomosexual on a number of traits, males rated the homosexual less favorably and more stereotypically on all traits except for honesty and happiness. Personality ratings were also generally more favorable when the confederate possessed traditionally masculine interests. In ratings of similarity, females tended to see themselves as most like the confederate when he possessed neutral interests and least similar when his interests appeared traditionally masculine, although differences did not approach a significant level. Male subjects saw themselves as equally similar in the masculine and neutral interests conditions, and significantly less similar in the feminine interests condition. Male subjects least favorable and most stereotypical ratings were most often assigned to the confederate when the subjects felt less similarity to him.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents for their continued support throughout my many years of schooling and to "Petunia" for the inspiration and caring that helped me to make it through. I will always be grateful for the times we have shared together and the happiness you have brought into my life.

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INTRODUCTION

Although research on homosexuality has been conducted throughout the 20th century, it was not until the late 1960s and 1970s that researchers began to focus their attention not only on the characteristics of the homosexual individual but also on the ways in which negative attitudes of society contribute to problems encountered by homosexuals (Levitt & Klassen, 1974; MacDonald & Games, 1974; Morin, 1977; San Miguel & Millham, 1976). Since homosexuals constitute a legitimate minority group in the United States, there is a need for additional research on homosexuality and society's reaction to them.

Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin (1948) and Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, and Gebhard (1953) estimated that from 1% to 3% of women and 2% to 16% of men from 25 to 35 years of age had been exclusively homosexual at some time in their lives. In addition, 50% of all men and 28% of all women reported having had homosexual experiences. Although these figures indicate that a substantial portion of the population has had some degree of homosexual contact, the attitudes towards homosexuals have been generally negative throughout both past and present society

and have often led to discrimination against homosexually oriented individuals (MacDonald & Games, 1974).

Negative attitudes toward homosexuality have been in evidence in the United States since the 18th century, when any nonprocreative sexuality was considered pathological. This attitude carried over into the 19th century, where medical writings described homosexuality as a form of hereditary insanity, although there was no empirical research on which to base such claims (Morin, 1977).

One of the first psychologists to challenge the view of homosexuality as pathological was Freud (1951). Freud described homosexuality as an "arrest of sexual development," but did not consider it an illness. He viewed the persecution of homosexuals as a great injustice. Despite Freud's viewpoint, many psychoanalytic writings have labeled homosexuality as pathological behavior (Hendin, 1975).

Since homosexuality has been viewed as pathological for so long by many respected individuals and professions, the fact that homosexuals have evoked negative reactions from a large segment of society is not surprising. Several studies carried out during the 1970s indicated that the general public perceived homosexuals as "sick" (Smith, 1971; Steffensmeier & Steffensmeier, 1974) or "dangerous" (Morin & Garfinkle, 1978; Steffensmeier & Steffensmeier, 1974). However, with the increased activity

in the movement toward equality for homosexuals beginning in the late 1960s, the view of homosexuals as sick individuals began to be questioned. At this point researchers began to focus on the problems encountered by homosexuals rather than the problems of homosexuality. Researchers began to assess how people reacted to homosexual individuals and what types of people reacted most negatively.

The term homoerotophobia was first used by Churchill (1967) to describe a person's fear of sexual or erotic contact with a member of the same sex. A more descriptive term, homophobia, was introduced by Smith (1971) and popularized by Weinberg (1972). Homophobia was described as a heterosexual's irrational fear of being in close proximity to someone believed to be homosexual. This is an important concept because it describes a fear of someone who is merely thought to be homosexual. Whether or not the person actually engages in homosexual behavior is irrelevant. As Dunbar, Brown, and Amoroso (1973) have found, homophobics are more likely to label a man who exhibits what they consider a single feminine characteristic a homosexual than are nonhomophobics. Homophobics were also found by Dunbar et al. to stereotype homosexuals as displaying more feminine personality characteristics than heterosexual males.

In a study by MacDonald (1974) in which subject ratings of personality characteristics associated with men, women, male homosexuals, and lesbians were compared, men were rated the most potent and male homosexuals were rated least potent. This supports the contention that male homosexuals are viewed as lacking "manly" qualities and are seen as impotent by many members of our society. MacDonald viewed the results of this study as offering support for the belief that the need to "keep males masculine and females feminine" is a major factor in the propagation of negative attitudes toward homosexuality.

