

Exploring gay and lesbian gender inverted stereotypes
and acceptance levels in the UK: A mixed method
study.

By

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Glossary and Acronyms

Glossary

Butch:	a term used in LGBTQ+ culture to describe someone who expresses themselves in a typically masculine way (Stonewall, 2024).
Cisgenderism	Refers to ideologies that deny self-identities that do not align with gender at birth (Lennon & Mistler, 2014)
Femme:	a term used in LGBTQ+ culture to describe someone who expresses themselves in a typically feminine way (Stonewall, 2024).
Gay:	Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also, a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term (Stonewall, 2024).
Sexual Orientation:	A person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. Along with romantic orientation, this forms a person's orientation identity (Stonewall, 2024)
Stereotyping:	A pervasive and persistent human tendency that stems from a basic cognitive need to categorise, simplify, and process the world (Zhang et al., 2023).
Gender:	Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth (Stonewall, 2024).

Gender Identity:	A person's innate sense of their gender, whether male, female or something else, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth (Stonewall, 2024).
Gender Inverted Stereotype:	Gay and lesbian related stereotypes that may suggest that gay men are seen to be feminine and lesbian women are masculine (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009).
Heterosexual:	Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women or to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men (Stonewall, 2024).
Heteronormativity:	Assumption of a person's heterosexuality (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024)
Homonormativity:	Homonormativity refers to the convergence of LGBTQ+ goals with the norms and ideals associated with heteronormativity, resulting in LGBTQ+ individuals seeking to position themselves as being similar to heterosexuals. It prioritises the normalisation and acceptance of certain forms of LGBTQ+ people while excluding those who challenge normativity (Browne et al., 2020).
Homosexual:	This might be considered a more medical term used to describe someone who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used (Stonewall, 2024). Additionally, the BPS (2024) advises against the use of the word homosexual and suggests the use of the terms gay and lesbian.

Homophobia:	The fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views about lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Homophobic bullying may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual (Stonewall, 2024)
Lesbian:	Refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term (Stonewall, 2024).

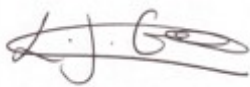
Acronyms

GLAAD:	Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.
IIT:	Implicit Inversion Theory (Kite & Deaux, 1987)
LGBTQ+:	The acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning and more (Stonewall, 2024).
WVS	Acronym for the World Values Survey
BSA	Acronym for the British Social Attitudes survey

Declaration

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Birmingham City University within the College of Psychology in the Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences (BLSS). I confirm that this thesis is my own work, and no material has been used for any other submission for an academic award. Where the words of others are used these are clearly referenced or placed in quotation marks.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'L.J.G.' followed by a stylized flourish.

Date: 23rd November 2025

Dissemination

Gee, L. (2024). You Don't Look Gay? *The Psychologist*, BPS

Gee, L. (March 2024). How do people in the UK LGBTQ+ community understand, apply and conform to gay and lesbian stereotypes. *BLSS Research Away Day, Birmingham, UK*

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Gee, L. (July 2022). Attributing gender inverted stereotypes by sexuality in a UK population. *PsyPag, UK.*

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Abstract

This thesis investigates gender inverted stereotypes and their application to gay men and lesbian women, through a mixed methods approach. Society may still hold the belief that gay men are perceived as feminine and lesbian women as masculine (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Brambilla et al., 2011a, 2011b; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Mize & Manago, 2018; Reyna et al., 2014). Examining gender inverted stereotypes is essential to consider in the context of changing legal frameworks and increasing societal acceptance in the UK. The relevance and application of the gender inverted stereotype may be decreasing, as Hammack et al. (2018) suggest that younger generations tend to be more accepting of diverse sexualities and social change.

This thesis examines this area by utilising quantitative survey data to assess the prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes and qualitative interviews to expand and explore understanding and experiences. In the quantitative phase, 146 individuals who identified as heterosexual and LGBTQ+ completed standardised measures assessing gender inverted stereotype application. Statistical analyses, including a MANCOVA, provided the interactions and main effects of the independent variables (participant sexual orientation, target sexual orientation, participant gender, target gender) on the dependent variable of application of the stereotype (masculine, feminine, neutral). The findings suggested that gender inverted stereotypes were applied to both gay and lesbian target conditions by heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals with no differences.

Building on the quantitative findings, the qualitative phase used semi-structured interviews with a sample of 6 heterosexual participants and then a sample of 8 LGBTQ+ participants, incorporating photo elicitation to explore both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ perspectives. The first qualitative analysis explored heterosexual participants' accounts, examining their views and identifying thematic themes around the persistence of gender

inverted stereotypes, with influences such as media playing a role. The analysis of the second qualitative sample focuses on LGBTQ+ participants' experience with these stereotypes, exploring how they engage with, resist, or conform to stereotypes associated with being gay or lesbian. The final qualitative analysis addresses perceptions of acceptance in the UK, aiming to fulfil the thesis's third objective. Drawing on both the heterosexual and LGBTQ+ samples, this chapter includes themes of conditional acceptance and the potential of education to improve acceptance levels.

By using a mixed method approach, this thesis adds to knowledge by demonstrating the persistence and application of gender inverted stereotypes. The thesis offers novel findings on LGBTQ+ stereotype research by exploring experiences from both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals, with suggestions that conforming to the gender inverted stereotypes may be beneficial in finding like-minded individuals and creating safety and support. The qualitative findings also highlight that perceptions of LGBTQ+ acceptance may be partial and conditional, which may be influenced by social desirability.

Keywords: Gender inverted stereotypes, LGBTQ+, Gay and Lesbian, Acceptance, Mixed methods.

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Thank you.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all LGBTQ+ individuals who may be navigating their identity. If you wish to express yourself in a masculine way, do so! If you prefer a feminine expression, embrace it! If you're uncertain, that's ok too! Whether you decide to conform, challenge, or resist gender inverted stereotypes, remember that your journey is valid, powerful, and authentic.

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the thesis and outlines the focus of the research, which is to examine gay and lesbian gender inverted stereotypes within contemporary UK society. Using a mixed methods approach, the research aims to understand experiences, perceptions and understandings of gender inverted stereotypes from heterosexual and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and more (LGBTQ+) people. Due to shifts in legal and societal viewpoints on the acceptance towards gay and lesbian individuals, the topic requires further exploration as gender inverted stereotypes may, or may not, continue to influence perceptions and experiences. The novel mixed methods approach combines quantitative research to establish the presence of gender inverted stereotypes and adds qualitative findings, using photo elicitation to explore these experiences further. This methodology allows for further investigation and can add to previous works that use one method alone. Furthermore, using a mixed sample of both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals fills gaps in the existing literature on gay and lesbian gender inverted stereotypes and the perceptions of LGBTQ+ acceptance levels within the UK.

The concept of gender inversion and its application to gay men and lesbian women was first coined by Kite and Deaux (1987) and was termed the Implicit Inversion Theory (IIT). Research within the area supports this concept by suggesting that gay men are seen to be feminine and lesbian women masculine (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Brambilla et al., 2011a, 2011b; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Mize & Manago, 2018; Reyna et al., 2014). More contemporary findings from Clarke and Arnold (2017) and Klysing et al. (2021) suggest that the IIT may need revisions, with gay and lesbian individuals appearing as ‘androgynous’, demonstrating both masculine and feminine traits, rather than gender inverted. The possible societal shifts in acceptance (PEW, 2020; 2023) and changes to UK law may have

affected the application of the gender inverted stereotypes. This thesis aims to explore the application of the gender inverted stereotypes, firstly by identifying the prevalence through quantitative methods, then exploring further with qualitative interview techniques.

To address these areas of research, this thesis will explore how current UK society perceives, understands and applies gender inverted stereotypes. The primary objectives of the thesis are:

1. To examine stereotypical viewpoints of gay and lesbian individuals from individuals who identify as heterosexual or LGBTQ+.
2. To explore personal perspectives of adhering to stereotypical viewpoints in individuals who identify as LGBTQ+.
3. To understand if there has been a change in the perceived acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, and to what extent.

The thesis will contain the following chapters:

Chapter 2: This chapter will outline the literature in the area and supply a rationale for the thesis. Stereotypes will be discussed and then narrowed down to explore gendered stereotypes, gender inversion and self-stereotyping. Influences on the stereotype, such as the media, will be discussed. Finally, the chapter will explore influences that may affect the acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Chapter 3: This chapter will outline the theoretical framework for the thesis, justifying the use of quantitative, qualitative and photo elicitation research methods to explore gender inverted

stereotypes. The chapter will then explain and justify the quantitative methodology and the qualitative methodology.

Chapter 4: This chapter is the first empirical study of the thesis, which employs a quantitative design to assess whether gender inverted stereotypes persist and to examine any differences in the application across sexual identities. The quantitative element will address the following questions: "Are gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women in contemporary UK society?" and "Does a participant's self-identified sexuality and gender influence the application of gender inverted stereotypes to gay men and lesbian women?"

Chapter 5: Presents the first qualitative analysis using the heterosexual sample, and the discussions cover both societal stereotypes commonly associated with the lesbian and gay community and the participants' views on stereotypes. Building on the findings from the quantitative element, the research aimed to answer the question: "How do people who identify as heterosexual perceive gay and lesbian gender inverted stereotypes in contemporary UK society?"

Chapter 6: Will explore the LGBTQ+ sample experiences with the gender inverted stereotypes, highlighting how they may engage, resist and conform to them. The aim of this chapter is to expand on the findings from chapters 4 and 5 with experiences from LGBTQ+ people. The research aimed to answer the question: "How do LGBTQ+ individuals in the UK understand, apply, and conform to gender inverted stereotypes?"

Chapter 7: This chapter addresses the acceptance aspect of the thesis aims and responds to the research question, "How do people perceive past, current and future acceptance of gay and

lesbian identities in the UK?”. Participants, from both the heterosexual and LGBTQ+ samples, discussed the levels of acceptance for LGBTQ+ individuals during the interviews.

Chapter 8: This final chapter offers a discussion of the thesis findings, then highlights the strengths and the limitations of the study. It outlines the key contributions of the thesis to the fields of LGBTQ+ studies, social psychology, and mixed methods research, justifying how the findings advance understanding of gender inverted stereotypes and perceived acceptance in contemporary society. Furthermore, this chapter provides recommendations for future research and reflects on the researcher’s role.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the research connected to the gender inverted stereotypes that may be associated with gay men and lesbian women. The background and rationale of the area will be discussed initially, followed by research on gender inverted stereotypes and their applications. The chapter will also investigate influences on the stereotypes, such as the media. The final sections of the literature review explore research on the acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals and the influence on gender inverted stereotypes. The chapter will close by summarising the research approach for the thesis.

