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Who Do We Love?

Shifts in Attitudes About Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Same-Sex Close Relationships

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Attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity have shifted dramatically over the past century and not always in a linear direction. Same-sex sexuality has moved in and out of various forms of social acceptability. Today, the full spectrum of attitudes, from total acceptance and celebration to punishment by death, remains. At the same time, but not always in parallel, attitudes toward same-sex relationships, gender diversity, and gender (non)conformity have also shifted. This chapter provides a modern understanding of the lesser-known historical roots of 20th-century attitudes toward sexual orientation, gender identity, and same-sex relationships. We also examine how people's attitudes toward same-sex relationships and gender identity have shifted since the early 1900s. Although Western cultures have made significant progress toward accepting gender and sexual diversity—including substantial reductions in levels of societal sexism, homophobia, and transphobia—prejudice remains. We provide recommendations for researchers in this field and outline a lesser known social prejudice that remains virulent today and continues to spur discrimination against individuals of all sexual and gender identities: femmephobia.

Historical Attitudes Toward Sexual and Gender Diversity

Attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity have perhaps varied far more over time than the traditional narrative of "linear progress" may lead one to expect. While we do not have the space to trace changes in attitudes through the millennia, same-sex relationships have existed across many historical

Karen L. Blair, Erin L. Courtice, and Rhea Ashley Hoskin, *Who Do We Love?* In: *Modern Relationships*.
Edited by: Mahzad Hojjat and Anne Moyer, Oxford University Press. © Oxford University Press 2024.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780197655504.003.0011

cultures. However, by the turn of the 20th century, same-sex sexuality and relationships were generally not accepted and were explicitly outlawed by many jurisdictions. Legal prohibitions against same-sex relationships date back to those created in Europe during the Middle Ages with the urging of the clergy, who viewed such acts as representing sinful behavior. Through colonization, Europeans exported many such laws around the globe (for detailed tracing of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians, see Crompton, 2003). However, there have always been cultural variations in attitudes toward sexual and gender minorities. For example, while Europe punished homosexuality severely during and beyond the Middle Ages, love between two men or two women was more naturalized and celebrated in ancient China and Japan (Crompton, 2003). Today, the tables have turned. Same-sex relationships are often legal and celebrated in the West but illegal and sometimes criminalized in most parts of Asia, with a few exceptions (e.g., Taiwan).

In general, sentiments that vilified and persecuted same-sex relations before the 20th century were rooted in religious doctrine, whether Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or even Buddhism. While organized religion would remain a strong adversary to the civil liberties and acceptance of sexual minorities, attitudes began to shift at the turn of the 20th century. They were no longer solely rooted in religious doctrine, but scholars from the nascent field of psychology also began to offer justifications. One such scholar was Lewis Terman (1877–1956), who, although not often credited as such, can be considered the father of "modern" scientific homophobia, sexual prejudice, and, as we will argue at the end of this chapter, femmephobia. Terman is best known for his contribution to the study of intelligence. Modern scholars often criticize his work for the racist assumptions he imbued into intelligence research by developing the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Test. However, they have paid much less attention to how his views of femininity shaped a century of negative attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity (Hegarty, 2007).

Terman described himself as an outsider among his peers who were "far from providing any stimulus to intellectual development" (Terman, 1930, p. 301). Nevertheless, Terman described feeling a sense of awe and admiration for his peers' strength, agility, and skill—all traits that he would later classify as "masculine." Although perhaps not relatable today, in the early 1900s, high intelligence was an undesirable trait associated with weakness, eccentricity, and homosexuality (Hegarty, 2007). In men, society viewed giftedness as a form of effeminacy and a sign of immature development.

Thus, the prevailing views of intelligence presented a personal challenge for Terman. He longed for his intelligence to not preclude him from the requisite physical mastery and bravado he observed among his male peers. Thus, in 1919, Terman turned his attention to studying intelligence in children to disprove the link between giftedness and effeminacy.

