



# Traditional Sex and Gender Stereotypes in the Relationships of Non-Disclosing Behaviorally Bisexual Men

Karolynn Siegel<sup>1</sup> · Étienne Meunier<sup>1</sup>

Received: 31 October 2017 / Revised: 2 May 2018 / Accepted: 5 May 2018 / Published online: 4 June 2018  
© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2018

## Abstract

Traditional stereotypes about sex and gender present men as assertive, aggressive, sexually adventurous, and emotionally restrained, and women as docile, passive, sexually modest, and emotionally sensitive. Past research has shown that such stereotypes impose constraints on heterosexual relationships that decrease sexual satisfaction for men and women. This study examined the impact of traditional sex and gender stereotypes on a sample of 203 behaviorally bisexual men who were in a heterosexual relationship with a woman to whom they did not disclose their same-sex behaviors. Participants' descriptions of their partners reified several traditional stereotypes regarding men's and women's sexual dispositions (e.g., men are more sexually adventurous than women), role during sex (e.g., men should be dominant and women submissive), relationship desires (i.e., women prefer long-term intimate relationships and men prefer unattached sexual gratification), and emotional involvement (e.g., women are emotionally sensitive and men emotionally detached). These stereotypes shaped participants' sexual relations with women and men, which were widely conceived as acts of domination–submission. Perceiving women as more skilled for emotional intimacy and affection, most participants would only develop intimate relationships with them; however, some participants also perceived women as too emotionally sensitive and described men as better companions. Many participants were dissatisfied with these gender norms although they conformed to them, further supporting that traditional sex and gender stereotypes impose constraints on relationships that can limit authentic sexual expression and intimate satisfaction.

**Keywords** Men who have sex with men and women (MSMW) · Sexual stereotypes · Gender norms · Sex partners · Intimate relationships · Sexual orientation

## Introduction

Sexual and intimate relationships are shaped by traditional stereotypes about sex and gender that associate maleness and masculinity with assertiveness, aggressiveness, sexual adventurousness, and emotional restraint, and femaleness and femininity with docility, passivity, sexual modesty, and emotional intimacy. These stereotypes provide prescriptions and proscriptions regarding men's and women's self-presentation and behavior (Prentice & Carranza, 2002), inform what traits are perceived as attractive in sexual or intimate partners (Schudson, Manley, Diamond, & Anders, 2017), and inform the scripts that guide people through sexual interactions (Masters, Casey, Wells, & Morrison, 2013; Simon

& Gagnon, 1986). Sex and gender stereotypes can have negative impacts on the sexual, relational, and psychological well-being of men and women. For example, scripts supporting female submission and male dominance decrease sexual autonomy and sexual satisfaction in women (Sanchez, Fetterolf, & Rudman, 2012) and can normalize male sexual aggression (Reidy, Shirk, Sloan, & Zeichner, 2009; Weiss, 2009). These scripts also pose challenges to the practice of safer sex when, for instance, men blame their engagement in condomless sex on an uncontrollable and powerful male sex drive (Fleming et al., 2018; Vitellone, 2000; Zeglin, 2015). On the other hand, scripts saying that women should be passive can cause some women to defer to their male partner for the decision whether to use a condom or not, or to comply if he proceeds without using one (East, Jackson, O'Brien, & Peters, 2011; Gavey, McPhillips, & Doherty, 2001; Moran & Lee, 2014). Sexual scripts informed by sex or gender differences also sustain a double standard that rewards men for sexual adventurousness, but labels sexually adventurous women as "promiscuous" (Farvid, Braun, & Roney, 2017; Fetterolf & Sanchez, 2015).

✉ Karolynn Siegel  
ks420@cumc.columbia.edu

<sup>1</sup> Department of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University Medical Center, New York, NY 10032, USA

Sex and gender stereotypes are based on traditional gender roles in heterosexual relationships (Eagly, 1987), but also affect the sexual and intimate relationships of sexual minorities. Although some studies have provided evidence that LGBTQ people reject dominant gendered dating practices (Lamont, 2017), others have found that lesbian women prefer partners who have traditionally feminine characteristics while gay men prefer partners who are traditionally masculine (Bailey, Kim, Hills, & Linsenmeier, 1997; Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). Further, there are harmful consequences from not conforming to sex and gender stereotypes. For instance, studies have found that gay and bisexual men who are feminine experience more emotional distress and mental health problems than those who are gender conforming (Sandfort, Melendez, & Diaz, 2007; Taywaditap, 2001). Even among gay or bisexual men who conform to masculine ideals, the perceived pressure to do so often leads to psychological distress or relationship issues (Fields et al., 2015; Sánchez, Greenberg, Liu, & Vilain, 2009). Understanding how sex and gender stereotypes affect people's sexual and intimate relationships and finding avenues to counter these notions can thus benefit the sexual and emotional health of men and women of different sexual identities.

This article looks at how stereotypes of sex and gender are reflected in descriptions of male and female sex partners offered by men who have sex with men and women (MSMW) who do not disclose their same-sex behaviors to their female partners. This group of men (often described in popular media as men “on the down-low”) has received much attention from sex researchers because they represent a potential “bridge population” that could acquire HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) from their male partners and transmit these infections to their female partners (Doll & Beeker, 1996; Ekstrand et al., 1994; O’Leary & Jones, 2006). Several studies have investigated why these men choose to not disclose their same-sex behavior (Benoit & Koken, 2012; Malebranche, Arriola, Jenkins, Dauria, & Patel, 2010; Schrimshaw, Downing, & Cohn, 2018; Schrimshaw, Downing, Cohn, & Siegel, 2014; Schrimshaw, Siegel, Downing, & Parsons, 2013) and why many of them continue to regard themselves as heterosexual despite their homosexual behaviors (Baldwin et al., 2015; Carrillo & Hoffman, 2016; Persson et al., 2017; Reback & Larkins, 2010; Ward, 2015). Yet, researchers have not paid much attention to similarities or differences in how these men perceive their sexual and intimate relations with men and women. MSMW—especially those who do not disclose their same-sex behaviors—are attracted to both sexes but often compartmentalize the heterosexual and homosexual facets of their sexual lives (Dodge et al., 2012; Reback, Kaplan, & Larkins, 2015); as such, they are a key population for investigating enduring beliefs about sex and gender differences.

To our knowledge, the study by Dodge et al. (2013) and Schnarrs et al. (2012) of 75 behaviorally bisexual men (of various sexual self-identification and disclosure levels) in the Midwest is

the only recent one that included a specific focus on how sex and gender stereotypes inform how MSMW perceive men and women as sex partners. Schnarrs et al. found that what MSMW found desirable in male and female partners was greatly informed by normative gender stereotypes. Participants were attracted to men's confidence, boldness, aggressiveness, and machismo whereas they were attracted to women's nurturing, caring, attentive, and emotional qualities. They also felt that male partners were more willing to explore different sexual behaviors and positions than female partners who, for instance, were assumed to be uninterested in anal sex. They also appreciated that sex with men could be rough and aggressive while they had to be more careful and gentle with women, for whom they reserved affectionate behavior like kissing and caressing.