2.2 Background and Rationale

Previous research into gay and lesbian stereotypes suggests they violate gender norms (Golebiowska, 2001; Herek, 1991; Patterson, 1995), and these stereotypes may link to negative attitudes (Bettinsoli et al., 2020). There may still be a societal belief that gay men are seen to be feminine and lesbian women as masculine (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Brambilla et al., 2011a, 2011b; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Mize & Manago, 2018; Reyna et al., 2014). Research states that gay men may be perceived as gentle, passive, effeminate, and well-dressed (Bailey et al., 2016; Glick et al., 2007; Gurwitz & Marcus, 1978; Haddock et al., 1993; Madon, 1997; Taywaditep, 2002), whereas lesbian women may be seen as masculine and have a disinterest in traditional feminine interests and appearance (Clarke & Spence, 2013; Geiger et al., 2006; Huxley et al., 2014; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Wilkinson, 2008). These stereotypes are supported by the Implicit Inversion Theory (IIT; Kite & Deaux, 1987), which states that gay men and lesbian women are viewed as having behaviours and traits like the opposite sex (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Kite & Deaux, 1987).

Two models that can help to understand femininity and masculinity are described by Biernat (1991) as orthogonal and bipolar. The orthogonal model states that masculinity and femininity are separate constructs; an individual can be high or low in both. However, the bipolar model suggests that masculinity and femininity are at opposite ends of a continuum, which states that if an individual is high on masculinity, they would be low on femininity (Biernat, 1991). Individuals employ the orthogonal model for self-descriptions but adopt the bipolar model when evaluating others (Biernat, 1991; Foushee et al., 1979). Blashill & Powlishta (2009) suggest that this may lead individuals to rate men as high in masculinity and women as high in femininity, and due to the gender inverted stereotypes, apply the opposite to gay and lesbian individuals. These beliefs around masculinity and femininity may also influence the pervasive nature of heteronormativity (Kitzinger, 1991). Heteronormativity is a system that positions heterosexuality as the norm and the predominant form of sexuality (Robinson, 2016). However, these beliefs may have shifted; same sex relationships are more widely accepted now than previously (British Social Attitudes, 2019; Hadler, 2012; PEW, 2020; 2023; Watt & Elliot, 2017), which may influence the stereotypes applied to gay and lesbian individuals. Furthermore, research highlights that younger generations are more open-minded and accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals (Hammack et al., 2018; PEW, 2020; 2023).

Considering the shifts in visibility, legal frameworks and acceptance towards gay and lesbian individuals, it is important to establish if these changes have affected the gender inverted stereotypes. This thesis aims to explore the gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women and the perceptions of acceptance levels within the UK. The study will explore perspectives from both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the area. This chapter will now move on to discuss stereotypes more broadly and then discuss the current research on gender inverted stereotypes.

2.3 Stereotyping

Walter Lippmann introduced the term "stereotypes" to the social sciences in his seminal work *Public Opinion* (1922, p. 268), describing them as “pictures in our heads” that simplify how we perceive human groups. He outlined that people rely on these simplistic images when forming and expressing opinions about others. As a result, stereotypes become a reason for social misunderstanding, tension, and conflict, as they distort reality by modifying actual experiences with preconceived biases. Lippmann noted, “For the most part, we do not first see and then define; we define first and then see” (1922, p. 81). More recent research supports these historical findings, suggesting that stereotypes are rigid, oversimplified, and frequently biased perceptions about a particular group of individuals (Zhang et al., 2023). These perceptions are usually overgeneralised assumptions, and once individuals adopt stereotypical thinking, they may find it hard to perceive individuals as unique beings (Blum, 2004). As stereotypes become ingrained within culture, often beginning in childhood, they tend to indicate which social groups are seen as minorities and have the potential to validate hostility towards an entire social group (Dovidio et al., 2010).

Much of the stereotype research within social psychology was conducted within the 1980s and 1990s, defining stereotypes as cognitive schemas that categorise individuals based on mental representations of a group and its members (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Stangor & Lange, 1994). These cognitive schemas encode and retrieve information, leading to the formation of stereotypes as a means of simplifying the social environment (Augustinos & Walker, 1998). It is suggested that perceivers categorise others almost instantly upon meeting them (Operario & Fiske, 2003). To test this, research using computer-aided timing techniques shows that initial categorisation occurs within milliseconds of meeting an individual (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Devine, 1989; Dovidio et al., 1986; Zàrate & Smith, 1990). When categorising, perceivers typically rely on visual cues such as race, age and gender (McCann et al., 1985;

Perdue & Gurtman, 1990; Stangor et al., 1992). Additionally, research states that other factors have become common, such as body size (Crandall, 1994; Ryckman et al., 1989), facial features (Kleck & Strenta, 1980; Zebrowitz, 1997), and social roles (Macrae et al., 1998). This categorisation often happens outside the perceiver's conscious awareness, with its effects on perception going unnoticed (Macrae et al., 1994).

The content of stereotypes may also influence perception, increasing overgeneralisation, inaccuracy, and resistance to new information (Meyers, 2013). For example, Operario and Fiske (2003) state that most casual discussions about stereotypes tend to focus on their content, the perceived "characteristics" of various groups. These may be related to ethnic minorities, women, the elderly, overweight people, gay and lesbian individuals, among others. The early theories of stereotype content, such as those proposed by Allport (1954), suggested that the stereotypes of outgroups reflect hostility (Fiske et al., 2002). This links stereotypes with discrimination and prejudice (Augustinos & Walker, 1998), with Locke et al. (1994) stating that stereotypes are based on the group features that are the most distinctive, providing the greatest differentiation between groups, and that show the least within-group variation. Additionally, racial and gender stereotypes are so deeply ingrained that their activation is automatic (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). However, it must be noted that studies of stereotype content focus on people's perceptions of others, rather than investigating the underlying reasons of stereotyping (Brown & Gaertner, 2008).

A more recent model to understand the content of stereotypes is the Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002), which suggests that within cognition, two dimensions persist: warmth (also known as trustworthiness, friendliness) and competence (also known as capability, assertiveness) (Fiske, 2018). These dimensions are influenced by competition and status; groups not competing with the in-group are seen as warm, whereas high-status groups are seen as competent. Additionally, distinct emotions are attached to levels of warmth and

competence, explaining why groups are admired, disliked and disrespected (Dovidio, 2010). The SCM model may remain applicable across cultures, with Cuddy et al. (2009) and Fiske and Durante (2016) stating that groups are stereotyped based on their structural relationships with other groups within society.

A second key principle of SCM states that stereotypes encourage negative and extreme behaviours (Fiske, 1980). This statement has influenced social cognition research for years and affects how outgroup members are perceived as negative (Operario & Fiske, 2003). Perceivers tend to associate minority groups with extreme behaviours, a phenomenon known as illusory correlation (Hamilton & Sherman, 1989), as both are rare and stand out from the norm (i.e., the majority group and positive events). Operario & Fiske (2003) add that when people encounter both an uncommon group and a rare event, they assume a direct connection between the two, exploiting the distinctiveness of negative and extreme concepts stored in people's minds. Minority groups such as gay and lesbian individuals are often perceived as novel or unique to the majority, making them vulnerable to cognitive processes that link their distinctiveness with undesirable traits and behaviours. Operario and Fiske's (2003) research on stereotypes concludes that stereotypes are fundamental human tendencies rooted in cognition and potentially harmful belief systems, which depend on situational factors.

Overall, stereotypes in psychology are viewed as rigid, oversimplified perceptions of a group, often leading to biased assumptions and generalised views (Blum, 2004; Zhang et al., 2023). Stereotypes often lead to discrimination and prejudice, rooted in distinct group features and are resistant to new information (Augustinos & Walker, 1998). Minoritised groups, such as gay and lesbian individuals, are particularly vulnerable to these associations, as they are often perceived as novel or unique to the majority, associating their distinctiveness with undesirable traits and behaviours (Operario & Fiske, 2003). Whilst there are many forms of

stereotypes, this review will now move on to a focus on gender stereotypes to aid in understanding the gender inverted stereotypes and their link to gay men and lesbian women.

2.3.1 Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are based on an individual's gender (Duehr & Bono, 2006); these are categorical beliefs that attach task performance to men and social relationships to women (Ellemers, 2018). When compared to typical stereotypes, such as age and class, gender stereotypes persist across time, possessing greater stability (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2021; Fiske, 2017). Two foundational constructs were initially introduced by Bakan (1966) to explain human behaviour, contemporary research focuses on agency (also known as masculinity, instrumentality and competence) and communality (also known as femininity, expressiveness and warmth) (e.g., Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske et al., 2007; Spence & Buckner, 2000). These two social perceptions are seen to be central to gender stereotypes (Hentschel et al., 2019). Women are often portrayed as caring, kind, compassionate, and helpful, while men are depicted as agentic, strong, ambitious, and independent (Liben & Bigler, 2002). Research from Byrnes et al. (1999) and Ellemers (2018) suggest there are apparent differences between agency and care, for example, risk taking behaviours in men, and women's perceived caution in risky areas such as substance use, gambling and driving. Due to these stereotypes, men are seen to be assertive, known as agentic and women empathetic, labelled as communal (Broverman et al., 1972; Eagly & Steffen, 1984).

Gender stereotypes are influential as an aspect of identity, due to their memorability and generalisability (Fiske et al., 2002), making them a prominent cue for stereotypical thinking (Blair & Banaji, 1996). Gender stereotypes are influenced by society, education and beliefs about the traits that biologically relate to each gender; these beliefs also manifest over the life course (Ellemers, 2018). The social construct of sex is also influential in gender stereotypes, categorising individuals by their reproductive roles, which are ingrained into

human cognition and societal structures (Martin & Ruble, 2010). From an early age, gender stereotypes and gender appropriate behaviours are learnt from surroundings and media (Fiske et al., 1998). Individuals form stereotypes from first hand experiences, cultural understandings and social exchanges (Eagly et al., 2019). These experiences continue to influence an individual's perceptions into adulthood (Bem, 1974).

In summary, gendered stereotypes oversimplify reality and are reinforced by various cultural and societal factors (Ellemers, 2018; Fiske et al., 2002). Although gendered stereotypes aid in categorisation, they can also lead to biased judgements that hinder assessment (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). Gendered stereotypes suggest that women should be feminine and communal, whereas men should be masculine and agentic. However, research has highlighted that when gendered stereotypes are applied to gay and lesbian individuals, the application becomes inverted (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009), which will be explored in the next section.

2.3.2 The Gender Inverted Stereotype

When stereotyping a gay or lesbian individual, Clarke and Arnold (2017) state that gender components are assumed because of the belief structure related to femininity and masculinity. Existing literature on gay men and lesbian women documents several stereotypes, with the most common being that gay men and lesbian women hold gender inverted traits and roles (Golebiowska, 2001; Herek, 1991; Patterson, 1995; 2000; Peel, 2020). Stereotypes associated with gay men typically include them being gentle, passive, effeminate, and well-dressed (Glick et al., 2007; Gurwitz & Marcus, 1978; Haddock et al., 1993; Madon, 1997; Taywaditep, 2001). In contrast, lesbian women are typically viewed as overly masculine and uninterested in traditional feminine activities or appearances (Geiger et al., 2006; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Patterson, 2000; Wilkinson, 2008).