However, Terman faced a hurdle: At the time, there was no means of measuring masculinity (or femininity). From his experience developing IQ tests, he knew that he could devise a measure of masculinity by identifying the statistical norms within the population. Thus, he developed a "masculinity index" in which a child could be scored based upon how their toy preferences aligned with the proportion of boys and girls who liked each activity. Masculinity was ascribed to the activities picked by "most boys," while femininity was ascribed to the activities enjoyed by "most girls," thereby defining both in "entirely relative terms" (Hegarty, 2007, p. 139). Terman revised the test in 1927, referring to it as the "Masculinity–Femininity" (M–F) test, with scores ranging from −100 (feminine) to +100 (masculine), such that Terman's "construction of gender encoded masculinity as presence and femininity as its absence" (Hegarty, 2007, p. 139). If masculinity scores were equal between genius/gifted boys and average boys, Terman could scientifically lay to rest the accusations of giftedness being a sign of "weakness" or effeminacy and consequently rehabilitate his self-view as an intelligent man.

To expand his work's applicability beyond the study of gifted children, Terman and his collaborator, Catherine Cox, revised and expanded the M–F test so that it was not limited to children. Terman and Cox published the revised M–F test in *Sex and Personality* (1936). The book explored the association between marital satisfaction and masculinity/femininity (submissive wives were happy wives) and the purported ability of the M–F test to detect homosexuality. Terman approached several correctional facilities seeking access to men incarcerated for homosexuality and, in pitching his research to the wardens, noted the ability of the test's true purpose to go undetected. The notion of having a pen and paper test that could identify "sexual deviants" without them knowing the true meaning of the test was appealing to those charged with removing homosexuals from society. Terman identified "true" homosexuals as those who participated in "feminine" (receptive) sex acts while scoring highly on the femininity scale of the revised M–F test. Terman's conclusions and conflations of gender expression with sexual identity perhaps did more than any single scholar of the 20th century to solidify the association between femininity and homosexuality.

Curiously, Terman tended to cherry-pick his findings. For example, when a sample of "56 army prisoners in Alcatraz, serving sentences for sodomy, scored on average +66.2, almost identical to the mean for male college students," Terman concluded that these men were "just" bisexual (like the Ancient Greeks) and that they did not represent "true" inverts or homosexuals (Hegarty, 2007, p. 141). Throughout Terman's work, he viewed any homosexual man with lower femininity scores as "capable of redemption" due to simply being "stalled" in their process of maturation toward heterosexual masculinity. Thus, Terman also provided a basis for inventing conversion therapy practices to convert homosexuals into heterosexuals. Modern research has identified significant harms associated with conversion therapy, and several jurisdictions have therefore begun to outlaw its practice (Drescher et al., 2016). Indeed, harking back to his original research interests, it appears that Terman saw individuals with both high intelligence and proclivities toward homosexuality as being a "higher form of 'sexual inverts,' [capable of rehabilitating] . . . into normal heterosexuality" (Hegarty, 2007, p. 143).

The influence of Terman's work on defining and measuring masculinity and femininity cannot be understated. His work laid the foundation for the century of research that followed. Views of homosexuality (in men and women) would change in various manners over time, while views toward femininity would remain largely the same—devalued and heavily regulated. Terman's constructs influenced the development of subsequent measures, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). Hegarty (2007) has argued that our very notions of what masculinity and femininity are, conceptually, have been derived from Terman's work. Terman helped solidify the idea of a homosexual as a "gender invert."

Consequently, his work contributed to theories that conflate gender expression with sexual identity, setting the stage for viewing femininity as a commodity to be consumed by men, and masculinity as the measure of a true man. Any man lacking in masculinity could be assumed gay, while any woman possessing too much masculinity could be presumed lesbian. At the same time, Terman's work also solidified the association between masculinity and intelligence, thereby instilling the ostensible juxtaposition of femininity and competency in ways that can still be felt today.