Karr (1978) studied the effects of the label homosexual on how the labeled individual would be rated on a number of personality traits. Karr found that a person labeled homosexual was rated more negatively than a non-labeled individual. The labeled individual was rated significantly less clean, softer, more womanly, more tense, more yielding, more impulsive, less rugged, more passive, and quieter. In another study (Karr, 1975), an experimental confederate labeled homosexual by a second confederate was rated as less friendly, less happy, less funny, more unpleasant, more tense, and less handsome than the same individual when he was not so labeled. Since the person being rated in both studies was seen as masculine when he was not labeled and feminine when he was labeled, it is again apparent that feminine

characteristics will be attributed to a male who is labeled homosexual, even when he possesses no such characteristics.

A possible weakness with Karr's (1975, 1978) studies was the fact that there was interaction between the subjects and the person being rated. Subjects worked with the person to be rated (as well as with two other experimental confederates) on a group task, and this interaction may have had an effect on how the target confederate was subsequently rated.

Gurwitz and Marcus (1978) studied how ratings of someone labeled homosexual were affected if subjects anticipated interacting with such an individual. No significant difference was found in the ratings of subjects who anticipated interacting with the labeled individual and those who did not anticipate interacting, but both groups rated the perceived homosexual more stereotypically and less favorably than the same individual when he was not labeled. The person labeled homosexual was rated significantly more emotional, more dull, less aggressive, more passive, less strong, more theatrical, less calm, less of a leader, less dependable, less honest, and less religious than when he was assumed to be heterosexual. Though females rated the perceived homosexual more negatively than the perceived heterosexual, their ratings were much less unfavorable than were those of male subjects.

Several studies have attempted to determine whether males or females are generally more negative in their reactions to homosexuals, and the results have been mixed. While several studies found no significant differences between the sexes in their reaction to homosexuality, the lack of difference might be what these studies examined. Studies by MacDonald and Games (1974), Morin (1974), Rooney and Gibbons (1966), and Smith (1971), attempted to assess cultural beliefs and societal attitudes rather than more specific, individual attitudes that would be more indicative of a homophobic reaction. The majority of studies measuring individual attitudes found males to be more homophobic than females.

Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier (1974) measured individual attitudes of both male and female subjects and concluded that male homosexuality is more objectionable than female homosexuality, and that females are more tolerant of homosexuality in general than are males. Males were found to be especially rejecting of male homosexuals, and the experimenters attributed this rejection to the idea that heterosexual males view a homosexual as a sexual failure and feel more personally threatened by such an individual. These findings are consistent with those of Millham, San Miguel, and Kellogg (1976), who found that homosexuals of the same sex as the rater are viewed more negatively than opposite-sexed homosexuals.

This study also found males advocating more repressive measures than females against male homosexuals.

Morin and Garfinkle (1978) stated that there are so many explanations for homophobic behavior that they could not possibly give a single interpretation. They do, however, feel that homophobia serves the function of maintaining the traditional male role, with the fear of being labeled homosexual serving to keep males within the confines of what our culture deems as appropriate sex-role behavior.

Churchill (1967) felt that by the mid-1960s homophobia had reached such extreme proportions that any behavior suggestive of homosexuality was shunned. He felt that homophobia manifested itself through preoccupation with stereotyping of the sexes, with certain behaviors, interests, and occupations deemed appropriate for males only and others appropriate for females only. Any deviation from the culturally prescribed sex roles could leave one open to suspicions of homosexuality, particularly in the case of males.

Gurwitz and Marcus (1978) gave subjects an information sheet that they believed to have been filled out by an individual they were to see in a videotaped interview. In the control condition, subjects read that the confederate's social life had revolved around people he had met through his dormitory on campus. Subjects then viewed

the videotaped interview and rated the confederate on a number of personality traits. The only difference in the experimental condition was that, before subjects viewed the videotape they read that most of the confederate's social life was through people he had met at his school's Gay Union. Thus, in the experimental condition the confederate was affiliated with a homosexual group and in the control condition he was not.

As indicated earlier, Gurwitz and Marcus (1978) found that the confederate was rated more negatively and more stereotypically when he was believed to be homosexual, with males responding most negatively to the homosexual label. Males also stereotyped the confederate much more than females did when he was perceived to be homosexual.

San Miguel and Millham (1976) studied 156 male college students to determine how they would react to a homosexual who was perceived to be either similar or dissimilar to each subject. Subjects were interviewed by a confederate who, according to the treatment condition, was labeled either homosexual or heterosexual and was presented to the subjects as highly similar or dissimilar to themselves along personality dimensions. They were then instructed to rate the confederate on how well they felt he performed during the interview. The confederate interviewed each subject using a prepared and standard

set of questions, so each interview was the same for all treatment conditions. Since a negative evaluation by a subject meant a loss of money for the confederate, the authors labeled a negative response a sign of aggression.