MSMW are attracted to both sexes but seem to prefer partners who are gender conforming. Schnarrs et al.'s (2012) participants were attracted to female partners who were feminine and to male partners who were masculine in their appearance and behavior. They rejected men who were feminine, which was also found in other studies with gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (Bianchi et al., 2010; Silva, 2017). Sex and gender stereotypes also informed how MSMW viewed sexual acts, as Schnarrs et al.'s participants said that the receptive (bottom) partner during anal sex between men was taking the woman's role, while the insertive one was assuming the man's role. However, despite their repudiation of femininity in men, many of them enjoyed exploring their feminine side by taking the bottom position. Similarly, Carrillo and Hoffman (2016), in a study of 100 straight-identified men who had same-sex desires, found that these men viewed their sexual activities with other men as “respite” from having to perform masculinity with women by affording an opportunity to let another man be in charge.

Sex and gender stereotypes also inform the types of relationships most MSMW are willing to develop with other men. Many studies with non-gay-identified MSMW have found that they avoid forming intimate relationship with their male sex partners. That is, because they view emotional sharing with a partner as a characteristic of women or gay men, avoiding emotional connection with male sex partners is essential for MSMW wanting to maintain a masculine and non-gay identity (Carrillo & Hoffman, 2016; Reback & Larkins, 2010; Silva, 2017; Ward, 2015). The behaviorally bisexual men in Schnarrs et al.'s (2012) study also reported only developing emotional connections with their female partners while they ensured their relationships with men remained “purely sexual.” However, a recent survey with behaviorally bisexual Latino men in New York City (NYC; Muñoz-Laboy, Garcia, Wilson, Parker, & Severson, 2015) revealed that many of them had steady relationships with men, sometimes concurrently with a relationship with women, which raises questions whether more MSMW than might be assumed actually forge some kind of an intimate relationship with male partners.

The current study examined how traditional sex and gender stereotypes informed descriptions of men and women as

sexual and intimate partners offered by a sample of MSMW ( $n = 203$ ), all of whom identified as bisexual, heterosexual, or offered other non-gay sexual identification, and did not disclose their same-sex activities to their female partners.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Data reported in this paper were collected as part of a study exploring different aspects of the sexual lives of men who are in heterosexual relationships while also having male sex partners, but who did not disclose their same-sex behaviors to their female partners. Participants in this study were 203 behaviorally bisexual men who: (1) were 18 years of age or older; (2) did not identify as gay; (3) reported anal or oral sex with a man in the prior year; (4) reported vaginal, anal, or oral sex in the prior year with a woman with whom they had been in an ongoing romantic or sexual relationship for at least 3 months; (5) had not disclosed their same-sex behavior to any female sex partner in the prior year; and (6) resided in the NYC area. We used quota sampling to obtain approximately equal numbers of Black non-Hispanic, White non-Hispanic, and Hispanic men of any race, and as many Asian and Native American men as possible.

Recruitment advertisements, which indicated that we were looking to interview men who had sex with both men and women but whose female partners did not know about their same-sex behavior, were placed on relevant websites, newspapers, and in venues that men who have sex with men frequent (e.g., gay bars and LGBT organizations). Participants were screened by telephone and, if eligible, were scheduled to come at the researchers' offices. During this meeting, participants provided informed consent and completed an interviewer-administered questionnaire as well as several standardized measures through audio-computer-assisted self-interviewing software. Finally, they participated in a semi-structured focused interview (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990) in which they were asked to discuss: their relationship and behavior in the past year with up to three female partners and up to three male partners, the types of sexual behaviors they typically engaged in with male and female partners and the HIV/STI prevention strategies they use with both, the settings where they meet male partners, and their reasons for not disclosing their same-sex behaviors to their female partners. The interviews were conducted by four male interviewers of different race/ethnicity and lasted on average 2 h and 14 min. Participants received \$75 in cash and were reimbursed for transportation costs. All study procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board at Columbia University Medical Center and a certificate of confidentiality was obtained from the federal government to further protect study participants.

### Data Analysis

For this paper, we analyzed sections of the in-depth interviews where participants described their relationships with male and female partners and their comparisons between both. Specifically, participants had to discuss up to three partners of each gender from the prior year. For each partner, they were asked what they liked and did not like about the relationship and how emotionally and sexually satisfying the relationship was. After discussing their recent male and female partners, participants were asked why they had sex with both men and women, what they liked about their relationships with men and women, and how their relationships with their male and female partners differed.

We used ATLAS.ti to perform a thematic analysis of verbatim transcripts of the interviews (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). In a first cycle of coding, two senior researchers worked iteratively to create a set of topic codes that three research assistants used to label sections of the transcripts that represented the different topics of the study. For the present analysis, the authors and another researcher extracted the sections of text where participants discussed their relationships with male and female partners. Using a descriptive coding technique (Saldaña, 2015), they labeled each part of the interview where participants mentioned perceived differences between male and female partners, creating a large inventory of codes summarizing these perceptions. The authors then organized the initial coded excerpts into the themes presented in this paper using a pattern coding technique, which aims to group initial codes into a more parsimonious and meaningful set of themes (Miles et al., 2013). After iteratively creating the pattern codes, the authors independently re-analyzed a subsample of excerpts with the final thematic codes and obtained 90% agreement. Coding discrepancies mostly occurred for excerpts in which more than one theme was present and were resolved with minimal discussion.

## Results

Table 1 provides participants' characteristics. The mean age was 36.9 years old. Thirty-three percent were Black, 29% were Hispanic of any race, 27% were White, 10% were Asian, and 1% Native American. Three quarters of the sample identified their regular female partner as a wife or girlfriend. Fifty-seven percent identified as bisexual, 35% as heterosexual or straight, and 8% reported other non-gay sexual self-identifications.

Analysis revealed that most participants deployed traditional sex and gender stereotypes in their characterization of their male and female partners and their relationships with them. These stereotypes were: (a) that men's and women's sexual dispositions are different (e.g., men are more sexually adventurous than women); (b) that the men's and women's role in sex are different (e.g., men should be dominant and women

**Table 1** Participants' characteristics ( $N=203$ )

	%	<i>N</i>
Age (in years; mean/SD)	36.9	11.2
Race/Ethnicity <sup>a</sup>		
African American/Black	33	68
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	29	59
Caucasian/White	27	54
Asian	10	20
Native American	1	2
Education		
High school or less	31	62
Some college, associates, or technical school	33	68
College graduate or more	36	73
Household income (yearly)		
Under \$30,000	39	76
\$30,000–\$74,000	38	75
\$75,000 or more	23	45
Don't know	3	7
Current relationship status		
No wife or steady girlfriend	25	50
Girlfriend, but not living together	53	108
Lives with wife or girlfriend	22	45
Sexual identity		
Bisexual	57	115
Heterosexual/straight	35	71
Other <sup>b</sup>	8	17

<sup>a</sup>Numbers represent non-Hispanic Black, White, Asian, and Native American participants and Hispanic participants of any race

<sup>b</sup>Other non-gay identities included "refusing to label oneself," "goes either way," "between bisexual and heterosexual," "curious," and "down low."

submissive); (c) that men and women have different relationship desires (i.e., women prefer long-term intimate relationships and men prefer unattached sexual gratification); and (d) that men and women have different emotional involvement in relationships (e.g., women are emotionally sensitive and men emotionally detached).