Terman's creation of measures that could presumably identify homosexuality and his development and application of such measures within the criminal justice system set the stage for a large portion of the 20th century to view homosexuality as a sexually deviant crime[1]. With few exceptions, gay men and lesbians faced disproportionate levels of incarceration in prisons or mental asylums throughout the early to mid-1900s. In addition, neurosurgeons used lobotomies to "treat" sexual deviance, particularly among lesbians, which escalated after World War II and continued into the late 1960s (Morgan & Nerison, 1993). Despite this, there were pockets of time and space within the first half of the 20th century in which sexual and gender minorities carved out significant freedoms. For example, in the interwar period Berlin, Germany, grew to be the home of a burgeoning queer community that some may say has yet to be rivaled by even the queerest of modern cities, including San Francisco and New York City (Beachy, 2014). However, as a stark reminder that progress is not linear, the rise of the Nazi party in Germany brought an end to the growing freedoms enjoyed by Berlin's queer community.

Although Terman conducted most of his work at Stanford University, his conflation of gender expression and sexuality reached all the way to Germany. Many nations in the 1930s and '40s viewed male homosexuality as a criminal form of sexual deviance. However, the Nazi conceptualization of the threats posed by gay men stands out for its emphasis on femininity as the true root of such a threat (Setterington, 2013). Even during the high points of Berlin's queer scene, Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code legally prohibited sodomy in Germany, but authorities rarely enforced the law. When Hitler came to power, the Nazi party increased the enforcement and severity of Paragraph 175 under the premise that gay men threatened the *virility* of the race and, therefore, the Reich. In other words, the greatest threat posed by gay men in Nazi Germany was their femininity and associated weakness. Indeed, the Nazis applied the same reasoning as Terman in separating the "true" homosexuals for persecution based on their femininity. Gay men who were less feminine, who could "pass" as straight, and willing to be "reformed," could avoid the extreme degrees of persecution that their more feminine counterparts could not outrun.

Ultimately, between 1933 and 1945, it is estimated that the Nazis arrested roughly 100,000 men, 53,000 of whom were convicted of "homosexual indecency" (Newsome, 2014). It is unknown precisely how many of these men died in concentration camps. Upon liberation by the Allied Forces, gay men were among the few categories of concentration camp inmates remanded to prisons assuming that they were "legitimate" criminals who had violated Paragraph 175. Given that many of the Allied nations had similar sanctions against homosexuality and that a version of Paragraph 175 predated the Nazis, the Allied Forces viewed the "crimes" of gay men as a legitimate cause for incarceration. West Germany went on to convict nearly 60,000 more men under Paragraph 175 *after* WWII ended (Newsome, 2014). Indeed, well past WWII, Allied nations continued to persecute gay men and lesbians, particularly within the military and civil services. Known as the Lavender Scare in the United States and the LGBTQ Purge in Canada, thousands of men and women were removed from their professions during the Cold War due to concerns that their homosexuality would make them easy targets for foreign agents. During the same era, femme lesbians were seen as a threat to national security and assumed to be potential foreign spies due to their "deceptive" identities. Their femininity was considered to grant them an ability to "pass" or be otherwise indistinguishable from heterosexual women (Corber, 2011), making it more difficult to easily "detect" lesbians. Throughout the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, and even stretching into the '80s and '90s in some professions, gay men and lesbians often had to keep their relationships a secret to protect their careers. Witch hunts to roust homosexuality from the military and the civil service rested upon the same conflations of gender and sexuality provided by Terman's work, resulting in gender nonconformity, especially "misplaced femininity," triggering investigations. Self-perpetuating gender norms that prevented men from expressing any degree of femininity for fear of being accused of homosexuality and similarly tempered women's masculinity served to solidify the profoundly ingrained link between homosexuality and gender inversion throughout the latter half of the 20th century.

The levity and freedom of the homosexual movements from the interwar years are a stark reminder that simply achieving any degree of acceptance or tolerance does not guarantee that such sentiments will remain or that future generations will not "turn back the clocks." Indeed, the HIV/AIDS epidemic had a similarly chilling effect on attitudes toward sexual diversity in the 1980s. While responses to HIV/AIDS varied worldwide, in North America, it was painted as a "gay" disease and even referred to as "GRID"—gay-related immunodeficiency—for some time. Thus, governments and health-funding bodies largely ignored the disease instead of viewing HIV/AIDS as the dangerous pandemic that it was—capable of infecting individuals of any gender or sexuality. Consequently, somewhat dormant religious objections to homosexuality returned to the forefront, with some describing AIDS as God's punishment for gay men's sinful promiscuity.