Original works from Kite and Deaux (1987) discuss the idea of gender inverted stereotypes and how they apply to gay and lesbian individuals. Their study aimed to establish

if societal stereotypes of gay men and lesbian women corresponded with Freud's (1953) inversion model, which suggested that gay men and lesbian women were similar to heterosexual individuals from the opposite sex. Their findings provided further evidence for gender inversion, which they termed Implicit Inversion Theory (IIT; Kite & Deaux, 1987), where gay men and lesbian women are seen as opposite to their heterosexual counterparts. Empirical research supporting this theory indicates gender is an important aspect of gay and lesbian stereotypes, stating that gay men are expected to exhibit high levels of femininity, resembling heterosexual women, while lesbians are expected to display high levels of masculinity, resembling heterosexual men (Jackson & Sullivan, 1990; Kite & Deaux, 1987; Madon, 1997; Taylor, 1983). Furthermore, a person deviating from what society has prescribed to be the normal set of gender roles for his or her sex (e.g., engaging in an occupation more socially acceptable for the other sex) is likely to be perceived as gay or lesbian regardless of their sexual identity.

In 2009, Blashill and Powlisha replicated the work of Kite and Deaux (1987); despite a 20 year gap the original findings were supported, demonstrating that traditional gendered stereotypes were applied to heterosexual individuals (e.g. Heterosexual men as masculine), but gender inversion occurred with gay and lesbian individuals (e.g. Gay men as feminine). These findings support the framework of IIT; however, Blashill and Powlisha suggested that more research was needed due to sampling limitations, as a young, white, heterosexual, US sample was relied upon. In 2017, Clarke and Arnold further explored Blashill and Powlisha's (2009) findings through an occupational psychology lens. Using a US sample of gay, lesbian, and heterosexual adults, they found that, consistent with IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987) and Blashill & Powlisha (2009), gender inversion was applied to gay and lesbian individuals. Using quantitative measures, Clarke and Arnold (2017) aimed to establish whether gay men and lesbian women hold the same gender inverted stereotypes as heterosexual individuals. The

findings suggested that participants in this study held the same gender stereotypes of gays, lesbians, and heterosexual men and women. Although Clarke and Arnold's (2017) findings are similar to those in the area, their results may challenge some aspects of IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987). Their findings suggest that the gendered characteristics of gay men and lesbians may not be perceived as inherently opposite to those of their heterosexual counterparts. Clarke and Arnold's (2017) results show that gay men and lesbian women may be perceived as "androgynous" when compared to heterosexual individuals, possessing both masculine and feminine traits equally. It would appear that gender inverted stereotypes of gay and lesbian individuals are more complex than being viewed as opposite to those of heterosexuals, possibly indicating a shift in stereotypes over time due to societal changes. Additionally, Clarke and Arnold's (2017) study utilises an occupational lens; the question and scale used could have encouraged thoughts outside of these realms, which require further exploration.

A complex aspect of gay and lesbian stereotypes lies in their content, as agency and communion are measurable gender stereotypical traits related to men and women (Hsu et al., 2021). As identified earlier within this review, women are stereotyped as high in communion (femininity) and low in agency (masculinity) and men as low in communion and high in agency (Ellemers, 2018). Abele and Wojciszke (2007) add that agency relates to the goal pursuit of the self, and communion relates to the consideration of others. Linking these ideas with gender inversion may suggest that gay and lesbian individuals might be seen as opposite to their heterosexual counterparts in their stereotype content. Research exploring gay male stereotype content suggests that gay men are perceived to be higher in communion (femininity) than heterosexual men (Barrantes & Eaton, 2018; Niedlich & Steffens, 2015; Pedulla, 2014; Steffens et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2017). In these studies, participants also rated lesbian women as higher in agency and competence than heterosexual women (Kite & Deaux, 1987; Niedlich et al., 2015; Niedlich & Steffens, 2015).

To further explore the content of gender inverted stereotypes, contemporary research from Klysing et al. (2021) investigates the stereotype content that intersects with gender and sexual orientation. The sample included women, men and non-binary individuals who identified as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, or other. Their findings revealed differences in stereotype content between general gender categories and their corresponding gender incongruent categories for gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals, incorporating both communion and agency. Gay and lesbian groups were rated as more like their gender incongruent counterparts than their same gender heterosexual counterparts, suggesting stereotype content is also seen as gender inverted. However, the research states that stereotype content for sexual minority groups demonstrated only a partial gender inversion in stereotype content, supporting Clarke and Arnold's (2017) assertions that gay and lesbian stereotypes may now be perceived as androgynous. This shift to an "androgynous" gender inverted stereotype may relate to current societal changes, as previous work did not identify this. Further investigation into the application of these stereotypes in the current climate may be required.

Further research into warmth and competency from Mize and Manago (2018) examined how stereotypes related to gender, sexuality and group societal status. This study used a survey-experimental design with a US sample of undergraduate students to assess stereotype content. Gay men were seen as more feminine and less masculine than heterosexual men, and lesbian women less feminine and more masculine than heterosexual women, supporting the gender inversion theory. The researchers state that stereotypes are broadly shared across cultures and often align with traditional gendered norms, and in doing so, further disadvantage sexual minorities. Contemporary research from Hudson and Ghani (2023) investigated stereotype content, social status and gender inversion, examining the perception of competencies that relate to gay and lesbian individuals. This research contained two studies, which investigated

the extent to which stereotypes are prescribed and proscribed for individuals from different sexual orientations (study 1) and race (study 2). In line with the topic of this thesis, Hudson and Ghani's (2023) first study suggests that gender inverted stereotypes may be selectively applied to gay men and lesbian women, and this may be influenced by status expectations. Across both studies, they consistently found that while both gender inversion and status role explanations have some merit, status roles exert a stronger influence on the competence stereotypes of gay men and lesbian women. This indicates that perceptions of competence may be shaped by the lower social status often attributed to these groups, rather than by gender inversion alone. Additionally, the findings were linked to implicit cognition, identifying that people unconsciously associate gay men and lesbian women with incompetence. However, the sample lacked diversity, with most participants identifying as white and heterosexual, further demonstrating common limitations across stereotype research. These contemporary findings add further aspects to the gender inverted stereotypes, suggesting they may include additional content beyond what has been previously identified.

To summarise, the existing quantitative literature on gender inverted stereotypes suggests that gay men may be seen as feminine and lesbian women as masculine (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Brambilla et al., 2011a, 2011b; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Mize & Manago, 2018; Reyna et al., 2014). Due to the ingrained beliefs that relate to masculinity and femininity, gender inverted stereotypes remain consistent (Clarke & Arnold, 2017). However, with research highlighting a more "androgynous" application (Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Klysing et al., 2021), this may have affected the application of the gender inverted stereotype. Further complex elements, such as social status, may also impact the gender inverted stereotypes (Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Mize & Manago, 2018). To explore the connection between gender, sexual orientation and gender inverted stereotypes, further research is needed (Clarke & Arnold, 2020). Further to this, it is evident there is a lack of

qualitative research on the topic; exploring experiences may help to further understand gender inverted stereotypes and their application. The next section will expand on the application of the gender inverted stereotypes.

2.3.3 The Application of the Gender Inverted Stereotype

An individual's sexual orientation holds significant importance and, when perceived by others, can impact how they are treated (Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2020). While knowing a person's sexual orientation can aid in mate selection and encourage group cohesion, it also influences various life outcomes, such as hiring decisions (Rule et al., 2016). The lack of variability in the gender inverted stereotypes has contributed to people perceiving sexuality through implicit signals (Rule, 2017). These indirect cues include signals such as physical appearance, body language, emotions and vocal characteristics (Rieger et al., 2010; Rule, 2017; Shelp, 2002). Rule (2017) further states that accurate identification of gay men and lesbian women occurs at above-chance levels and is based on cultural stereotypes associated with the constructs of heteronormative masculinity and femininity.

When perceiving an individual's sexual orientation, Rule and Alaei (2016) suggest that four basic channels of information are relied upon: adornment, actions, acoustics, and appearance. People's adornments can indirectly signal sexual orientation, feeding into the idea of gender inversion; for example, lesbian women may masculinise their appearance by having a short hairstyle (Krakauer & Rose, 2002) whereas gay men may wish to feminise their appearance by having a thinner body, compared to what is typically associated with heterosexual men (Conron et al., 2010). The gender inversion shown by gay men and lesbian women occurs consistently across the cues used to identify sexual orientation and represents one of the earliest and most pervasive stereotypes, gender inversion (e.g., Ulrichs, 1870/1997).

Consistent with the four basic channels introduced above, individuals judge men and women with more gender atypical features or behaviour as gay and lesbian from facial portraits

(Dunkle & Francis, 1990), brief videos (Rieger et al., 2010), voice recordings (Smyth et al., 2003), and body movement (Johnson et al., 2007). Rule (2017) reviewed the literature surrounding perceptions of sexual orientation from minimal cues and concluded that the mind categorises individuals into salient groups, and sexual orientation is a group that we use to simplify the world. Minimal cues in each of the four basic channels seem to support accurate judgments of sexual orientation. Rule (2017) further suggests that, although individuals do not typically consider LGBTQ+ individuals a ‘visible minority’, scientific evidence suggests that people are sensitive to differences in sexual orientation and can reliably perceive it based on minimal nonverbal cues.

Research in this area often describes the application of stereotyping as gaydar. The literature commonly defines gaydar as the ability to categorise or identify sexual orientation, identifying verbal and non-verbal behavioural cues that are related to gay men and lesbian women (Rule, 2017). In some cases, it is specifically described as the capacity to differentiate between gay or lesbian and heterosexual individuals (Rieger et al., 2010; Valentova et al., 2011) or an ability attributed to LGBTQ+ individuals to recognise others who are LGBTQ+ (Woolery, 2007). Experimental testing of gaydar has used various types of stimuli, but primarily falls into two main categories, visual and auditory (Miller, 2018). Stern et al. (2013) suggest that visual gaydar indicates that gender inversion, leads to accurate judgments of sexual orientation, when these gendered cues are absent or unreliable, observers' accuracy reduces. Studies support a link between gender inversion and the sexuality of gay and lesbian individuals (Bailey & Zucker, 1995; Lippa, 1995a; 1995b; 2000; 2005; 2008; Rieger et al., 2008), as observers are more likely to perceive an individual as gay or lesbian when they perceive gender nonconformity, regardless of the individual's actual sexual orientation (Freeman et al., 2010). The speed at which individuals judge strangers' sexual orientation suggests that people evaluate automatically, without awareness, intention, or control (Rule &

Alaei, 2016). However, there may also be problematic consequences of the application of these stereotypes, which may make an individual vulnerable to discrimination and prejudice (Lick et al., 2015). Furthermore, attempting to hide one's sexual orientation can impede general daily functioning (Everly et al., 2012) and concealment attempts are usually ineffective (Sylva et al., 2010). This highlights a challenging element of gaydar, and the gender inverted stereotype, as they can inadvertently expose individuals as gay or lesbian, potentially subjecting them to negative social consequences (Rule & Alaei, 2016).

