

LGB within the T: Sexual Orientation in the National Transgender Discrimination Survey and Implications for Public Policy

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This book chapter examines sexual orientation and discrimination experienced by transgender people, using data from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. This study explores how respondents to the NTDS identified their sexual orientation, how those responses differ based on demographic variables (e.g. age, race, and gender), and how respondents' experiences of discrimination and outcomes differ based on sexual orientation. The study finds that only 22% of transgender respondents identified as heterosexual or straight, and that transgender people who identify as sexual minorities (lesbian, gay or bisexual) experience a greater likelihood of encountering some forms of discrimination compared to those who identify as straight. For instance, LGBTQAO respondents are more likely than straight respondents to be harassed in a place of public accommodation (55% vs. 44%).

This chapter appears in *Trans Studies: The Challenge to Hetero/Homo Normativities*, an interdisciplinary essay collection edited by Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel and Sarah Tobias on transgender scholarship and public policy. *Trans Studies* is **available for purchase in print or as an ebook from Rutgers University Press**.

The tables that follow are expanded versions of the tables included in the published chapter.

Table I. Self-reported Sexual Orientation of NTDS Respondents (n=6368)

	Frequency	Percentage
Gay / Lesbian / Same-gender attraction only	1417	22
Bisexual	1479	23
Queer	1276	20
Heterosexual / Straight / Different-gender attraction only	1428	22
Asexual	264	4
Other	504	8

Table 2. Write-in Response of NTDS Respondents who Selected “Other” for Sexual Orientation (n=504)

	Frequency	Percentage of “Other”	Percentage of Sample
Pansexual	116	23.0	1.8
Transgender / transsexual / provided a gender identity only	80	15.9	1.3
Unsure / Questioning	55	10.9	0.9
Did not provide enough information to categorize	48	9.5	0.8
Entered multiple sexual identities	39	7.7	0.5
Attraction stable, but respondent’s gender changes	27	5.4	0.4
Celibate / Not currently sexual	19	3.8	0.3
Attracted to anyone / everyone / gender doesn’t matter	17	3.4	0.3
Entered own unique identity	17	3.4	0.3
No labels / does not identify with a label	16	3.2	0.3
Heteroflexible / Primarily different-gender attracted	13	2.6	0.2
It depends / It varies	12	2.4	0.2
Heteroqueer / Queer hetero	12	2.4	0.2
Omnisexual	9	1.8	0.1
Commented on the question only	7	1.4	0.1
Bi-curious	7	1.4	0.1
Two-Spirit	4	0.8	0.1
Intersex	4	0.8	0.1
Polysexual	2	0.4	0.1

Table 3. Race, Age, Income, and Educational Attainment by Sexual Orientation, column percentages¹

Demographic Variables	Heterosexual or Straight	LGBQAO Respondents					Full Sample		
		All LGBQAO	Lesbian or Gay	Bisexual	Queer	Asexual		Other	
Race**^	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	1
	Asian or Pacific Islander	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	2
	Black or African American	5	4	6	2	3	2	5	5
	Latino/a	6	4	3	3	4	4	8	5
	White	77	77	77	81	75	77	66	76
	Multiracial²	8	13	10	11	15	14	18	11
Age**	18 to 24	15	20	17	14	28	14	25	19
	25 to 44	50	52	46	50	67	37	47	52
	45 to 54	19	16	19	22	4	23	15	17
	55 to 64	13	11	14	13	1	21	12	11
	65 and older	2	2	3	2	0	5	2	2
Annual Household Income**	Less than \$10,000	14	15	13	12	17	17	26	15
	\$10,000 to \$19,999	9	13	13	10	15	13	14	12
	\$20,000 to \$49,999	30	32	32	33	36	28	26	32
	\$50,000 to \$99,999	32	26	27	29	24	28	21	27
	\$100,000 and above	15	13	15	17	8	14	12	14
Education*	No high school degree	4	4	4	4	2	3	10	4
	High school only	10	8	8	9	5	7	9	8
	Some college	42	40	42	43	32	44	43	40
	College degree	25	28	24	26	39	27	21	27
	Graduate/professional degree	20	20	22	18	22	18	17	20

**All tests indicated statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). *Only the chi-square test including all Q69 identities indicated significance ($p < 0.05$). ^No t-test performed.

¹ Columns in this and subsequent tables may not add to 100 due to rounding.

² Those categorized as "Multiracial" are those who selected two or more races and/or those who selected the answer option "multiracial or mixed race" on the NTDS survey.

Table 4. Gender and Transition-related Measures by Sexual Orientation, column percentages