The stigma of HIV/AIDS continues to color societal attitudes toward LGBTQ people and their relationships today. As discussed in Chapter 7, the pandemic significantly delayed advances in LGBTQ civil rights, including the legalization of same-sex marriage. Nonetheless, marriage debates did begin to take place in earnest in the last few years of the 20th century. Depending on the time and place in which such debates emerged, they often brought to the surface hostile public discourses that laid bare the lingering influence of Terman's contributions toward shaping society's views of homosexuality and femininity as deviant, immature, and threatening.

Current Attitudes Toward Same-Sex and Gender-Diverse Relationships

Sexual prejudice has historically focused on the sexual component of same-sex relationships as a rallying point. For example, many organizations have expressed concerns about children's content depicting same-sex relationships or family structures, arguing that such content is "inappropriate" or "sexual" (Hoskin, 2018). However, similar portrayals of heterosexual couples or parenting have always been present in children's content (e.g., the inevitable kiss between prince and princess at the end of Disney movies). Thus, it is not the presence of romance itself that is deemed inappropriate—but, rather, it is the act of *same-sex* romance that is labeled inappropriate or over-sexualized. These arguments suggest that individuals high in sexual prejudice view same-sex relationships as nothing more than their associated sexual acts, thereby reinforcing the narrative of "sexual deviancy" that resonated before and throughout Terman's work. Consequently, attitudes concerning same-sex relationships and their access to institutional legitimacy are essential for understanding attitudes toward sexual minorities more broadly.

As of 2022, 31 countries have legalized same-sex marriage, representing significant progress since 2000, when same-sex marriage was only legal in the Netherlands (HRC, 2022). At the same time, support among citizens of Western countries for same-sex relationships has significantly increased. For example, between 2002 and 2010, European countries with legal recognition of same-sex marriage also reported more positive attitudes toward gay men and lesbians (Hooghe & Meeusen, 2013). Similarly, in the United States, Americans' implicit and explicit anti-gay biases began to improve more quickly following the federal legalization of same-sex marriage in the Obergefell (2015) U.S. Supreme Court decision (Osofu et al., 2019).

Of course, the legalization of same-sex marriage is not the sole explanation for positive shifts in people's attitudes toward sexual minorities and their relationships. Furthermore, legalization has not always had wholly positive outcomes. For example, when the legalization of same-sex marriage has been driven by the courts rather than through legislative processes, public attitudes sometimes regress, representing a reactive backlash response to top-down approaches to extending LGBTQ civil liberties (Flores & Barclay, 2016). In the more conservative states that did not independently legislate same-sex marriage before Obergefell, anti-gay attitudes worsened following the Supreme Court's decision (Ofosu et al., 2019). Thus, individual factors also play a role in people's attitudes toward same-sex relationships. Demographic shifts, including reduced religiosity, increased access to education, and more frequent contact with sexual minorities, may explain some of the positive trends in accepting attitudes toward sexual minorities and their relationships (e.g., Lee & Mutz, 2019). More specifically, positive attitudes toward same-sex marriage are most common among individuals who are younger rather than older, women rather than men, and those residing within higher socioeconomic statuses (e.g., Perales & Campbell, 2018). Notably, attitudes toward sexual minorities are not equal across sexual minority identities. For example, although attitudes have improved considerably toward same-sex relationships (including those between two men), such approval is often reserved for sexual minorities who conform to societal gender norms. In other words, societal and familial acceptance of same-sex relationships and sexual minority identities often hinges upon not straying too far from societal gender expectations (i.e., masculine men, properly feminine women). Consequently, much of the lingering homonegativity directed at men within society is often associated with negative perceptions of femininity in men (Jewell & Morrison, 2012).