In summary, sexual orientation cues often emerge from indirect signals like physical appearance, body language, emotions, and vocal traits (Rieger et al., 2010; Rule, 2017; Shelp, 2002). The consistent nature of gender inverted stereotypes has led to the concept of gaydar; the ability to identify sexual orientation based on implicit signals (Rule, 2017). However, relying on stereotypes to identify sexual orientation can have negative effects, including vulnerability to discrimination and challenges in daily functioning (Lick et al., 2015; Everly et al., 2012). The gender inverted stereotypes may also be held by gay and lesbian individuals, resembling how heterosexuals may apply them (Clarke & Arnold, 2017). The following section will examine how gay and lesbian individuals may internalise and apply these stereotypes to themselves.

2.3.4 Gay and Lesbian Self-stereotyping

Stereotypes not only characterise others but also influence individuals' self-perceptions (Bem, 1974). Self-stereotypes may differ from most cognitive schemas due to their consequences; they generate behavioural expectancies which often function as self-fulfilling prophecies (Jussim, 1986). The process of self-stereotyping can shape an individual's identity toward stereotype consistency, leading to the internalisation of stereotypical traits as components of their gender identity, an essential part of the self-concept (Wood & Eagly, 2015). Additionally, self-stereotyping may occur as humans are inherently social beings, driven

by the need to belong to groups to satisfy fundamental needs for safety, survival, and reproduction (Allen et al., 2022). The degree to which an individual emotionally invests in a group they belong to is termed social identification, which influences social perceptions, emotions, and behaviours (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Individuals who strongly identify with their ingroup typically define themselves in terms of their group membership, feel a deep connection to the group, demonstrate commitment to it, and act in its interests (Begeny et al., 2022). People's social identification holds psychological significance and carries social implications; it stands as a crucial concept in studies of intragroup and intergroup dynamics (van Veelen et al., 2016). Due to this, individuals may try to align with the group. Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT: Turner & Reynolds, 2011) explains how individuals perceive themselves as individuals or group members, which influences behaviour and social interactions. In broader terms, SCT suggests that an individual's self (comprising unique characteristics) and social self (representing prototypical group attributes) exist at opposite ends of the same spectrum. When the social self becomes prominent, the personal self will shift into depersonalisation, leading ingroup members to define themselves in line with prototypical group traits (Turner & Reynolds, 2011).

Research has shown that gay and lesbian individuals may hold the same gender inverted stereotypes as heterosexual individuals (Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Simon et al., 1991). Before developing their identity, gay and lesbian individuals may be exposed to sociocultural stereotypes and assume they must follow these ideals (Troiden, 1993). This similarity in perceptions and understandings can be attributed to the pervasive influence of heteronormativity. As stated by Kitzinger (1991), heteronormative beliefs often dominate societal perceptions, leading individuals to internalise these stereotypes regardless of their sexual orientation. Consequently, while gay and lesbian individuals may recognise that they

face distinct challenges related to their sexual identity, they may still adopt gender inverted stereotypes in their self-perceptions and interactions.

When identifying with a group, gay men and lesbian women may display stereotypical behaviours to communicate in a heteronormative environment (Brown, 2020). The gender inverted stereotype may allow gay and lesbian individuals to join a group identity, allowing minorities to develop distinct social identities, promoting intragroup support (Simon et al., 1991). Limited research in this area suggests that lesbians and gay men may choose to conform to the gender inverted appearance norms to embody and express their sexual identity, and having these identities can be an intrinsic part of forming communities which are safe spaces (Hutson, 2010). Furthermore, these communities may have appearance norms situated within them to signal belonging and membership (Rothblum, 1994). These specific gay and lesbian looks may remain within the community and be useful for gay men and lesbian women to identify with each other (Hayfield, 2013), with the most documented and recognised looks being butch or masculine lesbians and effeminate gay men (Clarke & Turner, 2007).

The research related to conforming or resisting gender inverted stereotypes is mixed. Research from Clarke and Turner (2007) suggests that their participants chose to conform to the stereotypes when they first explored their sexuality, to affirm and to display to others that they were comfortable with their identity. Their research further states that when participants feel secure in their sexual identity, conforming to the stereotypes may be reduced. This process may align with the Cass Identity Model (1979) which outlines the development of a gay or lesbian identity as a process involving six stages: (i) identity confusion, where sexual orientation is questioned; (ii) identity comparison, where the possibility of being gay is considered but heterosexuality is still persistent due to fear of alienation; (iii) identity tolerance, involving seeking out the gay and lesbian community to reduce alienation; (iv) identity acceptance, where the individual publicly embraces their identity; (v) identity pride, marked

by activism and rejection of heterosexual norms; and (vi) identity synthesis, where a fully integrated identity emerges. While the model presents these stages as sequential, identity formation is not always linear and may be influenced by sociocultural factors (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996; Riggle et al., 2017). However, there is research that refutes this model; for example, Kitzinger (1991) suggests that gay and lesbian individuals are aware of these stereotypes and may consciously reject or challenge them.

Overall, stereotypes characterise others and influence self-perception (Bem, 1974). Gay and lesbian individuals may internalise the gender inverted stereotypes as heterosexual individuals do (Clarke & Arnold, 2017). Additionally, to aid in both group and individual identity formation, gay and lesbian individuals may adopt sociocultural stereotypes (Troiden, 1993; Simon et al, 1991). Conforming to gender inverted stereotypes may aid in navigating heteronormative environments (Brown, 2020), forming safe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals (Clarke & Turner, 2007; Hayfield, 2013). However, it is important to note that some gay and lesbian individuals may actively avoid the gender inverted stereotypes applied to them (Kitzinger, 1991). The process of identifying one's sexual orientation is dynamic and may be influenced by many contexts, such as historical and cultural (Hammack, 2005). Therefore, when examining gender inverted stereotypes, it is important to consider contextual factors, for example, the media (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011). The next section will explore the media's impact on the internalisation of these stereotypes.

2.4 Media's Influence on Stereotyping Gay Men and Lesbian Women

The media could play a significant role in forming stereotypes related to gay men and lesbian women, for example, through films and television (Sink, 2018). Media can also influence stereotypical beliefs, leading people to unconsciously detect links between stereotypes and gay characters (Hogg & Vaughan, 2018). According to Rothenberg (2007),

the media has the power to stereotype gay men and lesbian women alongside the elderly, ethnic groups, and the institutionalised, and this contributes to the self-image of many viewers. While a few gay characters appeared on television in the 1970s and 1980s, the portrayals were seen as negative. Activists held the mass media and popular culture responsible for promoting negative stereotypes about gay and lesbian individuals and erasing the viewpoints of gay men and lesbians, which then led to an increase in visibility (Steiner et al., 1993). The presence of LGBTQ+ characters on television and in movies increased during the 1990s (Walters, 2001). Despite the increase in representation, the characters portrayed were usually white, urban, wealthy gay men and were presented in a way that was acceptable to heterosexual audiences, by reinforcing traditional values like family (Avila-Saavedra, 2009). It has been noted by Shugart (2003) that LGBTQ+ characters are also used as support for heterosexual relationships, for example, the “gay best friend”. Since the mid-2000s, the diversity and breadth of gay characters have increased (Marwick et al., 2014). This increase has improved the visual representation of gay individuals through shows such as *Modern Family*, *The L Word*, *It’s a Sin* and *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. This increase in LGBTQ+ representation in television may help young individuals identify and negotiate sexual and gender identity but also helps heterosexual audiences to “picture” LGBTQ+ people (Dhoest, 2016). These developments from the media may help attitudes and can be explained by the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954), with more shows promoting the acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, people can view relevant depictions of LGBTQ+ communities (Rowe, 2010). However, there are concerns that mainstreaming drag queens in shows such as *RuPaul’s Drag Race* may promote the stereotypical image of a feminine gay man (Bishop et al., 2014).

Van Meer and Pollman (2022) found that across multiple Dutch TV programmes, gay men are often depicted with feminine characteristics, while lesbian women are frequently shown as exhibiting masculine traits. Interestingly, they further suggest that people who watch

more television in general have a more stereotypical view of gay men. These media portrayals may contribute to reinforcing the gender inverted stereotypes that suggest that lesbians are masculine and gay men are feminine. For example, findings from Seif (2015) state that the most notable characteristics observed in the portrayal of LGBTQ+ characters on television relate to gendered stereotypes. Primarily, many characters conform to gender inverted stereotypes, with gay male characters like Cameron from "Modern Family" and David from "The New Normal" often depicted as effeminate. These characters exhibit traits described by Tropiano (2002) as being fashion-conscious, having a high-pitched voice, and engaging in traditionally feminine hobbies. Most gay male characters in television are heavily based on stereotypical beliefs (Sink & Mastro, 2017). It is suggested by Rothman (2013) that there are two main types of gay men in television: the non-threatening representation of a heteronormative, non-sexual, rich white man with a successful career and the flamboyant, stereotypical, and overdramatic gay man (e.g., Will and Jack from *Will & Grace*). However, when gay male characters are presented as masculine, such as Jack and Ennis from *Brokeback Mountain*, this portrayal deconstructs traditional manhood, leading to derogatory remarks (Sharf, 2019), raising the question of whether counter stereotypical images in media intensify reactions toward gay men (Galdi et al., 2023).

Research states that lesbians are often represented in two ways within television and film, one being a heterosexualised way, where they are attractive, feminine and are merely there to please heterosexual male viewers (Diamond, 2005). For example, Robin from *Desperate Housewives* represents the femme lesbian who is overtly sexualized (Loughnan & Pacilli, 2014). Alternatively, they follow the gender inverted stereotypes; shows such as *Orange Is the New Black* have characters that fit into the gender inverted stereotypes, portraying masculinity. For example, Big Boo is a classic portrayal of the butch lesbian (Chavez, 2015). Jackson and Gilbertson (2009) suggest that lesbian characters reinforce the perceived norm of

an “appropriate” and acceptable lesbian that fits set stereotypes. Media may also soften certain stereotypes to increase acceptance of characters, for example, Farr and Degroult (2008) suggest that some television programmes may show masculine appearing lesbians, but their looks remain soft and feminine. Demonstrating masculine characteristics may allow the character to be recognised as lesbian, but feminine looks would make them more acceptable to heterosexual audiences. These limited exposures to alternative gay characters portrayed in media can create a cognitive link, leading to stereotype formation (Sink, 2018). Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1969) could explain how media can create gender inverted stereotypes. Though this theory is dated, it states that repeated exposure to a system of messages from media can influence attitudes and views, especially on subjects where experience is lacking (Morgan, 2009).