Gender and Transition-related Variables		Heterosexual or Straight	LGBQAO Respondents					Full Sample	
			All LGBQAO	Lesbian or Gay	Bisexual	Queer	Asexual		Other
Gender***	Trans women (MTF)	46	46	59	59	11	70	49	47
	Trans men (FTM)	30	27	16	15	57	12	25	28
	Cross-dresser (male assigned)	21	8	4	17	1	8	10	11
	Cross-dresser (female assigned)	0	4	4	2	7	2	3	3
	Genderqueer / GNC (male assigned)	2	3	4	2	2	3	3	3
	Genderqueer / GNC (female assigned)	1	12	13	4	22	6	10	9
Transition Status**	Currently live full-time	60	53	56	51	53	56	54	55
	Do not yet live full-time, but want to	24	28	23	35	22	35	30	27
	Do not want to live full-time	16	19	21	14	25	9	16	18
Age began living full- time**	Younger than 18	9	5	5	3	6	2	10	6
	18 to 24	28	29	19	18	56	15	35	29
	25 to 44	43	40	39	48	34	36	32	40
	45 to 54	15	18	25	24	3	27	18	17
	55 or older	6	7	12	7	1	20	5	7
People can tell I am trans/GNC even if I don't tell them**	Always	4	7	9	4	9	4	8	6
	Most of the time	9	18	19	12	25	20	17	16
	Sometimes	21	29	27	30	29	30	29	27
	Occasionally	31	29	31	31	24	31	31	29
	Never	36	17	15	23	14	15	15	21
Outness**	Generally out	45	63	63	52	77	57	63	59
	Generally not out	55	37	37	48	23	43	37	40

**All tests indicated statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). *Only the chi-square test including all Q69 identities indicated significance ($p < 0.05$). ^No t-test performed.

Table 5. Discrimination/Outcomes in Employment, Education, and Family Rejection by Sexual Orientation, column percentages

Discrimination/Outcome Variables		Heterosexual or Straight	LGBQAO Respondents					Full Sample	
			All LGBQAO	Lesbian or Gay	Bisexual	Queer	Asexual		Other
Employment	Unemployed*	13	14	15	13	12	12	20	14
	Lost job due to anti-trans bias*	27	25	30	28	15	35	28	26
	Not hired due to anti-trans bias*	42	45	49	44	39	54	49	44
	Harassed by someone at work due to anti-trans bias**	46	51	54	49	48	60	51	50
	Survived physical assaulted at work due to anti-trans bias*	6	7	9	6	4	9	12	7
	Survived sexual assault at work due to anti-trans bias*	6	6	8	5	3	8	9	6
	Ever engaged in sex work, drug sales, or other underground economic activities for income**	14	17	14	17	19	12	21	16
Education	Harassed by anyone in K-12 due to anti-trans bias**	71	80	74	77	85	79	83	78
	Survived physical assault by anyone in K-12 due to anti-trans bias	34	36	36	35	34	41	39	35
	Survived sexual assault by anyone in K-12 due to anti-trans bias	12	12	13	12	10	15	12	12
	Expelled from school at any school level due to anti-trans bias	6	5	5	6	4	8	6	5
	Had to leave school because anti-trans harassment was so bad**	17	12	12	12	9	19	16	13
Family Rejection	Experienced family rejection due to anti-trans bias**	53	59	60	61	50	63	67	57

**All tests indicated statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). *Only the chi-square test including all Q69 identities indicated significance ($p < 0.05$).

Table 6. Discrimination/Outcomes in Health and Housing by Sexual Orientation, column percentages

Discrimination/Outcome Variables		Heterosexual or Straight	LGBQAO Respondents					Full Sample	
			All LGBQAO	Lesbian or Gay	Bisexual	Queer	Asexual		Other
Health	Negative	88	89	90	90	90	88	83	89
	HIV Status***								
	Positive	4.03	2.16	3.06	1.77	0.86	1.14	4.66	2.64
	Don't know	8	9	7	9	9	11	12	8
	Ever attempted suicide**	36	42	40	40	43	45	47	41
	No health insurance**	15	20	19	19	20	23	22	19
	Doctor refused to treat due to anti-trans bias*	20	18	19	19	15	29	20	19
Ever postponed getting medical care when sick/injured due to provider discrimination**	25	29	26	22	40	28	27	28	
Housing	Homeowner**	42	30	34	37	14	42	27	32
	Ever experienced homelessness*	19	18	19	17	15	27	22	19
	Ever evicted due to anti-trans bias*	12	11	12	11	6	16	17	11
	Ever denied home/apartment due to anti-trans bias	19	19	19	16	21	25	20	19

**All tests indicated statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). *Only the chi-square test including all Q69 identities indicated significance ($p < 0.05$). ^T-test only performed for those who reported being HIV positive.

Table 7. Discrimination/Outcomes in Public Accommodations by Sexual Orientation, column percentages

Discrimination/Outcome Variables		Heterosexual or Straight	LGBQAO Respondents					Full Sample	
			All LGBQAO	Lesbian or Gay	Bisexual	Queer	Asexual		Other
Public Accommodations	Ever denied equal treatment in public accommodations due to anti-trans bias**	38	44	43	39	53	40	43	43
	Ever verbally harassed in public accommodations due to anti-transgender bias**	44	55	52	48	68	49	51	52
	Ever survived physical assault in public accommodations due to anti-transgender bias**	6	7	7	6	9	9	8	7
Police and Incarceration	Ever arrested for being trans or gender non-conforming**	9	6	9	6	3	6	10	7
	Ever sent to jail or prison for any reason**	17	15	17	15	10	19	21	16
	Denied equal treatment by police due to anti-trans bias	15	16	15	12	22	17	19	16
	Verbally harassed by police due to anti-trans bias	25	27	25	23	36	29	25	27
	Physically assaulted by police due to anti-transgender bias	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4

**All tests indicated statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). *Only the chi-square test including all Q69 identities indicated significance ($p < 0.05$).