### Perceived Sexual Differences Between Men and Women

The large majority of participants perceived very different qualities between men and women as sex partners that reflected common sex and gender stereotypes. Many participants felt that men were better sex partners while women were better relationship partners. The sexual opportunities they associated with men, and the sexual limitations they associated with women, were the basis of the justifications they offered for their engagement in same-sex behavior while being in an ongoing heterosexual relationship.

### Sexual Adventurousness

A recurring notion was that men were more sexually adventurous than women. For example, one participant felt that sex with women was typically more restricted and rather predictable, while he felt he could be more adventurous with male partners.

Sex between men and women is obviously very different. With her it's more... it's good, but it's not great. It's not adventurous. It's just sex. ... I mean, there's oral sex and vaginal sex. ... It's not planned but it's—... It's very vanilla. ... I'm more sexually adventurous with men. (209: 33, White, bisexual)

Another participant echoed that men were more sexually adventurous, but also added that women, even if they were willing to try out different things sexually, would generally be disinclined to express it.

I guess men are more open and willing to try almost anything and women—I mean I'm generalizing—but generally women are not or won't make it as obvious that they're interested to try different things. So with men, the difference is that you're more open to talk or think or do things that otherwise you wouldn't do with women. (107: 34, Hispanic, heterosexual)

One of the things some participants felt they could not do with women was to have anal sex. They assumed about women that, "they don't like it" (120: 22, Hispanic, heterosexual), and believed men were more interested in it. Their female partners refusing to have anal sex with them was an important dissatisfaction of many men, which in their minds justified seeking out male partners.

She don't do anal—that's what turns me off. ... I told her I loved anal sex and she told me that she doesn't do it, so I told her okay, ... the choice that you make will determine whether I cheat or not. (210: 41, Hispanic, bisexual)

Participants generally said they had to be with a male partner if they wanted to receive anal sex. Although female partners could provide them with anal stimulation, some participants said they would not let a woman do so. The participant below, for example, expressed that if he let a woman touch his anus, it might reveal the fact that he had same-sex desires or might cause her to presume that he was gay.

If I feel like being a bottom, then I have to be with a man. ... To be the top, I can be with either. ... Women have a... when they want to check, the test to see if you're gay or not, ... when they're going down on the guy, they'll brush up on his asshole and, it's just real stupid, ... and determine how much he liked it. (191: 43, Black, other)

## Mutual Understanding of the Body

Many participants also expressed the conviction that people of the same sex were better able to please one another than people of different sexes. A recurring reason offered for having sex with male partners was that they better understood how to provide pleasure to a male because they had the same genitalia. Most frequently this assertion was made regarding oral sex, with many participants expressing that they thought men were better than women at fellatio: “I remember somebody telling me a long time ago that nobody can give a blow job like a guy—and it turned out to be true!” (239: 54, White, bisexual). Another participant further described the better understanding of how to pleasure the male body he felt with men compared to women:

Orally, that’s a huge plus there. I guess the personal understanding of the body that you have with a guy. Like, a guy knows how to touch you, but a girl doesn’t initially know. ... Because they’re playing with the same body, they [men] understand it. They understand the testicles, they understand the balls, they understand the penis, the shaft, you know, they share those things. (280: 37, White, bisexual)

## Assertiveness and Aggressiveness

Many participants also felt that men were willing to get into sexual activity with less romancing or foreplay, whereas women needed more time to get into a sexual mood or become aroused. Some participants referred to this as a more “animalistic” quality of sex with men.

It’s more, like, animalistic, you know, sexually charged and that type of thing. ... If you’re with a woman, it’s a little bit more feminine, and it’s a little bit more, you know, what’s that word I’m looking for? “Foreplayish” and all. With men it’s just, like, bam, get in there! (239: 54, White, bisexual)

Participants also appreciated that they could be more direct about their sexual desires with men than with women. Some liked that men were generally clearer about what they wanted from the sexual encounter and more motivated to get it. In comparison, as mentioned above, women were seen as more reserved about sharing what they wanted to do and less likely to be assertive about their desires being met.

He knew what he wanted to do and basically, we did it. ... Because he was, you know, he was dominant, you know? Dominant, aggressive. He came in and basically just did what he wanted to do. It was a turn on, so to speak. You know, just straight to the point. (279: 36, Black, bisexual)

Another appeal of male partners was the opportunity to be more physically aggressive with them than with women. Some

participants felt that most men wanted sex to be rough while women were too delicate for such behavior or frightened by aggressive male behavior.

Men want, like, a man. They want it rough, they want it jagged, rigid. They want to be ravaged and tossed. You can’t really do that with most women. Because they be like, “what the fuck” and they get scared and, like, you can’t do that. Like you can fulfill more fantasies with a man than you can fulfill with a woman. (190: 27, Hispanic, other)

The quotes above show how participants perceived clear differences between men and women as sex partners that reflected traditional gender stereotypes. They thought men were sexually adventurous, willing to try out different sexual behaviors, had a better understanding of male sexual body parts, were more assertive, and enjoyed more aggressive sex. On the other hand, they perceived women as reserved, prudish, fragile, passive, and not knowledgeable about how to please a male sexually. Among participants who cited such differences, the majority described the sexual qualities of men as advantages they held over women as sex partners. Very few participants felt that these stereotypically masculine sexual qualities were undesirable. One exception was a participant who explained that, when he was the receptive partner for anal sex, he wanted his male partner to be gentle and take his time. He then went on to explain how he disliked a recent male partner who was too masculine.

I like to receive anal sex. ... But it’s something I have to be in the mood for and if somebody is too rough or too aggressive when I’m not in the mood for that or doesn’t respect my boundaries, then that’s a problem for me.... He’s a little too rough... like, physically he’s a little too masculine for me. I don’t like that. (283: 37, White, heterosexual)

Overall, participants turned to men to engage in types of sexual behavior they felt unable to do with women. Thus, same-sex activities were a way to attain more sexual satisfaction than they could within a heterosexual relationship. Traditional gender norms clearly structured the heterosexual activities of these non-disclosing behaviorally bisexual men, but as described below, led to different configurations of gender roles in their same-sex behaviors.

## Perceived Gender Roles in Sexual Relationships

Collectively, participants perceived sexual activity to be between a masculine, assertive, and dominant person and a feminine, passive, and submissive one. In their heterosexual relationships, the roles were always fixed: they had to be the masculine and dominant partner and their female partners were always the feminine and submissive ones. Although the roles with the male

sex partners were more flexible, they nevertheless followed the same masculine–feminine dichotomy; that is, they believed that one man in the homosexual dyad had to take the feminine role. The distribution of gender roles in same-sex relationships could happen in one of the three ways described below.