Individuals with a family member in a same-sex relationship express improved attitudes toward same-sex marriage and sexual minorities. Even the experience of attending a family member's same-sex wedding can positively impact an individual's support for same-sex relationships more broadly (e.g., Kenndey et al., 2018). Of course, this does not mean that individuals in same-sex relationships do not still face negative attitudes from family members. Indeed, when family members (close and extended) disapprove of same-sex relationships, they often decline to attend a loved one's same-sex wedding, creating stress for those within the relationship and their more supportive family members (Riggle et al., 2018). Thus, for the experience of *attending* a same-sex wedding to influence an individual's attitudes toward same-sex relationships, they must first possess some degree of openness and willingness to attend. In general, though, familial support for same-sex marriage and relationships has increased in recent years (Ogolsky et al., 2019). Despite these increases, individuals in same-sex relationships consistently perceive less social support and approval for their relationships than individuals in mixed-sex relationships (Blair et al., 2018). This finding is particularly stark when exploring perceptions of support from family members (Holmberg & Blair, 2016).

In addition to lower perceptions of support for one's relationship, individuals in same-sex relationships continue to face the dangerous consequences of remaining sexual prejudice. In 2019, over 15% of all hate crimes committed in the United States targeted LGBTQ+ people (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019). This percentage is relatively high, considering that only 5.6% of people are estimated to identify as LGBTQ+ in the United States (Jones, 2021). Unsurprisingly, hate crimes motivated by LGBTQ+ bias negatively impact LGBTQ+ people. For instance, following the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting, LGBTQ+ people reported increased safety concerns (Stults et al., 2017).

Furthermore, overt acts of aggression toward LGBTQ+ people persist, ranging from anti-LGBTQ+ bullying to the disproportionately high murder rates of transgender women (Nadal, 2018). Minority stress refers to the additional stress LGBTQ+ individuals experience due to managing their identity, confronting safety concerns, and discrimination (Meyer, 2003). Such stressors are associated with adverse psychological health outcomes (Pellicane & Ciesla, 2021) and contribute to LGBTQ+ health disparities. Minority stress also applies at the couple level, such as when same-sex couples experience more significant concerns for their safety when in public due to negative attitudes and actions directed at their relationship (LeBlanc & Frost, 2020). One way in which couple-level minority stressors become salient is by engaging in public affection sharing (i.e., public displays of affection; PDAs), such as holding hands. Compared with those in mixed-sex relationships, individuals in same-sex and gender-diverse relationships report engaging in PDAs less frequently and being less comfortable doing so.

When same-sex and gender-diverse couples do share affection in public, they report experiencing higher levels of PDA-related vigilance, or a sense of unease and hyperawareness of their surroundings, knowing that their affection can be the catalyst for violence (Blair et al., 2022). Furthermore, individuals in a same-sex relationship who report having a feminine partner and feminine men experience exacerbated PDA-related vigilance (Matheson et al., 2021).

Attitudes Concerning Gender-Diverse Relationships

Researcher interest in same-sex relationships has grown over the past two decades; however, there is still much left to be explored alongside improved understandings (particularly in Western countries) of the nuances of gender, transness, and nonbinary identities. For instance, people have become more aware of and increasingly identified with trans and nonbinary genders in the past 15 years (Nolan et al., 2019). These shifts have created new questions about how people construe and define their own sexual identity alongside their gender identity. For example, cisgender (someone for whom gender aligns with sex) partners of trans individuals may feel that their partner's transition requires them to change or modify their own sexual identity to affirm their partner's gender (Platt & Bolland, 2017). At the same time, many people have eschewed traditional sexual minority labels (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual) in favor of more expansive terminology, such as queer and pansexual. This developing area of research suggests that people's—including heterosexual people's—understandings of their sexual identity may evolve and expand in the next two decades.