The frequency of gay and lesbian characters is seen to be increasing; Bond et al. (2019) suggest that this will normalise the use of gay characters in television. However, they found significant differences between how characters talk about sexuality. Heterosexual characters were most likely to engage in dialogue that insulted, joked, or mocked lesbian or gay sexualities. Research from Bond and Compton (2015) and Gonta et al. (2017) suggests that greater exposure to positive media that represent gay males, and lesbian women will lead to more positive attitudes and less stereotypical application. The recent increase in gay men and lesbian women in media (Portwood, 2016) has been shown to increase positive attitudes among younger generations (Gonta et al., 2017). However, due to the lack of representations, this may contribute to the lack of knowledge of the variability of gay and lesbian gender roles (Salvati et al., 2019). For gay and lesbian individuals, accurate representation in the media matters because they are not automatically visible in society (Gross, 2001), and media images are crucial in the development of self-images, identities, and self-esteem (Kivel & Kleiber, 2000; McKee, 2000). For some LGBTQ+ people, TV plays an important role in building tolerance in society and in validating their place within it. In a thematic review performed by Ofcom

(2018) investigating representation and portrayal on BBC television, some LGBTQ+ participants felt that they are often portrayed using extreme depictions, e.g., gay men as flamboyant and lesbian women as butch and masculine. They further found that some gay and lesbian individuals felt programmes often treated people's sexuality as their central, defining feature, whereas the participants wanted sexuality to be presented as an incidental characteristic instead, to show that there is more to lesbian and gay people. The media has a considerable influence on attitudes, but it is also crucial for improving attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals (Gonta et al., 2017).

This section highlights the influence the media has on the perceptions and stereotypes that are related to gay men and lesbian women (Van Meer & Pollmann, 2022). Regardless of societal advancements, the portrayal of LGBTQ+ individuals in media may perpetuate stereotypes (Seif, 2015). This limited representation may contribute to stereotype formation and limit acceptance (Salvati et al., 2019). The next section within this literature review will focus on the UK acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals.

2.5 Acceptance and Tolerance Towards Gay Men and Lesbian Women

Gay men and lesbian women have a long history of being discriminated against (Redman, 2018), which was impacted by criticism towards the scientific study of same sex intimacy in the 19th century (Foucault, 1978). By the mid-20th century, an idealised view of intimacy emerged, characterised by a married, monogamous union between individuals of different sexes, who procreate and raise their children within a nuclear family structure (Coontz, 2016). This shift may have been reinforced by the rise of Christian beliefs, which condemned gay and lesbian sexuality, enabling individuals and groups to use religious beliefs as a justification for discriminating against gay men and lesbian women (Herek, 1991). However, the UK and Western societies have shown progression in attitudes towards gay and

lesbian individuals since the late 1960s, although this was set back by the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s (Altman, 1986; Herek & Glunt, 1988). The visibility of gay pride in recent years and the legalisation of gay marriage have helped to build resilience within the LGBTQ+ community in the face of prejudice (Kwon, 2013). However, Herek and McLemore (2013) state that although these advances may have taken place, LGBTQ+ individuals may still be widely stigmatised. The following subsection will expand on the historical impacts that may affect the acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals.

2.5.1 Scientific and Legal Impacts on Acceptance and Tolerance

Until a few decades ago, identifying as gay or lesbian was treated as a mental illness (Burton-Hughes, 2020). In the initial edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) released in 1952, gay and lesbian identity was categorised as "sociopathic personality disturbance." It wasn't until the latest version of the DSM, the fifth edition, that gay and lesbian sexual identities were no longer pathologised (McHenry, 2022). The origins of labelling gay and lesbian sexuality as psychopathological were from the work of German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing. In his work "Psychopathia Sexualis" (1886/2006), von Krafft-Ebing characterised all non-procreative sexual behaviour as a form of psychopathology (Drescher, 2015). Despite Sigmund Freud's claim that gay and lesbian sexuality was simply an "arrested" form of psychosexual development not responsive to "cure", the idea persisted within psychology and psychiatry (Hectors, 2023). The following generation of psychoanalysts regarded gay and lesbian sexuality as a "phobic" aversion to the opposite sex that could be rectified through psychoanalytic intervention (Drescher, 2015).

The influence of psychoanalytic theory and societal beliefs aided in the classification of gay and lesbian sexuality in the DSM (American Psychiatric Association, 1952). Regarding this inclusion, Fischer (2012, p. 1027) suggested that "pathologizing homosexuality was not merely intended to uphold societal norms but was rooted in a genuine belief among

psychiatrists of that era that gay and lesbian sexuality was indicative of psychological illness". Between the publication of the DSM-I (American Psychiatric Association, 1952) and the DSM-II (American Psychiatric Association, 1968), there was a shift in the classification of gay and lesbian sexual identity. It moved from being categorised under "sociopathic personality disturbance" to being listed under "personality disorders" and "sexual deviation". The persistence of the diagnosis in the DSM faced challenges from gay activists in the early 1970s, who engaged in protests at each annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) until 1973, which led to the removal of "homosexuality" as a mental disorder (Drescher, 2015; Kirk & Kutchins, 1992). However, gay and lesbian individuals continued to be pathologised within the DSM (Drescher, 2015). As a compromise between gay activists and those advocating for the retention of the diagnosis, the APA introduced a new disorder termed "sexual orientation disturbance" (SOD) in a reprint of the DSM-II (American Psychiatric Association, 1973, p. 44). SOD was defined as "individuals whose sexual interests are primarily directed towards people of the same sex and who experience distress, conflict, or a desire to change their sexual orientation". In 1980, with the release of the DSM-III (American Psychiatric Association, 1980), SOD was replaced by "ego-dystonic homosexuality" (EDH) and reclassified under the new category of "psychosexual disorders". EDH had criteria like SOD but explicitly stated that individuals with this diagnosis wished to change their sexual orientation from heterosexual (Hectors, 2023). Subsequently, the DSM-III-R in 1987 did not explicitly mention gay and lesbian sexuality, replacing EDH with "sexual disorder not otherwise specified", defined as "marked distress regarding one's sexual orientation" (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 296). This diagnosis was eventually removed from the DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) without replacement.

Alongside pathologising gay and lesbian sexuality, historically, gay and lesbian identities were seen as punishable by law. One of the first anti-same-sex laws created during

the reign of Henry VIII in the 1500s was known as the “Buggery Act”. This act outlawed same-sex relations in Britain, making it punishable by death. After 200 years, the death penalty was abolished, though this was only a minor improvement; it was replaced by a minimum of 10 years of imprisonment. The last legal executions were in 1835 but identifying as gay or lesbian was not decriminalised until 1967 (Human Dignity Trust, 2024). Significant social changes have taken place in the UK, represented by events such as the establishment of the Homosexual Law Reform Society in 1958. This society campaigned for the legalisation of gay and lesbian sexual identities, which had been criminalised by the Wolfenden committee in 1957 (Davidson, 2004). However, by the end of 1957, there were over a thousand men in prison in the UK convicted of same-sex acts, with more men avoiding prison by agreeing to receive other punishments (Hubbard & Griffiths, 2019). To challenge the negative social stereotypes of lesbian women, the Minorities Research Group was created in 1963. It put lesbian women in touch with one another through its magazine, *Arena Three*, to affirm community (Hopkins, 1969).

In 1964, the Campaign for Homosexuality Equality began (Kollman & Waites, 2011), which aided in the decriminalisation of same-sex sexual activity (Hubbard & Griffiths, 2019). Although this was an important step, the law was limited and did not prevent the police harassment of gay men or reduce the pathologising theories in psychology (Jivani, 1997). It is argued by Dickinson (2015) that although the law was passed to help LGBTQ+ individuals, it did not seem to improve attitudes towards them, and in the 1970s, many still believed that gay men should not work in teaching or medicine and were dangerous to young people. These beliefs were then further enforced by the HIV and AIDS crisis of the 1980s (Hubbard & Griffiths, 2019). There was a popular association between HIV/AIDS and gay men (Garfield, 1994), and early literature from HIV and AIDS trusts, such as the Terry Higgins Trust, advised abstinence and engaging in sexual contact with only other “healthy” men, and avoiding sex

with men who were sexually active in the United States (Cook, 2007). This was further supported by popular media enforcing that the HIV/AIDS crisis was both an individual and community concern (Hubbard & Griffiths, 2019).

Research from the 1980s by Gayle Rubin (1984) suggested a “charmed circle” of privileged intimacy styles that characterise a hierarchy of sex types, where some are treated as ‘good, normal, natural and blessed’ and others as ‘bad, abnormal, unnatural and damned’. The categories of sexual behaviour considered socially acceptable fall within the “charmed circle” and include heterosexual, married, monogamous, procreative, non-commercial, in pairs, in a relationship, same generation, in private, without pornography, solely involving bodies and vanilla. Conversely, those outside this circle, deemed abnormal, include gay and lesbian sexual identities, unmarried, promiscuous, non-procreative, commercial, solitary or in groups, casual, cross-generational, public, involving pornography, with manufactured objects, and sadomasochistic (Rubin, 1984). Additionally, these beliefs may have encouraged the enforcement of further laws, such as Section 28.

Throughout the 1980s, the LGBTQ+ community were politically and socially stigmatised, creating a hostile political context which allowed the passing of Section 28 (Lorenzo, 2019). Section 28 came into British law in May 1988 (Moran, 2001) and stated that local authorities and schools could not promote gay and lesbian sexuality (Day, 2019). This act denied gay and lesbian pupils the chance of seeing people like them in books, plays, leaflets or films within school. Teachers were not allowed to teach about same-sex relationships, and anyone who broke the law could face disciplinary action (Stonewall, 2019). This led to high levels of homophobia and hostile environments for gay and lesbian students in the British education system (Plummer, 1999). This law encouraged sexual minorities to be victimised and socially excluded through homophobic language and a heterosexist curriculum (Rivers, 2011). Furthermore, homophobia within school increased rates of absenteeism, social isolation

and dropout in school (Rivers, 2011; Warwick et al., 2001). In response and to fight back against unfair laws, Stonewall UK was formed in 1989 (Barker et al., 2011); however, Section 28 was not repealed until 2000 in Scotland and 2003 in the rest of the UK (Pyper & Tyler-Todd, 2023).