Results of this study indicated that significantly more aggression (negative responsiveness) was directed toward the perceived homosexual than was directed toward the heterosexual target (confederate). It was also found that subjects directed greater aggressiveness toward the homosexual target who was perceived as similar than they directed toward the homosexual target who was seen as dissimilar to themselves.

These findings support the notion that it is threatening to a heterosexual male to find that he is similar in many ways to a homosexual male. The authors felt this could be explained as either a threat caused by discrepancy to the heterosexual male's organization of experience (belief system) or as a threat to a vulnerable sexual identity. Further investigation would be necessary to determine which, if either, of these explanations holds true.

San Miguel and Millham's (1976) study is particularly interesting because it made a point of presenting a perceived homosexual in a nonstereotypical manner. Subjects in one of the experimental conditions were told that their personalities were almost identical to that of

a confederate who would later identify himself as a homosexual in their presence. This forced the subjects in this condition to dispel beliefs they may have held regarding what a homosexual was supposed to be like. However, their study only touched on the idea of structuring a perceived homosexual's personality in order to manipulate a stereotyped image.

The present study represents an attempt to determine how a homosexual would be rated on a number of personality traits if he possessed interests traditionally associated with members of a particular sex. It is hoped that through manipulation of an experimental confederate's interests and goals in life, the stereotyped image of a homosexual can also be manipulated. While the intent of this study is to examine how subjects will rate a perceived homosexual when he is presented as having traditionally masculine, feminine, or neutral interests, its design will also allow examination of how a heterosexual male is viewed when he admits to possessing atypical interests.

While the 1975 and 1978 studies by Karr and the 1978 study by Gurwitz and Marcus involved verbal interaction or anticipated interaction between subjects and an experimental confederate, the present study will make no mention of a possible interaction and none will occur. This will provide all subjects with the same level of

exposure to the confederate and eliminate the potential for contaminating variables that might be introduced if interaction was to occur.

Since San Miguel and Millham (1976) employed only male subjects in their research, questions were left unanswered as to how females would react to a homosexual who was believed to be either similar or dissimilar to themselves in terms of interests expressed. This study attempted to answer some of those questions.

This study examined the following hypotheses:

1. There will be a main effect of labeling such that homosexuals will be rated more negatively and more stereotypically than nonhomosexuals.
2. An interaction between gender and the homosexual label will be obtained such that males will rate homosexuals lower than will females.
3. An interaction between the homosexual label and interests will be obtained such that a homosexual will be rated lowest when he possesses feminine interests.
4. The three independent variables will interact such that a homosexual will be rated lowest by males when he possesses interests most similar to theirs and by females when he possesses interests most similar to those of the female subjects.

METHOD

Design

This study employed a 2 x 2 x 3 factorial design with the following independent variables: sex of subject, whether or not the confederate mentioned a desire to join a gay student group; and whether the confederate was associated with traditionally masculine, feminine, or neutral interests. Twenty personality variables served as dependent variables, which each of the 20 items analyzed separately. Data were analyzed by analyses of variance. Subject ratings of perceived similarity between themselves and the confederate in all nonlabeled treatment conditions were also analyzed by an analysis of variance.

Subjects

Subjects consisted of 72 male and 72 female undergraduate psychology students who received for their participation an extra credit receipt for use in the psychology class for which they were enrolled. Subjects were run in groups ranging in size from 1 to 20 people at a time, with both males and females randomly assigned to one of six conditions prior to participation. All

subjects were treated in accordance with the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists" (American Psychological Association, 1982).

Materials

Materials were comprised of six videotaped interviews and a three page rating form. The first two pages of the rating form contained 20 personality variables, each to be rated along a seven-point Likert type scale. The personality variables consisted of items such as "friendliness," "intelligence," "attractiveness," and "leadership ability" and were chosen because of their use in past research or because of the experimenter's interest in exploring those areas. The third page included four questions concerning the interests verbalized by the confederate on the videotape and one question asking subjects to rate along a seven-point Likert-type scale the degree of similarity they felt between themselves and the experimental confederate (see Appendix A). Questions concerning the confederate's stated interests were used only as a manipulation to gain the subjects' undivided attention and were not analyzed in any manner.

The six videotaped interviews lasted three minutes each and were scripted to ensure dialogue consistency (see Appendix B). The same male individual (hereafter, referred to as the confederate) appeared in every interview posing as a junior psychology major at Appalachian

State University (ASU). The confederate was not a current ASU student, so there was little chance that he would be recognized by any of the subjects. The interviewer was not seen on the videotape, but his voice was heard asking questions of the confederate.