Gender-diverse individuals face unique challenges within the context of romantic relationships. Simply being told that another person is transgender or nonbinary (whether true or not) reduces cisgender individuals' reported feelings of attraction (Mao et al., 2019). Transgender people are also more likely to experience intimate partner violence, including being up to 2.2 times more likely to experience physical violence from a partner and 2.5 times more likely to experience sexual violence from a partner (Peitzmeier et al., 2020). Trans women are particularly at risk for intimate partner violence and are vastly overrepresented in each year's transgender day of remembrance (Namaste, 2011). Trans men, however, are not immune to violence, both within and outside of their close relationships. When targeted by strangers, many trans men and nonbinary individuals identify perceived femininity as placing them within the crosshairs of their aggressors (Hoskin, 2019, 2020). Thus, across transgender and nonbinary identities, femmephobia contributes to the negative attitudes directed at gender-diverse individuals and the violence they encounter. Given such real threats of danger, it is no surprise that trans individuals report difficulty deciding if, when, and how to disclose their gender identity to potential romantic partners, an experience that is unique to the trans and nonbinary community (e.g., Lloyd & Finn, 2017). Such concerns are not unfounded. One study reported that 87.5% of the cisgender people in the study's sample would not consider dating a transgender person (Blair & Hoskin, 2019). This number included 96.9% of the cisgender heterosexual participants and 76.1% of the gay and lesbian cisgender participants. Those whose sexual attractions were already blind to gender were the most willing to consider dating trans individuals; 55.2% of queer and bisexual individuals were willing to consider dating a transgender partner. To a disproportionate extent, trans women were the least likely to be included in the hypothetical dating pools of others, providing further support for societal denigration and regulation of "misplaced" or "unwarranted" femininity.

The Invisible Hurdle: Femmephobia

It is impossible to determine what attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity will be most prevalent in the coming decades. There are already legal attempts to limit or roll back some forms of LGBTQ+ civil liberties in the United States. Same-sex relations remain illegal in 71 countries, and the trajectory toward acceptance is reversing in others. For example, the growing conflict between Russia, the European Union, and ultimately, "The West" is, in part, premised upon the proposed necessity of protecting Russia from the disintegration of the family structure that has become commonplace in Western nations. In other words, Russia's leaders argue that the progression of LGBTQ+ rights in the West threatens Russia's values. They subsequently have used the perception of such threats to provide justification and cover for their political and military transgressions (Snyder, 2018). In the United States, legislators have signed controversial bills that limit the discussion of LGBTQ+ identities within the classroom (Izaguirre, 2022). Thus, while attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity have improved, this is no guarantee that they will continue to do so.

Despite generally improving attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity, femmephobia stands apart as a prejudice unfamiliar to many, even within LGBTQ+ communities. The legacy of Terman's denigration and devaluing of femininity is so ubiquitous that femmephobia remains prevalent in terms of attitudes directed *toward* LGBTQ+ communities by outsiders and attitudes expressed *within* the community itself. Consequently, one of the most relevant hurdles to be cleared in the coming decades concerning attitudes toward sexual and gender diversity is eradicating or at least lessening femmephobic sentiments.

Femmephobia, as articulated by Femme Theory, refers to the systematic devaluation and regulation of femininity. Femmephobia describes negative sentiments and attitudes directed at individuals perceived as feminine and those whom society does not view as appropriate feminine subjects. Femme theory emerged from theoretical understandings of 1940s lesbian communities, which often included butch–femme partnerships (Hoskin, 2021). However, as articulated by Hoskin (2017, 2021), femme theory has expanded to explore the treatment of femininity across contexts and identities. Femme theory allows for an understanding of how societal attitudes concerning femininity (many of which trace back to Terman's original work) function to ensure the continued placement of femininity beneath masculinity while maintaining strict confines around *who* can be feminine and what is considered *proper* femininity.

We see femmephobia within the LGBTQ+ community itself through a variety of instances. While outsiders often invoke Terman's conflation of femininity and male homosexuality to denigrate gay men, gay men themselves perpetuate this sentiment against each other by articulating dating preferences that exclude more feminine men (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). Indeed, the very term "queer" was adopted in the early 1900s by more masculine or "straight-acting" gay men as a way of differentiating themselves from the more feminine "pansies" and "fairies," whom society so virulently hated (Hoskin, 2017; Taywaditep, 2002). Within lesbian communities, feminine lesbians are often excluded and made to feel invisible. Their femininity renders their sexuality inauthentic, and they are assumed to be curious visitors incapable of genuine or permanent attraction to other women (Blair & Hoskin, 2015). Even LGBTQ+ communities' revered and respected champions—drag queens—serve to highlight the deeply ingrained nature of femmephobia, such that many drag queens report being rejected as prospective dating partners precisely because of their femininity or their willingness to perform femininity within their drag queen personas (Levitt et al., 2018). At the same time, while drag celebrates gender diversity and "misplaced" femininity on a large stage, the very appeal of drag queens as a source of entertainment can be seen as a further invocation of femmephobia, such that drag presents femininity as something to be "put on" rather than anything that could be agentic or authentic (Hoskin, 2019, 2020).