By the 1990s, many psychological disciplines had shifted their view on gay and lesbian sexual identities from that of a mental illness to recognising the impact of prejudice and oppression (Hubbard & Griffiths, 2019). The 2000s displayed further change with the Civil Partnership Act (2004) being a legally recognised relationship for same-sex couples, which led to a change in law allowing same-sex partners to register their civil partnership in 2011 (GOV, 2013), and same-sex marriage then became legal in the UK in 2014 (Eekelaar, 2014). The 2000s also saw the introduction of the Equality Act (2010), a UK anti-discrimination law that protects individuals from unfair treatment. The act prohibits discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in areas like employment, education, housing, and services while requiring public bodies to promote equality in their policies. Additionally, during the 2010s, the United Kingdom lifted the ban on LGBTQ+ individuals in military service in 2011 (Helfer & Voeten, 2014). Most recently in 2020, the government announced further relaxation of blood donation rules for gay and bisexual men, shifting the focus to individual behaviours rather than imposing a blanket ban on men who have had sex with men in the past three months. In 2021, the UK census included questions on gender identity and sexual orientation for the first time, enabling the collection of data on the LGBT population nationwide (Stonewall, 2022). The 21st century reintroduces the concept of sexual fluidity and flexibility (homo-flexible, hetero-flexible) (Hammack et al, 2018), which demonstrates a contemporary understanding where sexual attraction may exist along a spectrum, which may potentially change over time (Moleiro & Pinto, 2015).

As demonstrated, there have been many changes in legal, societal and scientific views on gay and lesbian sexuality. Moving from severe condemnation to laws which prohibit discrimination, the UK and Western societies have shown progression in attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals since the late 1960s; however, more work is still needed (Altman, 1986; Herek & Glunt, 1988). The next section will expand on this understanding of progression by providing an overview of survey-based research to further examine the acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals.

2.5.2 Worldwide Surveys Demonstrating Acceptance

Surveys into acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals date back to the 1980s, for example, Inglehart's 1981 survey found that 44% of the population of France, Great Britain, [former] West Germany, the Netherlands and Italy said that "homosexuality is never justifiable" (Inglehart et al., 2017). Since the first edition of this survey, known as the European Values Study (EVS), participants have responded to the question, "Do you think that homosexuality can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between?" This question is often interpreted as a measure of general acceptance of gay and lesbian sexuality. Kuyper et al. (2013) add that substantial changes have occurred in public attitudes towards gay and lesbian sexuality in many European countries over the past 30 years, particularly between 1990 and 1999. On average, the level of acceptance increases by 11 percentage points every nine years. While the nearly 30-year timespan of the EVS data is a major advantage, a drawback is that the EVS only collects data once every nine years. Therefore, EVS data may not allow for a detailed examination of recent changes in attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals.

A survey that offers this possibility is the European Social Survey (ESS), which began in 2001 and collects data every two years. The collected data is from 19 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland, UK). The

samples are representative of the population aged fifteen and over, regardless of their nationality, citizenship, or language (Tausch, 2024). Since the ESS also includes an item measuring attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals ("gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own lives as they wish"), it enables a closer examination of any changes. Kuypers et al. (2013) suggest that from the 1980s until 2013, all participating European countries became more tolerant. Key findings from the British Social Attitudes (2019) survey suggest that two-thirds of the sample now say that sex between two adults of the same sex is "not wrong at all", which is an increase of 50% since the question was first asked in 1983. The findings from the survey suggest the change in attitudes is partly due to younger generations who have more liberal views, replacing older generations. However, it is important to note that the data implies the process of liberalisation is slowing down, despite overall progress in LGBTQ+ acceptance; a significant minority still hold differing, less accepting views on these issues. This indicates that while societal attitudes in the UK have generally become more inclusive, resistance and opposition persist among certain groups, potentially slowing the momentum of further liberalisation. More recently, the World Values Survey (2022) suggests that gay and lesbian sexuality is "justified" by 66% of people, whereas originally in 1981 this figure was only 12%, demonstrating an increase in acceptance. It is important to note that much of this change has occurred over a short timeframe, as recently as 2009, only 33% thought gay and lesbian sexuality was justifiable.

The Pew Research Centre (2020) investigated whether people around the world think that gay and lesbian sexuality should be accepted by society or not. The report utilised data from surveys conducted across 34 countries from May to October 2019 and totalled 38,426 respondents. The survey suggests that over the past two decades, the percentage of people who say gay and lesbian sexuality should be accepted by society has risen from 74% in 2002 to 86% in 2019. In 2023, PEW expanded its research to gather information regarding attitudes towards

same-sex marriage. The UK survey suggested that 22% oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally, whereas 72% favour it. To further support the development of acceptance in the UK, Stonewall (2022) used data taken from three surveys using Ipsos' online Omnibus. This survey, known as "Rainbow Britain", suggests that generation by generation, more individuals feel able to use the terms lesbian and gay to identify their sexuality, suggesting a possible improvement in acceptance levels. Beyond those labels, more young people acknowledge having same-sex attractions, including two in five people from Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012). The data further shows that younger generations are less likely to identify as straight, suggesting younger people are more likely to feel comfortable coming out as LGBTQ+. Stonewall (2022) indicates this is a rainbow generation, as 91% of Baby Boomers (born between 1948 and 1967) identify as straight. This is further supported by the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI, 2023), which shows that 28% of Gen Z adults (ages 18-25) identify as LGBTQ+. In comparison, PRRI found that 16% of millennials, 7% of Generation X, 4% of baby boomers and 4% of the Silent Generation identify as LGBTQ+.

The presented surveys show evidence that attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals have changed over time, and more individuals feel able to identify as LGBTQ+. With more people identifying as LGBTQ+, these connections may be aiding in the increase of LGBTQ+ acceptance. Stonewall (2022) suggests that two in five people (39%) have a close friend or family member who is lesbian or gay. More than half (52%) have met a lesbian or gay person, while nearly a third (29%) have lesbian or gay acquaintances, and 35% can name lesbian or gay celebrities. Given the increasing visibility of gay and lesbian individuals in public life, these numbers are not surprising. Generation X stands out as the most likely to have friends or family members who are lesbian or gay (44%) and to have lesbian or gay acquaintances (36%). This could be attributed to their growing up during the LGBTQ+ liberation movement and having had more time to meet a diverse range of people. These findings may be explained by

the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954), which proposes that, under certain conditions, interpersonal contact can lead to positive attitudes, reduced stereotypes, and greater acceptance between individuals from diverse groups.

Although many of these surveys highlight a rise in acceptance levels, the most recent hate crime report from Galop (2021) states that two-thirds (64%) of UK respondents had experienced anti-LGBT+ violence or abuse. Of those who had experienced anti-LGBT+ violence and abuse, 9 in 10 had experienced verbal abuse (92%), 3 in 10 had been subject to physical violence (29%), and 2 in 10 had experienced sexual violence (17%) (Hubbard, 2017). According to the Office of National Statistics (2023) data, in the last five years, hate crimes based on sexual orientation have increased by 112%. Additionally, a recent survey from Statista (2024) states that there were 22,839 sexual orientation hate crimes reported by the police in England and Wales in the 2023/24 reporting year, compared with 24,777 in the previous year, with offences for this type of hate crime peaking in 2021/22, at 26,152. Although these figures are decreasing, the number remains high, which is problematic for gay and lesbian individuals. This suggests that although surveys state that acceptance is increasing, this may not be apparent in all contexts, and discrimination may remain.

Another impact on acceptance levels may align with education. Various researchers, such as Andersen and Fetner (2008), Keleher and Smith (2012) and van den Akker et al. (2013) have suggested that people with fewer educational qualifications may think more negatively about gay men and lesbian women. In 22 of the surveyed places by the PEW research centre (2023), people with more education were more likely than those with less education to support allowing gays and lesbians to marry. Additionally, La Roi and Mandemakers (2018) state that more educated people tend to be more accepting than less educated people, suggesting that there may be an effect of education on acceptance. Individuals who attend higher education

settings may have access to interactions with diverse peers, the presence of free spaces and peer socialisation, which may create change in attitudes (Campbell & Horowitz, 2016).

Alongside higher education, attitudes towards sexual minorities have improved significantly within school-based education settings (Clements & Field, 2014). The teachings of LGBTQ+ inclusive lessons may contribute to improved acceptance and tolerance. To demonstrate the increase, research conducted by Trenchard and Warren (1984) found that only 42% (174 out of 416) of lesbian and gay students recalled their sexuality being mentioned within the secondary school curriculum. The discussion of gay and lesbian sexuality in schools had increased by 2004, 76% of students found that it had been mentioned (Ellis & High, 2004). Although this demonstrates a shift, a more recent survey from Stonewall of LGBTQ+ young people in the UK found that although 60%–80% had been taught about contraception, safe sex, violence in relationships and consent, only 20% had been taught about these issues from a same-sex partner's perspective (Stonewall, 2017). The National Education Union (2022) have also surveyed LGBTQ+ staff in schools, suggesting that despite 92% of respondents recognising the importance of having LGBTQ+ inclusive content in the curriculum, the majority indicated that such content is either not taught at all, or only addressed opportunistically. Specifically, only 18% reported that LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum content was consistently integrated throughout the school year. Early years and primary school settings were identified as the least likely to incorporate LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum content. Research has documented an emergent shift in the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth (McCormack & Anderson, 2010; White & Hobson, 2017), but more may be needed in terms of relationship and sex education to improve acceptance, moving away from heteronormativity to being inclusive of LGBTQ+ identities (Epps et al., 2023).

In summary, the journey towards LGBTQ+ acceptance and tolerance has been marked by significant historical and social shifts. Western societies, including the UK, have shown

progress in attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals since the late 1960s. Despite setbacks, the visibility of pride movements and legal advancements has encouraged resilience within the LGBTQ+ community (Kwon, 2013). Research suggests that generational differences play a crucial role in shaping attitudes, with younger groups showing greater acceptance and openness towards LGBTQ+ individuals (Stonewall, 2022). While significant strides have been made in LGBTQ+ acceptance, the journey towards full equality and inclusivity is ongoing. The next section will link acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals with stereotyping and prejudice.

2.6 Acceptance, Stereotyping and Prejudice

As suggested, there has possibly been an increase in acceptance and tolerance towards gay men and lesbian women in the UK; however, there is still a concern about stereotyping and how this may lead to prejudice (McLaughlin & Rodriguez, 2017; Salvati et al., 2019). Many gay and lesbian individuals face significant scrutiny, regulation, and violence due to living in societies shaped by normative ideologies regarding sexuality and gender (Clarke et al., 2010). Although shifts have taken place in acceptance, the impact of gender inverted stereotypes on gay and lesbian individuals can be seen in many areas, for example, employment and education. Tilcsik (2011) found that gay men were significantly less likely to be invited for an interview compared to straight men for positions where employers emphasised stereotypically “masculine” traits in the job advert (e.g., seeking an “aggressive leader”), and concluded that at least part of the bias stems from gendered stereotypes, these biases may be present in the current more accepting climate. A recent survey by BECTU (2024) further supports this by suggesting that 43% of LGBT+ workers say that they have personally experienced or witnessed bullying or harassment on grounds of their sexuality or gender identity (Allsopp, 2024).