On the videotape, the confederate had stereotypically masculine interests in two interviews, stereotypically feminine interests in two interviews, and interests not traditionally associated with one gender or the other in the final two interviews. To determine what interests and activities were considered masculine, feminine, or neutral, a list of 48 items was distributed to 40 psychology students (see Appendix C). The students rated each item as being associated with persons of a particular sex or not associated with persons of a particular sex (neutral). Those items with an agreement of 70% or greater were chosen for use in the confederate's script.

Although the specific interests voiced by the confederate were different between each of the three categories (labeled masculine, feminine, and neutral), the interests were the same within categories with one exception. In the experimental condition, while talking about his social life the confederate stated, "I was going to join a gay awareness group on campus so I could meet some new people here, but I never have gotten around to it. I figured a gay student group would at least give me a

chance to meet people with similar interests." In the control condition, the confederate referred to "some on-campus group" instead of a gay awareness group. The dialogue of the interviewer was identical for all six interviews.

Procedure

To obtain subjects, sign up sheets were distributed in undergraduate psychology classes and posted on bulletin boards in the ASU psychology department building. There were openings for 10 male and 10 female subjects for each of the 15-minute time slots, and sign up sheets indicated that the experiment would deal with first impressions.

Upon arriving, subjects were told that they would be viewing a randomly selected videotaped interview from among several that were made of ASU student volunteers just before spring break of 1984. They were told that they would be rating the individual seen on the videotape on a number of personality variables and would be asked a few questions about what the individual said, so to please pay close attention to the tape throughout. Subjects were also told that all students on the videotape were selected for specific reasons, although the reasons were not disclosed to them, and had been instructed to be completely honest in responding to the interviewer's

questions in order to ensure the experiment's accuracy (see Appendix D).

Following the instructions, subjects viewed the tape selected for them prior to their arrival. At the tape's conclusion, each subject was given a rating form and asked to put his or her age, sex, and class standing at the top of the first page; they were specifically requested not to put their names on the forms, as all ratings were to be made anonymously. Subjects were then asked to circle the number on the Likert-type scale that corresponded with the degree to which they felt the confederate possessed each of the 20 personality traits, being sure to rate the individual according to the way they honestly felt. They were also asked to respond to the questions on the third page to the best of their abilities. Subjects were allowed to leave when they had completed the form and were debriefed after all 144 subjects had been run. Debriefing was accomplished through announcements distributed in psychology classes contributing subjects and posted on a bulletin board in the psychology building.

RESULTS

A series of 2 x 2 x 3 factor analyses of variance were performed on subject ratings of the experimental confederate on each of 20 personality traits and on the extent to which they perceived themselves similar to the confederate. Due to the likelihood that subjects would feel little similarity to a person who labeled himself homosexual, analysis of similarity ratings was performed only in nonlabeled conditions. This belief was confirmed when mean similarity ratings were examined and found to be lower for the labeled confederate than for the non-labeled confederate in all instances.

The main effect of the homosexual label, the confederate's stated interests, the interaction between label and interests, the interaction between label and the subject's gender, and the triple interaction were statistically significant on one or more personality variables. (For the ANOVA tables for significant findings, refer to Table 1.)

Subject ratings for the confederate labeled homosexual when compared with those for the same confederate when he was not labeled revealed significant differences

Table 1

Results of Analyses of Variance for Personality Traits
that Revealed Significance for Label, Interests, Gender,
or any Interactions Therein

Personality Trait	SS	df	MS	F	P
Label					
Assertiveness	12.25	1	12.25	8.18	.01
Stability	6.67	1	6.67	5.21	.05
Gentleness	9.00	1	9.00	6.47	.01
Traditionalism	72.84	1	72.84	43.08	.01
Leadership Ability	20.30	1	20.30	12.72	.01
Interests					
Intelligence	5.85	2	2.92	3.12	.05
Attractiveness	9.35	2	4.67	3.60	.05
Assertiveness	14.35	2	7.17	4.79	.01
Gentleness	14.85	2	7.42	5.34	.01
Sensitivity	13.65	2	6.82	4.63	.01
Traditionalism	20.14	2	10.07	5.95	.01
Leadership Ability	12.43	2	6.22	3.90	.05
Interests x Label					
Honesty	6.54	2	3.27	3.13	.05
Gender x Label					
Attractiveness	8.51	1	8.51	6.55	.01

Table 1 (continued)

Personality Trait	SS	df	MS	F	P
<hr/>					
Gender x Interests					
x Label					
Attractiveness	10.93	2	5.47	4.21	.05
Assertiveness	12.93	2	6.47	4.32	.05

N = 144

across both males and females for several personality traits. When labeled homosexual, the confederate was rated significantly less stable, $F(1, 132) = 5.21$, $p < .05$; more gentle, $F(1, 132) = 6.47$, $p < .01$; less assertive, $F(1, 132) = 8.18$, $p < .01$; less traditional, $F(1, 132) = 43.08$, $p < .01$; and as having less leadership ability, $F(1, 132) = 12.72$, $p < .01$. These findings serve to support the hypothesis that a homosexual will be rated more negatively than a nonhomosexual. (For a listing of mean ratings for the labeled and nonlabeled confederate for which there was statistical significance, refer to Table 2.)