### Sexual Conquest

Some participants conveyed that sexual acts were always relationships of power in which the dominant one conquered the submissive. For a few such participants, sex between men was like a battle to determine who the alpha male was. The participant below, for instance, believed that women were weaker than men, and felt that conquering a man was therefore more challenging and more satisfying.

I feel really good when I fuck a man. I feel like a conqueror of an animal of majority, of power, of basically everything that is dominant. So I feel much better than conquering a gender of weakness, of less power. (244: 22, Asian, bisexual)

Similarly, another participant felt that sex with a man could make him feel stronger and more powerful than with a woman.

I guess I'll feel more strongly powerful and... being a man and being with another man, it makes me feel more strong than being with a female. (259: 43, Black, bisexual)

### Feminine Men

Although they were a minority, there were participants who looked for the same feminine qualities in their male partners as they did with their female ones because they wanted to remain on the masculine side of the gender dichotomy. The participant below was strictly attracted to feminine male partners because he wanted it to be clear that he was the one in the masculine role.

He has to be somewhat effeminate. That's important for me. I don't want a person who's like me, masculine. I don't like that at all. So, femininity is very important in a male. (226: 51, Black, heterosexual)

Similarly, another participant was attracted by men who behaved "smoothly" because he wanted to be the one in the aggressive role.

I like his smoothness about how he goes about things. When he wants something, he's very smooth and I like that. He's not aggressive at all, not aggressive, because I'm aggressive. I'm the aggressive one, so he's more or less passive. (210: 41, Hispanic, bisexual)

The attraction to feminine men was thus a way to maintain a sense of gender normalcy in their relationships with

men and thereby remain the properly masculine, assertive, and aggressive partner. For the participant below, the attraction to feminine men even seemed like a way to maintain a sense of being heterosexual. That is, he expressed not being necessarily attracted to men, but attracted to femininity, whether it was in a male or female partner.

The men I'm attracted to... are, like, more effeminate and less aggressive. ... For the most part, I'm attracted more to feminine people, you know? So whether it be a feminine man or a feminine woman, you know, that's what I'm attracted to. (303: 32, White, heterosexual)

Although some men preferred feminine men, a larger number of participants expressed strong dislike for feminine men: "I don't like feminine men! Oh my God, no! Oh, a turn off!" (275: 47, Hispanic, bisexual). However, if some participants were attracted by feminine men, none expressed interest in masculine women. Most participants also seemed interested in the extremes of the feminine–masculine spectrum, but not anything in the middle. That is, they wanted female partners to be feminine and male partners to be masculine.

It's like if I want to be with a guy, I want to be with a guy, a masculine guy. If I want to be with a girl, I want to be with a nice girl, like a feminine girl. (297: 30, Hispanic, bisexual)

### Role Reversal

Several other participants were attracted to the possibility of taking what they viewed as the feminine role in their same-sex relationships. This was different from *being* feminine in self-presentation or demeanor (or so-called "effeminate"); rather, it referred to taking the passive role in the sexual encounter. Sex with men provided participants with an opportunity to explore aspects of their sexual selves that contrasted with their sexual activities with women. For instance, the participant below felt that his female sex partner stimulated his masculine or macho energy while his male partner brought out a feminine side of him.

I have like, masculine–feminine energy. ... She brought out the more masculine in me, and the guy brought more of the femininity. Like it's always like a... switch roles.... She brings out the masculine in me, the machoness, and the man brings out more of the soft side of me. (298: 27, Black, bisexual)

These participants felt that they, in their relationships with women, always had to assume the stronger and more aggressive role while, with their male partners, they could explore their softer, more vulnerable side. They believed that only with men did they have the option of shifting between the passive and aggressive roles. Describing his relationships with men, a participant said:

I can be weak. I can be equal. I don't have to be the big man. I can be just weak and just vulnerable and sometimes I can be soft, and I can be the one that's just being tender, that's just getting caressed, like the woman is receiving. And then there's times when I can be the aggressive one too. ... I can deal with both sides of the emotional coin when it comes to...my male contacts. (113: 44, Black, bisexual)

Such participants seemed to feel that they were always expected to be the one in control and in charge in their sexual relationships with women. Thus, they welcomed the opportunity to let their partner be in control when they had sex with men.

For guys, I kind of like the aggressive nature to them, you know, that whole... When I just want to let go. When I want to let go and just kind of let somebody else be in control and take charge. That's kind of what I like. That's the difference. ... I'm definitely more dominant with women, and I'm definitely more submissive the majority of the time with men. ... When I'm with girls, I'm going to take you and do what I want with you. ... When I'm with guys, ... it's kind of what I want them to do with me, ... so I can kind of let control down. (135: 32, White, bisexual)

Many participants also seemed to feel that it was imperative that they take the masculine, assertive, and dominant role with women, which they perceived to be the more demanding role. For example, the participant below felt a pressure to perform and to be in charge with women, whereas, with men, he had the option of laying back and letting the other please him.

You always have to be, with a woman, the man, you know? It's like, you have to perform, you have to be on top of everything, and you have to make sure you please them and like that. With a guy, it's just totally different. You can do the pleasing to the other guy, or the other guy can please you. ... With a woman, it's just, most of the time you're the man and she's the woman. ... You have to make sure you please her. (170: 50, Hispanic, bisexual)

Although many participants, like those quoted above, enjoyed taking what they perceived to be the feminine role with their male partners, and exploring their passive or submissive side, they did not seem willing to do so with their female partners, with whom they preferred to remain in the prototypical masculine role. Indeed, the participant below described going back to women to restore his sense of masculinity after having had receptive anal sex with men.

When I play the part of a bottom, ... I feel, I guess, feminine or whatever, because I just got fucked. So then I'll go and fuck a female to restore that masculinity back. (265: 27, Hispanic, bisexual)

Very few participants felt that experiencing what they saw as the feminine role with their male partners had an impact on their sexual relationships with women. The participant quoted below stood out as an exception; he felt that having played the bottom role with an aggressive top male partner made him reconsider how he behaved with his female partners by being more aware of things they may not enjoy.

I think I'm a little more well-rounded than I was before because now I can appreciate both experiences. ... I've also learned—being with men who... play the top role and me playing the bottom role—what I like and what I don't like in terms of aggressiveness and approach. And I think that I sometimes feel that I can now connect that with my female partners, my wife specifically, and do things a little differently that I think that I wouldn't like if I was in her shoes. ... I think it's been an experience to benefit me as a person and perhaps, ironically, my relationship with my spouse or with females in general. (107: 34, Hispanic, heterosexual)

### Perceived Relationship Needs of Men and Women

Gender stereotypes also greatly informed how these non-disclosing, behaviorally bisexual men viewed the relationship needs of men and women. That is, many participants believed that women cared more about having an intimate relationship and presumed that their male partners were only interested in sexual gratification. They felt that women were better at meeting their need to be cared for and nurtured and sought this in their relationships with women while they turned to men only for sexual gratification.