Although acceptance has increased, research states that stereotypes remain (Salvati et al., 2019). As previously suggested, stereotypes are cognitive frameworks used by individuals

to process information about others based on group membership and presume that all members of a particular group conform to a specific set of assumptions, often indicative of bias and prejudice rather than factual accuracy (Dovidio et al., 2010). Pervasive stereotypes about gay and lesbian people include beliefs that the individual may conform to opposite gender norms (Peel, 2020). It is suggested by Clarke et al. (2010) that these stereotypes, among others, are harmful because they not only misrepresent gay and lesbian lives but also contribute to marginalisation and violence. They further suggest that unfair treatment can stem from prejudiced views, stereotypes, and cultural norms influenced by homophobia, heterosexism, heteronormativity, and cisgenderism.

Prejudice in these contexts, and others, can result in minority stress when issues related to prejudice become overwhelming (Clarke et al., 2010). The Minority Stress model (Meyer, 2003) highlights the key role of stressors that are uniquely experienced by members of minority groups, such as violence, stigma, and discrimination, as significant contributors to poor physical and mental health (Kelleher, 2009; Lick et al., 2013; Meyer, 2015, 1995). Despite a greater acceptance of sexual identities and same-sex marriage in many countries in the last decades, homophobia is widely sustained by religious, political and cultural values and beliefs at individual and social levels (Ventriglio et al., 2021). Homophobia refers to hostility towards individuals who are seen to be gay, lesbian or deviant from gender stereotypes in ways that suggest a gay or lesbian sexual orientation (Kimmel, 2017). Homophobia involves identifying and labelling differences based on LGBTQ+ identities; these are associated with negative thoughts and stereotypes that marginalise LGBTQ+ individuals (Link & Phelan, 2001). LGBTQ+ individuals may be marginalised in ways such as prejudice, loss of status, discrimination, and violence, leading to adverse impacts on the LGBTQ+ individual (Hatzenbuehler, 2009).

The social psychological study of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals has examined not only their impacts but also their root causes. Research consistently shows that attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people are most positive among younger individuals, those who are less religious, and those with less politically conservative views (Eliason, 2000; Ellis et al., 2003; Holland et al., 2013; Riggs & Sion, 2017). Factors that can shape or shift attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals include education about LGBTQ+ lives, personal interactions, exposure to positive media portrayals, and societal norms promoting tolerance (Bartoş et al., 2014). Positive attitudes may emerge from upbringing, legislative changes, life perspective, and social interactions. For some, these attitudes develop naturally, while for others, the same factors may reinforce negative biases and stereotypes (Peel et al., 2021). One major obstacle to advancing positive attitudes is the need to better understand and challenge the subtle forms of discrimination that persist. For example, Peel (2021) suggests that more is required to explore “mundane heterosexism” (subtle forms of discrimination) and recommends that the field “has yet to comprehensively map the shifting terrain of the language of heterosexism” (Peel, 2012, p. 43). Additionally, social desirability bias may affect prejudice, where individuals alter their responses to align with what is socially acceptable, hiding their true beliefs (Meertens & Pettigrew, 1997; Saucier et al., 2005).

In summary, stereotypes play a significant role in why certain groups are stigmatised and less accepted. As suggested by McLaughlin and Rodriguez (2017) and Salvati et al. (2019), although acceptance towards these individuals has increased, acceptance of their behaviour remains low. Due to societal norms, gay and lesbian individuals may still face prejudice, discrimination and scrutiny (Clarke et al., 2010). Many lesbian and gay individuals may experience scrutiny and violence because of heteronormative societies (Peel et al., 2021). The impact of prejudice may also affect the physical and mental well-being of the LGBTQ+

individual, resulting in minority stress (Meyer & Frost, 2013). The next section will provide an overall summary of the presented literature.

2.7 Literature Review Summary

Although research states that acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals may be rising (e.g., British Social Attitudes, 2019; PEW, 2020; 2023), gender inverted stereotypes remain (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Brambilla et al., 2011a, 2011b; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Mize & Manago, 2018; Reyna et al., 2014). These stereotypes are shaped by societal norms and influences that link with gendered expectations and hinder individual assessment (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). It is suggested that sexual orientation perception impedes individual treatment (Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2020), and the cues used to identify someone's sexuality relate to appearance and body language (Rieger et al., 2010; Rule, 2017; Shelp, 2002). The societal norms that link to gender and sexuality continue to connect with prejudice and violence toward gay and lesbian individuals (Allsopp, 2024; Clarke et al., 2010; Peel et al., 2021). Gender inverted stereotypes remain prevalent, and although acceptance has increased, acceptance of gay and lesbian behaviours (gender inverted stereotypes) remains low (McLaughlin & Rodriguez, 2017; Salvati et al., 2019)

2.8 Approach to Research

As suggested within the literature review, the gender inverted stereotype states that gay men may be seen to be feminine and lesbian women masculine (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Brambilla et al., 2011a, 2011b; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Mize & Manago, 2018; Reyna et al., 2014). However, the rise in acceptance levels, stated in recent surveys such as PEW (2020; 2023), could affect the application of the gender inverted stereotype. This thesis aims to explore gender inverted stereotypes by examining the prevalence

and the related experiences. The first empirical study will investigate the prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes through a quantitative methodology, focusing on numerical data, which will enable statistical analysis and the identification of patterns (Yilmaz, 2013). The sample includes both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals to understand the application of the gender inverted stereotypes. Using this quantitative method will allow for generalisability across various populations and examination of significance (Queiros et al., 2017).

The subsequent studies will include the use of qualitative methods. The online interviews, which incorporated photo elicitation, investigated the experiences of gender inverted stereotypes using both a heterosexual and LGBTQ+ sample of participants, highlighting individual experience and contextual influences (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020). Using an approach where participants can openly answer ensures their voices are heard, in a supportive environment, as topics that relate to LGBTQ+ research may be complex and problematic to discuss (Braun et al., 2021). This methodology allows for a nuanced understanding of the psychological processes that relate to social and cultural contexts (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012). Finally, the thesis aims to understand the perception of acceptance levels, as this may affect the application of the gender inverted stereotype. The final qualitative analysis examines perceptions of the acceptance of LGBTQ+ people, from both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals.

There is a lack of mixed-method research within the area of gender inverted stereotypes and perceptions of acceptance, as the literature review demonstrates; much of the research is quantitative, using scales to measure gay and lesbian stereotyping and surveys to understand acceptance. The inclusion of qualitative research within the area could be beneficial, as individual experience would provide additional valuable insights. This research will address this gap by using a mixed method, combining both quantitative and qualitative research. This thesis aims to identify both patterns and explore experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The

prevalence of the gender inverted stereotypes will be initially established through quantitative measures; the qualitative interviews will then add individual experiences and depth through imagery and narrative. The next chapter will discuss the methodology of the thesis, firstly outlining the theoretical background of the mixed method approach. The quantitative and qualitative methodologies will then be explained.

Chapter 3 Thesis Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the thesis methodology. The first section will discuss the theoretical background, justifying the epistemological and ontological decisions made. The justification for the choice of mixed methods will then be outlined and supported. Following this, the quantitative method will be discussed, followed by the qualitative method.

3.2 Theoretical Background

This section introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis and justifies the use of mixed methods when investigating gender inverted stereotypes. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods will allow for further investigation of the gender inverted stereotypes, exploring their application and the understandings around them. This section will begin by outlining the theoretical positioning of the thesis and will justify the addition of qualitative and photo elicitation methods, supporting the use of a mixed methods approach.

3.3 Theoretical Positioning

The field of social science research has seen three methodological waves: the traditional science period, the crisis period and the current synthesis period (Johnson et al., 2007). The traditional science period of the 19th century warranted that the social sciences adopted quantitative research approaches, from the view of positivism. The crisis period then began in the late 19th century, which led to criticisms of the scientific method and its assumptions for the study of social research (Smith & Heshusius, 1986). Due to these criticisms, this led to the addition of qualitative methods (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), as social sciences required methods that explored phenomena deeper, understanding human experience, emotions, perceptions and interpretations (Tenny et al., 2022). This crisis period additionally introduced a core set of

epistemological beliefs (e.g., subjectivist, knower and known are inseparable in human research), ontological beliefs (e.g., relativism, perspectivism, multiplism), axiological beliefs (e.g., value-bound), methodological beliefs (e.g., dialectical, dialogical, hermeneutical), and rhetorical beliefs (e.g., stressing an informal writing style using personal voice and limited definitions) (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The third wave, which is the current synthesis stage, emerged in the 1960s and marked a significant shift in research methodology. Researchers during this period advocated for combining the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, in line with core theoretical beliefs (Powell et al., 2008). This thesis aligns with the third wave, integrating both methodologies to use the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data. It has been argued that this third research paradigm aims to surpass traditional research methods that contrast quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (constructivist/interpretivist) research (Denscombe, 2008; Johnson et al., 2007; Morgan, 2007).

When combining both methods, it is important to develop distinctive philosophical foundations that justify the use of both research methods (Shan, 2022). Using both methods ensures that a fully comprehensive understanding is produced (Cresswell, 2015) and enables researchers to answer research questions with sufficient depth and breadth (Enosh et al., 2014). However, both methods do have limitations, and when combined, it is suggested that the research paradigms may be incompatible, as they have different ideas on reality and truth (Dawadi et al., 2021). Utilising an approach that incorporates pragmatism ensures the methods do not affect one another, and the chosen methods appropriately answer the research questions (Denzin, 2012). Despite this challenge, there has been a movement in favour of the use of mixed methods (Cresswell, 2015). For example, the combination of paradigms can allow for both inductive and deductive investigation, enabling researchers to combine multiple testing options (Jogulu & Pansiri, 2011). Combining both methods has value and can be used to

complement each other and benefit the research (Dawadi et al., 2021). The next sections will discuss both the ontological and epistemological positioning of the research.

3.3.1 Ontological Positioning of the Research

To demonstrate the nature of reality and to combine detailed positivist and constructivist perspectives (Gorski, 2013), this research adopts a critical realist approach. Critical realism suggests that a singular reality exists but can never be fully understood due to human cognition limitations and the complexity of social phenomena (Lincoln, 1994). As this research addresses societal perceptions of gender inverted stereotypes and the perception of acceptance levels, this ontological approach is required to define the differences in the social realities that may shape these views. To ensure further understanding of issues and explain relationships between social events and problems, critical realism is most appropriate, as it allows for strategic recommendations (Fletcher, 2017). When used within this context, critical realism suggests that a single reality exists regarding gender roles and stereotypes; however, understandings differ and are limited by our social context, cultural contexts, and individual experiences. Rather than solely interpreting the data, it is important to understand it, which is the primary goal for the use of critical realism within mixed methods (Sobh & Perry, 2006). The first empirical study of this thesis used a quantitative method to test the prevalence and strength of the gender inverted stereotypes, demonstrating the impact across populations (Edwards et al., 2014). It is suggested by Bhaskar (1998) that critical realism within qualitative methodology is essential for further insight and understanding. Expanding on the findings from the quantitative study, using critical realism and qualitative methods, will provide further understanding of the persistence and application of gender inverted stereotypes and the perceived acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals.