The interaction between the homosexual label and the subjects' gender produced a significant finding for ratings of attractiveness, $F(1, 132) = 6.55$, $p < .01$. Males rated the confederate as less attractive when he was labeled homosexual, while females rated the labeled confederate more attractive. Although there were other personality traits for which there were trends in the expected direction, attractiveness was the only trait with significant results in support of the hypothesis that males will rate homosexuals more negatively than will females. While it is apparent that males viewed homosexuals as less attractive than nonhomosexuals, the negative image of homosexuals may have played a role in the attractiveness rating obtained from females. Compared to

Table 2

Mean Ratings of the Experimental Confederate for Which
There Were Statistically Significant Differences as a
Result of the Homosexual Label

	Labeled Homosexual	Nonlabeled
Assertiveness	3.95	4.53
Stability	4.36	4.79
Gentleness	4.65	4.15
Traditionalism	2.89	4.35
Leadership Ability	3.42	4.15

N = 144

other heterosexual males, the confederate may have been seen as no better than average. However, females may have viewed him as more attractive because of the lack of homosexuals with which to compare him and because he possessed none of the mannerisms stereotypically associated with homosexuals. Therefore, he was likely able to overcome the traditionally negative image of how a homosexual should appear.

The interaction of the homosexual label and the different interests stated by the confederate revealed a significant difference in subject ratings of honesty, $F(2, 132) = 3.13, p < .05$. The confederate was rated more honest when he was labeled homosexual and had traditionally masculine or traditionally feminine interests and less honest when he was labeled and possessed neutral interests. Since he was rated highly in honesty even when he possessed neutral interests, it may have been that admitting to decidedly "manly" or "womanly" interests in conjunction with homosexuality made him appear even more honest.

The three way interaction among the subjects' sex, the homosexual label, and stated interests of the confederate yielded significant results for ratings of attractiveness, $F(2, 132) = 4.21, p < .05$; and assertiveness, $F(2, 132) = 4.32, p < .05$. The confederate was rated more attractive by female subjects when he was

labeled homosexual regardless of his interests, while males rated him more attractive in the nonlabeled condition except when he had neutral interests, where he was rated more attractive when labeled homosexual. While rated more assertive regardless of interests by male subjects, the nonlabeled confederate was rated as more assertive by female subjects only when he possessed typically masculine interests. When his interests were typically feminine or neutral, the confederate was viewed by females as more assertive when he was labeled homosexual.

Although no hypotheses were concerned solely with interests, mean ratings of the confederate according to his stated interests on the videotape were significant for a number of personality traits. (For a listing of all mean ratings of interests for which there was statistical significance, refer to Table 3.) These included ratings of intelligence, $F(2, 132) = 3.12, p < .05$; attractiveness, $F(2, 132) = 3.60, p < .05$; assertiveness, $F(2, 132) = 4.79, p < .01$; gentleness, $F(2, 132) = 5.34, p < .01$; sensitivity, $F(2, 132) = 4.63, p < .01$; traditionalism, $F(2, 132) = 5.95, p < .01$; and leadership ability, $F(2, 132) = 3.90, p < .05$. Ratings were most favorable when the confederate possessed traditionally masculine interests except for attractiveness, gentleness, and sensitivity. Ratings of gentleness and sensitivity were

Table 3
Mean Ratings of the Experimental Confederate for Which There Were Statistically Significant Differences as a Result of the Confederate's Stated Interests

	Masculine Interests	Feminine Interests	Neutral Interests
Intelligence	5.42	4.98	5.00
Attractiveness	3.75	3.59	4.19
Assertiveness	4.61	4.27	3.84
Stability	4.90	4.48	4.35
Gentleness	4.06	4.84	4.31
Sensitivity	3.79	4.50	4.21
Traditionalism	3.90	3.06	3.83
Leadership Ability	4.17	3.42	3.77

N = 144

most favorable in the feminine interests condition and least favorable in the masculine interests condition. The confederate was rated most attractive in the neutral interests condition and least attractive in the feminine interests condition.