I think with women I get more of the relationship side of it. With men, ... it's more about the sex, I feel. I don't need the nurturing, you know, it's more about getting off most of the time. (209: 33, White, bisexual)

Many participants believed that women did not have the same capacity that men had to enjoy sex outside of a romantic relationship. They felt that most women would only want to have sex in the context of a committed relationship. For them, the possibility of having a “no strings attached” sexual encounter with a man was what made them more desirable sex partners than women, who they assumed would expect an emotional connection.

They're [men] not expecting anything, you know, and as far as a long term relationship is concerned.... I mean they call it “no strings attached” basically. And basically that's what I like about it. You know, you don't have to get involved afterwards. That's very difficult to find with a woman.... You have to get more involved with women when you're sexually active with them. (250: 40, Hispanic, bisexual)

Yet, a few participants were unsatisfied by what they perceived as the emotional shallowness of men. The participant below, for example, wanted an emotional connection with his male partners but found it difficult to achieve. While he felt like he might prefer men as partners, he kept turning to female ones because he was unable to establish an emotional connection with men.

I can make emotional connections with people, and a lot of men can't do that. . . . A lot of men have been very selfish, I think. Whereas women seem to be a little more caring and a little more understanding about everything. . . . I'm starting to like the sex more with men but it's very much of a conflict because I'm also missing the female companionship. . . . I don't know whether or not I'm having sex more with women more just because of it's almost like a thank you for giving me something that I'm missing from men. (199: 51, White, bisexual)

### Perceived Emotional Differences Between Men and Women

Participants also held stereotypical views regarding the emotional qualities of men and women. Many perceived women to be more caring, nurturing, and “motherly,” but some also described women as more prone to jealousy and emotional manipulation. On the other hand, many participants perceived men as more emotionally shallow, but also more relatable and less temperamental.

#### Emotional Depth

Many participants felt that women had a greater capacity for providing affection, nurturance, and emotional connection than men. The following participant felt that, while women could be overly emotional, he still liked that they could provide more affection and emotional connection than men could.

I do like that women tend to or can be affectionate. Sometimes, I do think they're overly emotional, but they can be somewhat affectionate. . . . 'cause men are usually not that emotional. (204: 32, Black, bisexual)

Another common way participants talked about women's emotional availability was to mention their “motherly” qualities. They perceived women as kinder than men and more interested in the man's emotion, whereas men only wanted to talk about superficial subjects with other men.

I like the women's—their comfort, their motherliness. . . . Women, they have like a kindness in them. Like, men, they just talk ball—they wanna talk about the Super Bowl. I don't care who wins the game. (213: 52, Asian, straight)

#### Emotional Sensitivity

Some participants also seemed to associate the perceived emotional depth of women with negative emotions like jealousy, possessiveness, manipulation, passive-aggressiveness, or insecurity. In comparison, they believed men were able to express their emotions and understand one another without being emotionally volatile. A few participants expressed how relationships with women had sometimes put an emotional strain on them.

I go through more mental and moments of anguish with a female than I do with a male because I can talk to my male partners. . . . Oh my goodness! It's a headache even thinking about what I go through with females, you know? But with males, it's a different relationship emotionally. . . . because, I don't know, it's like they understand. They understand better. . . . With my female partner, when she's angry, it's like forget it, it's like all hell broke loose. . . . Then you get the sensitive part of a man but not all that boo-boo crying stuff. I can't deal with that from a woman. . . . With my relationship with men, they express themselves without that yelling and you know, that womanly emotion stuff. (210: 41, Hispanic, bisexual)

Another participant expressed how he felt that relationships with men were more reciprocal, both in the communication and in the effort made to please one another.

The woman don't like to communicate. They don't like to talk. They just screaming and fighting and always they think about themselves, “I want this, I want that.” . . . But you don't ask me about me! . . . They always thinking about themselves, . . . It's completely different. I have been with a guy that I'm sleeping with him, and I wake up and the guy is already doing breakfast for me. Doesn't even ask. You understand what I say? . . . And we talk, maybe we're more open to talking. (201: 50, Hispanic, other)

#### Same-Sex Affinities

Although many participants preferred to keep their relationships with men anonymous or impersonal, many others sought some type of bond with them. Some participants felt that their male partners would be easier to developing a friendship with since they shared interests in things like playing or watching sports, which they believed no woman would be interested in doing.

I can work out with him. I can go play ball with him. . . . Like, a woman is not gonna wanna go out and play ball, you know? Or she's not gonna wanna go out and, you know, ride a bike with me or whatever like that. Do, like, guy stuff. She won't wanna do that. She's like, “what, nah, I don't wanna do that. I don't wanna watch the football game.” But with him, I could be like, yeah, watch the football game, chill out, whatever. (205: 33, Hispanic, bisexual)



Many participants appreciated the possibility of having a friendship or companionship with their male sex partners that would not become emotionally complicated, which they believed would be hard to achieve in a relationship with a woman. The participant below felt that it was easier to be on the same page with male partners, while women tended to see things differently and could be more jealous or malicious.

Sometimes it's like having your best friend and being able to have sex with them, you know what I mean? Like, companionship. You can talk about shit. You're on the same level, usually like the same type of things.... He's just like you and you're both on the same page and it's like your best friend and you could also have sex, you know what I mean? It's different. I mean, women are real catty, real jealous and shit. (109: 34, Hispanic, bisexual)

Another affinity that participants shared with their male partners was the possibility of discussing their attraction to both sexes. This was a dimension of their intimate life that they believed women would not accept, and thus only discussed it with male partners, increasing a sense of connection with them.

Men are more understanding, in terms of if, say, you deal with women.... [I can] share with them that I, you know, deal with females also. ... They'll be okay with it, maybe even to the point where that's a turn on for them. But I don't feel comfortable telling a woman that I've dealt with or deal with men. So that's... you know, one thing that I like about dealing with a guy. (253: 22, Hispanic, bisexual)

### Loving Men

Albeit a minority, some of these non-disclosing MSMW had developed a strong emotional relationship with their male partners based on feelings of love and caring. Although they reserved “being in love” for their female partners, they described feelings of friendly love toward their male partners, whom they greatly cared about.

There's something about the connection we have, as friends. ... Like I really care about him. I would care if something happened to him. I would care, you know? I really love him. As a — I love him. So, yeah. And it ain't like I'm in love with him, but just there's a love there, that I know exists. I'm not afraid to say that. (196: 45, Hispanic, other)

Expressing that he was not “afraid” to say he loved his male partner, this participant acknowledged that his feelings went against normative attitudes that frown on love between men. Similarly, the participant below expressed that “it takes a lot” to express deep feelings to another man, and said that he cared

about his partner “as a human being,” somehow neutralizing the gendered aspects of his emotions.