Consequently, a prejudice borne out of a desire to equate sexual minorities with sexual deviancy has thus become one of the strongest and most prevalent prejudices expressed by sexual minorities toward each other. Such a shift is perhaps not as surprising as it may initially sound. Terman's work uncovered many examples of gay men who did not score highly on his measure of femininity. Given the degree of persecution that sexual minorities faced throughout the 20th century, is it any wonder that some may try to set themselves apart from what they (and society) understood to be the *truest* or most transgressive of their sins: femininity?

While LGBTQ+ communities have been working to undo the lingering legacy of Terman's denigration of femininity, what makes femmephobia particularly relevant as an "attitude" to watch over the coming decades is that it stretches far beyond the issue of sexual and gender diversity. Femmephobia has implications for many facets of life and cuts across identities, bodies, and sexualities. Terman's conflation of intelligence with masculinity presents itself today in the denigration of femininity within any "serious" work environment. Feminine scientists are taken less seriously and assumed to be less intelligent (Banchefsky et al., 2016), and women in STEM are accepted only so far as they can adhere to masculine norms of intelligence and competency (Menendez, 2019). Female politicians must walk the ever-so-fine line of navigating a sexist world that requires them to master a near-impossible balance of warmth and competence (Bordo, 2019) while carefully ensuring that they do not wade too far into the realm of femininity, which would render them frivolous, too emotional, and incapable of the "serious" matters of governing (Menendez, 2019). Somewhat more than sexism and misogyny, femmephobic sentiments shape the experiences of individuals across all sexual and gender identities. Gay men must navigate the same challenges of not allowing "femininity" to leak into their personae if they wish to be considered competent within masculine realms, and even straight men's ability to express nurturance, affection, or vulnerability is constrained by societal dictates that they not fall into the negative numbers of Terman's M–F test.

Thus, we are still grappling with the fallout nearly 100 years after Terman developed the M–F test with its embedded assumptions about gender expression and identity. Although we have progressed in rehabilitating attitudes toward same-sex relationships and sexual and gender diversity, such progress often hinges upon agreements to not violate the assumptions of acceptable femininity. When one looks to identify the areas in which LGBTQ+ individuals and their relationships still struggle to garner positive attitudes from themselves and others, some transgression of femininity is often nearby. Whether it is the heightened vigilance associated with having a feminine partner, the cruelty of violence directed at trans women, or the ability to instantly express contempt for another by associating them with feminine qualities, femmephobia diverges from other prejudices as requiring much greater attention than it has to date. Indeed, Hoskin (2020) has argued that femmephobia is the thread that weaves through and anchors many other societal prejudices, including homophobia, transphobia, sexism, and "toxic masculinity."

In looking ahead, we hope that readers and scholars alike will challenge Terman's assumptions about gender and sexuality by beginning to imagine our future world as one in which we value femininity on equal footing with masculinity. Such a world would be one in which we equally associate femininity and masculinity with the potential for intelligence, competency, and strength and would allow us to celebrate the feminine qualities of nurturance, emotion, and vulnerability regardless of an individual's sex or gender or sexuality. What would the implications of such a world be for all human relationships? What would it mean for how the world views sexual and gender minorities and their relationships? These are just some of the questions that we are excited to see researchers explore with respect to attitudes toward the relationships of sexual and gender minorities in the coming years.

Note

1. As discussed in Chapter 7, it would not be until the pioneering work of Dr. Evelyn Hooker that the negative consequences of Terman's work would begin to be undone, allowing for gay men and lesbians to be viewed as natural sources of diversity within the spectrum of human sexuality.

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