An analysis of variance performed on ratings of perceived similarity between subjects and the nonlabeled confederate indicated no significant differences for female subjects, although the mean was highest in the neutral interests condition, $\bar{x} = 2.92$, and lowest in the masculine interests condition, $\bar{x} = 2.42$. Male subjects felt equal similarity to the confederate in the masculine, $\bar{x} = 3.5$, and neutral, $\bar{x} = 3.42$, interests conditions, with no significant difference between the two. However, there was a significant difference between ratings in the masculine and feminine interests conditions, $F(1, 22) = 6.03$, $p < .05$; and between ratings in the neutral and feminine interests conditions, $F(1, 22) = 6.55$, $p < .05$. Male subjects felt little similarity with the nonlabeled confederate when he possessed traditionally feminine interests, and their least favorable and most stereotypical ratings were assigned to the perceived homosexual in the feminine interests condition for 11 of 20 personality traits. This would appear to refute the hypothesis that males would rate a homosexual most negatively when he possessed typically masculine interests, appearing most

similar to the males performing the rating. Since there were no significant differences in similarity ratings across interests by female subjects, the effect of similarity could not be explored for female subjects.

DISCUSSION

Results of the analyses of subjects' ratings offered some measure of support for all hypotheses offered. The homosexual label appeared to play a large part in less favorable and more stereotypical personality ratings for someone so labeled, particularly in ratings made by males.

While many personality traits fell short of significance, male subjects rated the perceived homosexual higher on the average in honesty, emotionality, impulsivity, gentleness, happiness, and sensitivity. All of these with the exceptions of honesty and happiness would be associated most often with females and would thus appear to be supporting a stereotypical image of what a homosexual should be like. It is likely that he was rated higher on honesty due to the fact that he was open enough to admit seeking involvement in a homosexual group. The difference in ratings of happiness in the labeled and nonlabeled conditions was the narrowest of all 20 traits, with the closeness possibly a result of the confederate's last statements on the videotape dealing with feeling unhappy in a small town.

Ratings by female subjects based on the homosexual label were interesting in that they were exactly the opposite of those made by male subjects in many instances. Many of the traits on which their ratings were similar to those made by males were traits that would support a stereotypical image, thus accounting for significance on stability, gentleness, traditionalism, and leadership ability. They also supported a stereotypical image in rating the labeled individual more emotional, more impulsive, and more sensitive.

While supporting a stereotypical image, female subjects rated the confederate more favorably in the labeled condition than in the nonlabeled condition on such traits as intelligence, cleanliness, attractiveness, and interestingness. Therefore, while it appears that females may support a stereotypical image of a homosexual, it also appears that they do not view this image as a negative one. The homosexual label itself did not appear to be an important factor with female subjects, supporting the belief that females are more accepting of a man believed to be homosexual than are males.

While attractiveness was the only trait for which there was a significant interaction between the homosexual label and the subjects' gender, several other traits approached significance. The fact that other traits did not reach a level of significance may have been a result

of the closeness between the ratings made by males and those made by females. There was little difference between mean ratings across the labeled and nonlabeled conditions for male and female subjects, thus no significant findings based solely on gender, and this undoubtedly had an impact on all interactions involving subjects' gender.

While it was surprising that honesty was the only personality variable for which there was a significant interaction between the homosexual label and interests, this may have been a result of the inclusion of a neutral interests category. This third category likely overlapped both the masculine and feminine interests categories, diluting the strength of ratings in these categories for a variety of traits for which the homosexual label itself proved significant.

Results of the three way interaction indicated that males viewed the nonlabeled confederate as more assertive than when he was labeled regardless of his stated interests, while viewing him as more attractive when labeled only when he possessed neutral interests. He may have been seen as more attractive with neutral interests because he neither fit the feminine stereotype nor could be seen as a threat due to possessing masculine interests, thus making him less threatening or less aversive to the male subjects. Females having rated the labeled

confederate more assertive when he possessed feminine or neutral interests may have been an indication that they felt a heterosexual male would not be very assertive if he did not possess masculine interests, thus rating him even less assertive than they rated a perceived homosexual.

Although there were few significant findings involving the triple interaction, trends indicated that males tended to rate the perceived homosexual less favorably and more stereotypically when he possessed traditionally feminine interests. Since males saw themselves as least similar to the confederate when he possessed feminine interests, this would lead one to reject the hypothesis that the confederate would be rated lowest when he was seen as most similar to the raters. Female subjects' ratings of the labeled confederate did not appear to be appreciably lower across any of the interest categories.