I have a lot of feelings when it comes up with [name of male partner]. ... I care about him a lot, you understand what I'm saying? You know, especially as a human being, you know? ... It takes a lot for me to, you know, to let somebody know that, “okay man, listen, I care about you,” you understand what I'm saying? (203: 50, Black, bisexual)

### Discussion

This study investigated perceived differences between men and women as sexual and intimate partners in a sample of non-gay-identified MSMW who had been in a relationship for at least 3 months with a woman to whom they did not disclose that they also had male sex partners. Analysis revealed that most participants' descriptions of their male and female partners, and of what they liked and disliked in each, reflected traditional stereotypes about sex and gender. That is, they believed men to be sexually adventurous, assertive, aggressive, dominant, and less interested in emotional connection, while they viewed women as sexually reserved, passive, submissive, and more interested in a committed intimate relationship than sexual gratification. For the majority of participants, such stereotypes informed what they were looking for in male and female partners and what forms of sexual and intimate relationships they formed with each. As we discuss below, these findings show that the influence of traditional sex and gender stereotypes is powerful, enduring, and exerts constraints both on men–women and men–men relationships.

Few studies have looked at the differences MSMW perceive between their relationships with male and female partners, but our findings are concordant with Schnarrs et al.'s (2012) study of 75 behaviorally bisexual men in the U.S. Midwest, which found that participants' “attraction to men and women appears to be influenced by ‘traditional’ beliefs about gender and gendered presentation” (p. 270). Many of our participants believed there were clear differences between men and women as sex partners. They typically saw women as passive, prudish, reserved, and less sexually driven than men, whom they perceived as aggressive, adventurous, assertive, and in control. These perceived differences between male and female sexuality informed what participants were looking for in their partners, that is, many of them were attracted to women's nurturing and affectionate qualities and to men's sexual assertiveness and aggressiveness. These findings support that gender stereotypes are highly prescriptive (Prentice & Carranza, 2002), as these beliefs about the particular characteristics of men's and women's sexualities set expectations for how people expect their male and female sex partners to behave.

As such, most participants expressed being attracted to partners who conformed to gender norms. Our participants were generally attracted by women who displayed feminine characteristics and men who exhibited masculine ones, which has been found to be true in studies with men and women of various sexual identities (Bailey et al., 1997; Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016; Schudson et al., 2017). Many of our participants also repudiated men with a feminine self-presentation, which was also found in other studies with gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (Bianchi et al., 2010; Schnarrs et al., 2012; Silva, 2017). Although our participants were attracted both to partners who were feminine and who were masculine, the high prescriptive power of traditional sex and gender stereotypes (Prentice & Carranza, 2002) seemingly made it impossible to appreciate masculinity in women or (with a few exceptions) femininity in men. In contrast to prior studies of MSMW, we found a few of our participants said they were sexually attracted to male partners who had a feminine demeanor. Nevertheless, traditional stereotypes also informed participants' relationships with feminine men whom they expected to play the passive and submissive role and thus boost the participant's own image as the masculine and dominating partner. As such, the interest in feminine men that a few of the non-disclosing MSMW in our study expressed was an application of traditional feminine stereotypes to homosexual men rather than an appreciation of gender fluidity.

The dichotomy of sex and gender stereotypes infused participants' sexual relationships with power differentials and they perceived dyadic sex to be an act between a masculine/dominant person and a feminine/submissive one. The constraints that the sexual script of female submission and male dominance impose on women and its negative consequences (e.g., less sexual autonomy and satisfaction, privileging of male sexual pleasure, normalization of male sexual aggression) have been well documented (for a review, see Sanchez et al., 2012). This power dynamic also informed how participants viewed their sexual relationships with men; that is, they perceived the penetrative partner to take the role of the man and the receptive one that of the woman. Echoing Kippax and Smith's (2001) findings in a qualitative study of men who have anal sex with men, our participants understood anal sex with other men as an act of domination–submission. Some non-disclosing MSMW in our study also expressed that dominating a man was more challenging than dominating a woman (whom they perceived as weak) and thus more gratifying. Only a minority of participants said that this power dynamic was an obstacle to their sexual satisfaction, for example with a participant who said that the aggressiveness of a male partner could make anal sex painful.

Many participants expressed satisfaction in the possibility of playing the feminine and submissive role with their male partners, which they did not seem to think possible with women. Similar to what Schnarr et al.'s (2012) found, some participants

felt that receptive anal sex with a man was an opportunity to explore their feminine, weaker, or softer side (although this was distinct from being “effeminate,” or feminine in self-presentation). Carrillo and Hoffman (2016) also found that heterosexually identified men sought out sex with men when needing a relief from the expectation of always being in control in their relationships with women or, “a respite from the burdens of hegemonic forms of masculinity” (p. 931). Indeed, some of our participants were dissatisfied with having to perform the traditional masculine role in their relationships with women. Thus, as found in a survey with heterosexual men and women (Sanchez, Crocker, & Boike, 2005), traditional sex and gender stereotypes decrease sexual pleasure not only for women but also for men, by creating strict expectations on how to perform within sexual relationships and limiting authentic sexual expression. There was an ironic component to our participants' view of gender roles in heterosexual relations in that they expected women to conform to the feminine/submissive role at the same time that they felt constrained by having to perform the masculine/dominant one. This rigidity in gendered expectations was especially perplexing considering that many of these men enjoyed some flexibility in gender-role performance with men. That is, very few participants mentioned that having experienced the feminine/submissive role with men had modified the way they behaved with women. The fact that these participants were concealing their same-sex behavior from their female partners and wanted to be perceived as heterosexual could explain why they strictly adhered to traditional gender roles in their relationships with women (perhaps evidenced in the case of the participant who did not want his female partners to stimulate his anus because it could expose his same-sex desires). Nevertheless, the non-disclosing MSMW in our study revealed how maintaining the unequal sexual dichotomy of female submission and male domination was crucial to their proper performance of heterosexuality.

Participants' intimate relationships were also shaped by traditional sex and gender stereotypes that present women as more emotionally invested and more interested in long-term relationships, compared to men who are thought to be emotionally restrained or shallow and to value sexual gratification over long-term commitment. Many studies of MSMW have found that they only developed emotionally intimate relationships with women and generally turned to men only for sex (Carrillo & Hoffman, 2016; Reback & Larkins, 2010; Schnarrs et al., 2012; Silva, 2017; Ward, 2015) and this was the case for most of our participants. As explained in the literature (Silva, 2017; Ward, 2015), avoiding emotional connection with men is often a strategy for maintaining a heterosexual or non-gay identity as many MSMW perceive emotional sharing as a womanly or gay characteristic. Many participants also perceived women to be more prone to jealousy, neediness, manipulation, possessiveness, or emotional insecurity, while they felt men were better at sustaining a sexual companionship that was not fraught with

such feelings. Of course, these perceptions likely resulted from the fact that most participants never formed long-term committed relationships with men.

Some of our findings depart from other studies of MSMW in that some participants discussed developing some form of intimate relationship with their male partners. They described ongoing friendships with male sex partners with whom they could engage in traditional homosocial activities like playing or watching sports, or share details about their sexual lives that they would not discuss with women (e.g., the fact that they had sex with both men and women). Again, traditional sex and gender stereotypes informed why participants would develop such relationships with men but not women. For one, they assumed that women would not enjoy traditionally masculine activities. Further, they felt women would not accept their partner having concurrent partners (regardless of these partners' gender) compared to men who, being more sexually adventurous, might actually find that arousing. Participants who developed ongoing relationships with men found better communication, mutual understanding, and reciprocity within them, and sometimes expressed loving or deeply caring for these partners. Once again, the perception that men were better at mutual understanding likely resulted from the fact that these men were more transparent about their personal lives with men than with women. As such, traditional sex and gender stereotypes played a part in precluding men from developing relationships based on mutual understanding and reciprocity with women, which many desired.

The majority of participants conformed as much as they could to traditional sex and gender stereotypes in their relationships with men and women although many of them expressed some discontent about these norms. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer individuals often try to resist traditional gendered relationship models and to form more egalitarian or flexible ones (Lamont, 2017), but most of the non-disclosing MSMW in our study did not seem willing to challenge gender norms and preferred to abide by a dichotomy or unequal gender roles. Still, for every theme, there were exceptions (e.g., men who did not enjoy male partners who behave aggressively, those who were open to more egalitarian sexual roles with women, or those who developed emotional bonds with male partners). Most salient was an apparent contradiction between participants' desire to not always be in charge in sexual encounters and the refusal to let go of control with their female partners. This finding is similar to Dworkin and O'Sullivan's (2005) in their study of heterosexual men that highlighted a disjuncture between actions and desires: many men acted along traditional scripts in which they were the initiator of sex even though they would have actually preferred sexual initiation to be shared equally with their female partners. Along these lines, Masters et al. (2013) also found heterosexual men to be more likely than heterosexual females to conform to traditional sexual scripts (whether they were satisfied with them or not). Our findings thus support that people who act along

traditional sex and gender stereotypes do not necessarily do so because they receive satisfaction from doing so. Rather, for our participants, the motivation for abiding by traditional sex and gender norms seemed to be motivated by the goal of maintaining a heterosexual identity, at least in the eyes of their female partners, although traditional gender roles also shaped their relationships with men. As demonstrated by other researchers, traditional sex and gender stereotypes can negatively affect women's and men's ability for authentic and rewarding sexual expression (Sanchez et al., 2012). Paying attention to how such stereotypes affect people's sexual and intimate lives can be beneficial to those involved in counseling or intervention development related to sexual health, intimacy, and relationships. Our results also point to enduring gender norms that sustain inequalities between masculine and feminine partners in non-disclosing MSMW's relationships, showing a continued need for innovative scholarship and interventions that can help people form relationships that are more egalitarian.

There are limitations to the study that should be noted, especially regarding the generalizability of the findings. The sample was composed of NYC MSMW who had a regular female partner but did not inform her of their same-sex behavior. As such, the findings may not apply to other groups of behaviorally bisexual men, for instance, those who disclose their same-sex behaviors, those who do not have a regular female partner, or those who live in rural areas. Because these men compartmentalized their relationships with men and women, they may have been more likely to believe there are differences between genders. Further, the interview questions (by asking what participants liked and disliked about their female partner and then about their male partners) might have increased the likelihood that participants describe men–women differences, whereas asking questions about sex partners in general might have generated different results. Participants were asked if there were differences between their relationships with men and women but were not specifically asked if they saw similarities, which could have inflated the importance of differences in how men perceive their partners. Finally, men who agreed to participate in the study might be a subset of MSMW who are more comfortable discussing their sex lives.

**Funding** This work was supported in part by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health from the National Institutes of Health (MH076680).

## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of interest** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethical approval** All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