While no hypotheses concerned themselves with ratings of the confederate based solely on his stated interests, the fact that several such ratings produced significant findings was most interesting. The findings based on interests paralleled the findings based on the homosexual label in many instances. This would appear to indicate that people's interests can be used to stereotype or berate them almost to the same extent that being labeled homosexual can be held against them. The

association between a male with atypical interests and the homosexual label appears to be a fairly strong one. This supports MacDonald's (1974) study in which the need to maintain a separation of the sexes was seen as responsible for negative attitudes toward homosexuality. However, since males were more favorable in their ratings of the confederate when he possessed typically masculine interests and females did not appear nearly as concerned with the confederate's stated interests, it appears that separation of the sexes is more important to males than to females.

A shortcoming of the present study was the fact that the experimental confederate employed was not well acquainted with his dialogue and had to read his lines from cue cards located above the camera recording the interviews. Although he did a good job of not staring at the cue cards, the fact that he was reading his dialogue may have prevented him from appearing more animated and natural in what he said and may have suppressed his ratings on several of the personality traits explored. If this study were to be replicated, it would be a good idea to allow enough time for the confederate to become much more familiar and comfortable with his dialogue.

Part of the reason that more significant findings were not achieved may have been the labeling process for the confederate. While he mentioned interest in joining

a gay awareness group twice in each labeled condition, the connection that this would indicate the confederate's homosexuality may have been too discrete for all subjects to be aware of. A more pronounced labeling method should be employed in any replication of this study.

An interesting area for future research might be the effect of educational level on ratings of a perceived homosexual. By drawing subjects from both lower and upper level college classes it may be possible to compare ratings made by entering or freshman students with those made by upper level (junior and senior) students and examine whether homosexuals are more accepted generally by better educated members of society. Since the majority of students employed in this study were obtained from introductory psychology classes, the number of upper level students participating was very limited.

While the number of significant results was not as great as would have been expected, the present study does add to the research previously performed in the area of homosexuality, particularly in looking at the effect of different interests on how a homosexual is rated. The finding that a male with atypical interests is rated similarly to a perceived homosexual is important in understanding prejudice, with the idea that a person will be stereotyped or viewed negatively based on his being seen as different from others appearing to hold true for many.

While society has come a long way in overcoming prejudice, it appears that it still has a long way to go.

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APPENDIX A

Rating Form

Rating Form

Please rate the person you have just seen on videotape on the following personality traits. For each trait listed, circle the number which you feel best corresponds with the degree to which the trait is possessed by the individual. Please rate the person according to how you honestly feel, and circle one number only for each trait.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Self-Confidence | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |
| 2. Honesty | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |
| 3. Emotionality | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |
| 4. Friendliness | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |
| 5. Intelligence | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |
| 6. Attractiveness | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |
| 7. Interestingness | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |
| 8. Pleasantness | I I I I I I I
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not At All Very Much |

9. Cleanliness
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
10. Physical Strength
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
11. Assertiveness
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
12. Stability
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
13. Impulsivity
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
14. Gentleness
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
15. Dependability
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
16. Happiness
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
17. Sensitivity
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
18. Maturity
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
19. Traditionalism
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |
20. Leadership Ability
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|-----|---|---|------|------|
| I | I | I | I | I | I | I |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not | At | All | | | Very | Much |

1. What activity did the videotaped individual say he enjoyed to help him stay in shape?

2. What musical instrument did he say he enjoyed playing?

3. What student group did he say he was considering joining?

4. What career was he interested in pursuing?

5. To what degree do you feel the videotaped individual is similar to yourself?

I	I	I	I	I	I	I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not At All					Very Much	

APPENDIX B

Videotape Dialogue

Videotape Dialogue

Note: The following symbols in the script indicate the treatment condition in which that portion of the dialogue is contained: (a) masculine interests, (b) feminine interests, (c) neutral interests, (d) not labeled sexually, (e) labeled homosexual.

Interviewer: I'd like for you to tell me a little bit about yourself if you would.

Confederate: Well, my name is Robert, I'm a junior psychology major, and I'm from Greensboro.
What else would you like to know?

Interviewer: What are some of your other interests?
Some of the things you like to do in your spare time?

Confederate: Well, I like to read, but it's hard to find time during school to read anything but books for classes.

Interviewer: What else do you like to do?

Confederate: I like music a lot, and I like to play the (a) saxophone; (b) flute; (c) piano; when I get a chance. I've been playing since I was 15 and have always really enjoyed it. Also, I'm taking a class in (a) woodworking; (b) ballet; (c) photography; and it's been a lot of fun so far. I like to stay

active and tend to get involved in a lot of different things. Keeping in shape is very important to me, and I (a) play soccer; (b) do aerobics; (c) swim; to relax and to keep my heart pumping.

Interviewer: What about work experience?

Confederate: I've worked as a (a) bartender; (b) bank teller; (c) camp counselor; the past couple of summers, and though I didn't make that much money, the work wasn't too bad. Anything to stay busy.

Interviewer: What do you think you'd like to do when you get out of school?

Confederate: I don't know for sure, but I've always thought that I wouldn't mind going into (a) law; (b) nursing; (c) teaching. I think I would make a good (a) lawyer; (b) nurse; (c) teacher; and my grades are probably good enough for me to have a chance, anyway. I couldn't see myself working a routine nine-to-five job where you do pretty much the same thing everyday. At least (a) law; (b) nursing; (c) teaching; offers a variety of experiences and you get to work with a lot of different people. I'm a pretty outgoing person, and it's important

that there be contact with other people in any job I take.

Interviewer: You say that you make good grades but that you also like to stay active--how does that work out for you?

Confederate: I have to study pretty hard or else I'm sure my grades wouldn't be very good at all. Most of the things I get involved with don't take that much time, and I try to make sure I've got enough time to do work that really needs to be done. I can be pretty lazy sometimes, but I usually get things done on time.

Interviewer: What about your social life? What's that like?

Confederate: Well, I go out with friends from time to time, but I don't get carried away. I'm from a much larger city and things are a lot different here than they are there. I just feel more at home in a bigger city and feel that I fit in better. I was going to join (d) some on campus group; (e) a gay awareness group on campus; so I could meet some new people here, but I never have gotten around to it. I figured (d) a student group; (e) a gay awareness group; would at

least give me a chance to meet people with similar interests.

Interviewer: What made you decide to leave the big city and come to school in Boone, in the first place?

Confederate: I had a friend who came here, and I came up to visit him a couple of times and really liked the place. I've always liked the mountains anyway, so I'd always considered Appalachian State University a possibility. I also liked the fact that I'd be close enough to Greensboro, so I could go home whenever I wanted to. I've got some friends here who went to my high school, so it's not that bad, but I just prefer a larger city where there are more things to do and more places to go.

Interviewer: Well, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to come down here and for being as honest with me as you have.

APPENDIX C

Interests Assessment

Interests Assessment

For each of the following activities, interests, and occupations, place an "M" in the space provided for those which you feel are traditionally associated with males or masculine characteristics, an "F" for those which you associate with females or feminine characteristics, and an "0" for those which you do not associate with one sex or the other.

SPORTS

- Aerobics
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Bowling
- Ice Skating
- Racquetball
- Snow Skiing
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Tennis

MUSICAL TALENTS

- Clarinet
- Drums
- Electric Bass
- Flute
- Guitar
- Piano
- Saxophone
- Trumpet
- Violin

PROFESSIONS

- Accountant
- Dancer
- Doctor
- Lawyer
- Librarian
- Nurse
- Social Worker
- Teacher
- Veterinarian

HOBBIES

- Ballet Dancing
- Cooking
- Hunting
- Hiking
- Martial Arts (Karate)
- Photography
- Pottery
- Red Cross Volunteer
- Sketching (Drawing)
- Woodworking

SUMMER JOBS

- Babysitter
- Bank Teller
- Bartender
- Camp Counselor
- Department Store Clerk
- Fast Food Worker - noncook
- Hospital Volunteer
- Lifeguard
- National Park Service Tour Guide
- Tutor

APPENDIX D

Subjects' Instructions

Subject's Instructions

Just before spring break, several interviews were recorded featuring Appalachian State University student volunteers. The students were chosen for particular reasons and were told to be as honest as possible so that people watching the interview would be able to make an accurate first impression. One of these interviews has been randomly selected to be shown at this time. After you have viewed the interview, you will be asked to rate the person on a number of personality traits. You will also be asked a few questions about what the person said during the interview, so please pay attention to the T.V. monitor throughout the interview. I also must ask that there be no communication or comment until the rating forms have been completed. Rating the individual should not be influenced by anyone else in the room, and you should fill out the three page form according to how you honestly feel. Are there any questions?

Place your age, sex, and your class (freshman, sophomore, etc.) at the top of the first page before doing anything else. In order to maintain your anonymity, you do not need to place your name anywhere on the form.

VITA

Charles Penn Watkins was born in Richmond, Virginia on October 14, 1957, and attended Richmond public schools, graduating from Thomas Jefferson High School in June, 1976. The following September he entered the University of Virginia, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in 1981.

In 1982, Mr. Watkins entered Appalachian State University and began work towards a Master's degree. This degree was awarded in 1985 in the field of Clinical Psychology. In addition to work in his major field, Mr. Watkins completed a concentration in the area of addictions counseling and met the qualifications for a minor in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. He will be employed at Peninsula Hospital, a private psychiatric facility located in Hampton, Virginia, after graduation.

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