**Informed consent** Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

## References

- Bailey, J. M., Kim, P. Y., Hills, A., & Linsenmeier, J. A. (1997). Butch, femme, or straight acting? Partner preferences of gay men and lesbians. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*, 960–973.
- Baldwin, A., Dodge, B., Schick, V., Hubach, R. D., Bowling, J., Malebranche, D., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2015). Sexual self-identification among behaviorally bisexual men in the midwestern United States. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *44*, 2015–2026. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0376-1>.
- Benoit, E., & Koken, J. A. (2012). Perspectives on substance use and disclosure among behaviorally bisexual black men with female primary partners. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse*, *11*, 294–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332640.2012.735165>.
- Bianchi, F. T., Shedlin, M. G., Brooks, K. D., Montes Penha, M., Reisen, C. A., Zea, M. C., & Poppen, P. J. (2010). Partner selection among Latino immigrant men who have sex with men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *39*, 1321–1330. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-009-9510-x>.
- Carrillo, H., & Hoffman, A. (2016). From MSM to heteroflexibilities: Non-exclusive straight male identities and their implications for HIV prevention and health promotion. *Global Public Health*, *11*, 923–936. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2015.1134272>.
- Dodge, B., Schnarrs, P. W., Reece, M., Martinez, O., Goncalves, G., Malebranche, D., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2012). Individual and social factors related to mental health concerns among bisexual men in the Midwestern United States. *Journal of Bisexuality*, *12*, 223–245.
- Dodge, B., Schnarrs, P. W., Reece, M., Martinez, O., Goncalves, G., Malebranche, D., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2013). Sexual behaviors and experiences among behaviorally bisexual men in the midwestern United States. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *42*, 247–256. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9878-2>.
- Doll, L. S., & Beeker, C. (1996). Male bisexual behavior and HIV risk in the United States: Synthesis of research with implications for behavioral interventions. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, *8*, 205–225.
- Dworkin, S. L., & O’Sullivan, L. (2005). Actual versus desired initiation patterns among a sample of college men: Tapping disjunctures within traditional male sexual scripts. *Journal of Sex Research*, *42*, 150–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490509552268>.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- East, L., Jackson, D., O’Brien, L., & Peters, K. (2011). Condom negotiation: Experiences of sexually active young women. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *67*, 77–85. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2010.05451.x>.
- Ekstrand, M. L., Coates, T. J., Guydish, J. R., Hauck, W. W., Collette, L., & Hulley, S. B. (1994). Are bisexually identified men in San Francisco a common vector for spreading HIV infection to women? *American Journal of Public Health*, *84*, 915–919.
- Farvid, P., Braun, V., & Roney, C. (2017). ‘No girl wants to be called a slut!’: Women, heterosexual casual sex and the sexual double standard. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *26*, 544–560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2016.1150818>.
- Fetterolf, J. C., & Sanchez, D. T. (2015). The costs and benefits of perceived sexual agency for men and women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *44*, 961–970. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0408-x>.
- Fields, E. L., Bogart, L. M., Smith, K. C., Malebranche, D. J., Ellen, J., & Schuster, M. A. (2015). “I always felt i had to prove my manhood”: Homosexuality, masculinity, gender role strain, and HIV risk among young black men who have sex with men. *American Journal of Public Health*, *105*, 122–131. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301866>.
- Fleming, P. J., Barrington, C., Powell, W., Gottert, A., Lerebours, L., Donastorg, Y., & Brito, M. O. (2018). The association between men’s concern about demonstrating masculine characteristics and their sexual risk behaviors: Findings from the Dominican Republic. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *47*, 507–515. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-016-0880-6>.
- Gavey, N., McPhillips, K., & Doherty, M. (2001). “If it’s not on, it’s not on”: Or is it? Discursive constraints on women’s condom use. *Gender and Society*, *15*, 917–934.
- Kippax, S., & Smith, G. (2001). Anal intercourse and power in sex between men. *Sexualities*, *4*, 413–434. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13634600104004002>.
- Lamont, E. (2017). “We can write the scripts ourselves”: Queer challenges to heteronormative courtship practices. *Gender & Society*, *31*, 624–646. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243217723883>.
- Malebranche, D. J., Arriola, K. J., Jenkins, T. R., Dauria, E., & Patel, S. N. (2010). Exploring the “bisexual bridge”: A qualitative study of risk behavior and disclosure of same-sex behavior among black bisexual men. *American Journal of Public Health*, *100*, 159–164. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2008.158725>.
- Masters, N. T., Casey, E., Wells, E. A., & Morrison, D. M. (2013). Sexual scripts among young heterosexually active men and women: Continuity and change. *Journal of Sex Research*, *50*, 409–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.661102>.
- Merton, R. K., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. L. (1990). *The focused interview: A manual of problems and procedures* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Miller, B., & Behm-Morawitz, E. (2016). “Masculine guys only”: The effects of femmophobic mobile dating application profiles on partner selection for men who have sex with men. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *62*, 176–185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.088>.
- Moran, C., & Lee, C. (2014). Women’s constructions of heterosexual non-romantic sex and the implications for sexual health. *Psychology & Sexuality*, *5*, 161–182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2012.715588>.
- Muñoz-Laboy, M., Garcia, J., Wilson, P. A., Parker, R. G., & Severson, N. (2015). Heteronormativity and sexual partnering among bisexual latino men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *44*, 895–902. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0335-x>.
- O’Leary, A., & Jones, K. T. (2006). Bisexual men and heterosexual women: How big is the bridge? How can we know? *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, *33*, 594–595. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.olq.0000225280.44538.f6>.
- Persson, A., Newman, C. E., Manolas, P., Holt, M., Callander, D., Gordon, T., & de Wit, J. (2017). Challenging perceptions of “straight”: Heterosexual men who have sex with men and the cultural politics of sexual identity categories. *Men and Masculinities*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17718586>.
- Prentice, D. A., & Carranza, E. (2002). What women and men should be, shouldn’t be, are allowed to be, and don’t have to be: The contents of prescriptive gender stereotypes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *26*, 269–281. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-6402.t01-1-00066>.
- Reback, C. J., Kaplan, R. L., & Larkins, S. (2015). Disclosure of male sexual partnering and HIV serostatus among a sample of heterosexually identified men who have sex with men and women. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, *27*, 227–239. <https://doi.org/10.1521/aeap.2015.27.3.227>.
- Reback, C. J., & Larkins, S. (2010). Maintaining a heterosexual identity: Sexual meanings among a sample of heterosexually identified

- men who have sex with men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 39, 766–773. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-008-9437-7>.
- Reidy, D. E., Shirk, S. D., Sloan, C. A., & Zeichner, A. (2009). Men who aggress against women: Effects of feminine gender role violation on physical aggression in hypermasculine men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 10, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014794>.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sanchez, D. T., Crocker, J., & Boike, K. R. (2005). Doing gender in the bedroom: Investing in gender norms and the sexual experience. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31, 1445–1455. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167205277333>.
- Sanchez, D. T., Fetterolf, J. C., & Rudman, L. A. (2012). Eroticizing inequality in the United States: The consequences and determinants of traditional gender role adherence in intimate relationships. *Journal of Sex Research*, 49, 168–183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2011.653699>.
- Sánchez, F. J., Greenberg, S. T., Liu, W. M., & Vilain, E. (2009). Reported effects of masculine ideals on gay men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 10, 73–87. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013513>.
- Sandfort, T. G. M., Melendez, R. M., & Diaz, R. M. (2007). Gender nonconformity, homophobia, and mental distress in Latino gay and bisexual men. *Journal of Sex Research*, 44, 181–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490701263819>.
- Schnarrs, P. W., Dodge, B., Reece, M., Goncalves, G., Martinez, O., Pol, B. V. D., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2012). Subjective sexual experiences of behaviorally bisexual men in the midwestern united states: Sexual attraction, sexual behaviors and condom use. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 12, 246–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2012.674863>.
- Schrimshaw, E. W., Downing, M. J., & Cohn, D. J. (2018). Reasons for non-disclosure of sexual orientation among behaviorally bisexual men: Non-disclosure as stigma management. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 47, 219–233. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-016-0762-y>.
- Schrimshaw, E. W., Downing, M. J. J., Cohn, D. J., & Siegel, K. (2014). Conceptions of privacy and the non-disclosure of same-sex behaviour by behaviourally-bisexual men in heterosexual relationships. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 16, 351–365. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.887779>.
- Schrimshaw, E. W., Siegel, K., Downing, M. J., & Parsons, J. T. (2013). Disclosure and concealment of sexual orientation and the mental health of non-gay-identified, behaviorally bisexual men. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 81, 141–153. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031272>.
- Schudson, Z. C., Manley, M. H., Diamond, L. M., & van Anders, S. M. (2017). Heterogeneity in gender/sex sexualities: An exploration of gendered physical and psychological traits in attractions to women and men. *Journal of Sex Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1402290>.
- Silva, T. J. (2017). Bud-sex: Constructing normative masculinity among rural straight men that have sex with men. *Gender & Society*, 31, 51–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243216679934>.
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. (1986). Sexual scripts: Permanence and change. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 15, 97–120. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01542219>.
- Taywaditep, K. J. (2001). Marginalization among the marginalized: Gay men's anti-effeminacy attitudes. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 42, 1–28.
- Vitellone, N. (2000). Condoms and the making of “testosterone man” a cultural analysis of the male sex drive in aids research on safer heterosex. *Men and Masculinities*, 3, 152–167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X0003002002>.
- Ward, J. (2015). *Not gay: Sex between straight white men*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Weiss, K. G. (2009). “Boys will be boys” and other gendered accounts: An exploration of victims' excuses and justifications for unwanted sexual contact and coercion. *Violence Against Women*, 15, 810–834. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801209333611>.
- Zeglin, R. J. (2015). Assessing the role of masculinity in the transmission of HIV: A systematic review to inform HIV risk reduction counseling interventions for MSM. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44, 1979–1990. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-015-0501-9>.