3.3.2 Epistemological Positioning of the Research

An appropriate epistemological paradigm for mixed methods research is pragmatism (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Denscombe, 2008; Johnson & Gray, 2010; Morgan, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Patton, 2002; Scott & Briggs, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). This position allows for the collection of effective data using diverse methods (Patton, 1990), which is necessary when exploring gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance perception levels. Pragmatism acknowledges that the independent physical world and the socially constructed world exist, and the reality of this is multiple and complex (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Using this approach within social science research is value orientated and aims to solve problems (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Additionally, when using pragmatism, researchers do not have to choose between postpositivist and constructivist/interpretivist positioning (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018); there is freedom to choose methods and procedures that best meet the research questions and needs of the research (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Using this approach to explore gender inverted stereotypes and perceptions of acceptance allows for flexibility within the methodology by using both quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research questions (Morgan, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

3.4 Research Design

The following section of this chapter will justify the use of mixed methods. Additionally, it will explain how the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodology is beneficial for understanding gender inverted stereotypes and the perception of the acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals.

3.4.1 The Use of Mixed Methods to Understand the Topic

Gender and sexuality research traditionally uses a quantitative design and focuses on single measurable truths and experimentation (Marecek et al., 1997). More current research within the area, which utilises queer and feminist perspectives, uses qualitative methods to explore individual experiences and multiple truths (van Anders et al., 2023). Combining both methods to explore gender inverted stereotypes and perceptions of acceptance within current UK society will provide further understanding by identifying broader trends and personal experiences (Mertens, 2007). Using mixed methods also addresses biases associated with single-method studies, making findings more inclusive and contextually relevant, particularly in marginalised groups (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

The use of both research methods can be complementary (Dawadi et al., 2021), as the quantitative element of this thesis will establish the prevalence of the gender inverted stereotypes, and the qualitative element will be used to explore the topic further. Within mixed methods research, Creswell and Creswell (2020) identify three designs, which are convergent, explanatory sequential, and exploratory sequential. As this research interprets initial quantitative results, followed by qualitative findings, the explanatory sequential design is appropriate. Using the explanatory sequential design method aligns with the thesis methodology, as the prevalence of the gender inverted stereotypes needs to be established initially before personal narratives can be collected. This approach is structured and phased, unlike the convergent design, which involves concurrent data collection and direct comparison. The exploratory sequential design examines qualitative data before quantitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2020), which is also not compatible with this thesis. To gain a full understanding of gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance perceptions within the UK, the explanatory sequential design ensures generalisability is first established, and then depth is

added through qualitative findings. The following subsections will explain and justify the addition of qualitative methods and photo elicitation.

3.4.2 Further Exploration Using Qualitative Research Methods

The qualitative studies aimed to expand on the quantitative findings by exploring the experiences of both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals. There is a possibility that potential shifts in UK legislation and societal acceptance (PEW, 2020, 2023) could influence the application of gender inverted stereotypes. A qualitative approach was necessary to explore this topic. The adoption of a semi structured qualitative approach aids in answering the research objectives and expands on the quantitative findings, by including individual perceptions, thoughts and viewpoints . To expand findings further, the qualitative component included photo elicitation (Collier, 1957), which will be explained and justified in the next section.

3.4.3 The Inclusion of Qualitative Photo Elicitation

Photo elicitation was used to support the semi-structured interviews. The term photo elicitation was first coined by Collier (1957) and is described as using photos in a research interview. Photography use in qualitative interviews has also been referred to as photo interviewing (e.g., Dempsey & Tucker, 1994) and Autodriving (Heisley & Levy, 1991). Another popular method is reflexive photography (e.g., Harrington & Lindy, 1998), which uses photographs taken by participants alone; however, the studies presented in this thesis also required the researcher's imagery to be discussed. Wang & Burris' (1994; 1997) methods were considered. Photo novella (also known as picture stories) uses participant photographs to document their day-to-day lived experiences. Photovoice has been used to replace photo novella, with Wang and Burris (1997) describing it as a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique. Wang et al. (1998) and Wang (1999) also suggest the approach is participant-led and enables

communities to communicate their needs; however, the method often targets policymakers to advocate for change, which was not part of the thesis's aims.

It is suggested by Kunimoto (2004) that using imagery allows participants to give more meaningful accounts by adding stronger emotional connections to their experiences, which was needed for this research to explore the aims. As photo elicitation is an interview technique that incorporates images to enhance the depth of participant responses (Hogan, 2022), this was deemed most appropriate. This method differs from traditional verbal interviews by engaging different cognitive processes, specifically, the brain's visual processing areas, which often encourage deeper emotional and cognitive responses (Harper, 2002). Rather than suggesting preconceived ideas, such as societal beliefs that relate to stereotypes, images allow participants to display their own experiences (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013). With the use of images, photo elicitation can access both implied and metaphorical understandings of the topic (Van Auken et al., 2010), enabling further conversations and introducing topics that may not initially have been considered (Bates et al., 2017).

Photo elicitation is used within a variety of topics, justifying its use within gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance research, and allows for imagery use from participants and researchers. Like Photovoice, using photo elicitation provides communities with the opportunity to develop their narratives, enhancing the participants' agency and autonomy (Coleman, 2016), which was important to this research. Furthermore, photo elicitation aligns with this study as this approach uses images to guide the interviews and evoke reactions from the participant (Kyololo et al., 2023). Rather than solely relying on verbal accounts, the use of photo elicitation within this thesis allowed both the researcher and participants to visually display their experiences and understandings of gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance levels. The photographs themselves were not analysed (Appendix G), as the primary data were

the participants' narratives, which is supported by Harper (2002), who suggested that the experiences should be a priority.

3.5 Theoretical Summary

The primary goal of using both quantitative and qualitative methods was to ensure the strengths of both approaches were incorporated, ensuring context-related transferability and context-sensitive insights (Creswell, 2013). This mixed method approach, underpinned by critical realism and pragmatism, aims to fully explore the topic of gender inverted stereotypes and perceptions of LGBTQ+ acceptance within the UK. The initial empirical study uses quantitative methods and identifies the prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes, and the qualitative elements will then add personal experiences and understandings to further explore the research aims. Mertens (2007) supports that the combination of these methods is beneficial to gender and sexuality research, as it captures both experience and social patterns. It also makes findings more inclusive and contextually relevant to marginalised groups as it minimises the biases related to single method studies (Hesse-Biber, 2010). The next section will describe the quantitative methods used in the first empirical study and justify the choices made.

3.6 Quantitative Study – Methods

This section will outline the methods used in the first quantitative study of this thesis, which examined the prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes using both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participants.

3.6.1 Participants

Participants were 146 volunteers, including females ($n = 99$, 67.8%), males ($n = 41$, 28.1%), and non-binary/third gender ($n = 6$, 4.1%). The majority selected the option heterosexual ($n = 75$, 51%) to identify their sexuality, followed by homosexual ($n = 35$, 24%),

then bisexual ($n=20$, 14%), queer ($n=10$, 7%) and pansexual ($n=6$, 4%). Participants were recruited online through the researcher's private social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, now known as X, and Instagram), and snowball sampling was then used to gain further participants. To take part, participants had to live in the UK, which was necessary as it linked to the overall research question regarding a UK sample only. Additionally, participants had to be over the age of 18 to comply ethically, ensuring legal informed consent was obtainable.

3.6.2 Design

This study was conducted online, ensuring access to a broader range of participants across the UK. The study aimed to answer research questions:

1. Are the gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women in current UK society?
2. Does the self-identified sexuality and gender of the participant affect the application of the gender inverted stereotype applied to gay men and lesbian women?

It was hypothesised that:

1. Gender inversion will occur with a lesbian or gay target and will be demonstrated as:
 - a) The gay male target will be stereotyped as having more feminine than masculine traits/careers/roles.
 - b) The lesbian female target will be stereotyped as having more masculine than feminine traits/careers/roles.
2. The application of the gender inverted stereotype will be significantly higher in participants who identify as heterosexual (vs LGBTQ+ individuals).

The survey was created and hosted on Qualtrics, which enabled the distribution of the survey through a link. Data was stored securely on the Qualtrics server located in the EU to meet EU data requirements (Qualtrics, 2020). Once data collection was completed, the data were downloaded and stored within the researcher's secure university OneDrive account. To

collect data on the application of gender inverted stereotypes, each participant was assigned a target condition (typical gay male, lesbian female, heterosexual male, or heterosexual female), then answered a series of questions about that hypothetical person, for example, “Think about a typical heterosexual female. How likely is it that this person would do/possess each of the following...”. To aid this study design, Qualtrics offers researchers the ability to allocate target conditions to participants randomly, using embedded JavaScript code, enabling the assignment of conditions. To ensure equal numbers in each target condition, assignment was random. JavaScript code was incorporated into the survey flow to generate random numbers within a specified range. Once allocated, the survey continued as usual, collecting responses and data according to the assigned target conditions.

The study was a cross-sectional survey using a between participants’ design. The dependent variable was the application of the gender stereotype (masculine, feminine and neutral), and the independent variables were the participants’ gender, sexuality, and the target condition gender and sexuality. Using Cohen’s (1992) “Power Primer”, it was calculated that the sample size must be a minimum of 128 participants. This was required for a medium effect size at a 95% confidence interval and with a power value of .80.

3.6.3 Measures

This study involved the use of questionnaires to collect data from a mixed sample of UK participants. The questionnaire included demographic questions, the Occupations, Activities, and Traits Attitudes Measure (OAT-AM, short version, Liben & Bigler, 2002), and the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding Short Form (BIDR-16; Hart et al., 2015). The questionnaires used Likert scales to establish if gender stereotypes were applied to the target condition. The following sections justify the use of the measurements.

Demographics:

This study collected demographic data, which included gender and sexuality; these were also used as IVs within the analysis. Participants could select a gender and sexuality or self-describe, to allow for all gender and sexuality options. According to Cameron and Stinson (2019), the recommended approach for assessing gender and sexuality in research is to add an open-ended question. This also aligns with the British Psychological Society (2024), which states that research involving gender and sexuality should respect the self-identified identities of the participants. In this study, this approach was utilised to permit participants to freely indicate their gender and sexual identities, whilst ensuring no gender or sexual identities were excluded.

Gender inverted stereotype application:

The Occupations, Activities, and Traits Attitudes Measure (OAT-AM, short version) is a 75-item measure of gender-typed attitudes (Liben & Bigler, 2002) and was used to assess if the gender inverted stereotype was being applied to the gay male and lesbian female target condition and if so, by which groups. The scale assesses cultural stereotyping of 25 occupations, 25 activities and 25 traits along the dimensions of “masculine” (e.g., *engineer, builds with tools, dominant*) ($\alpha = .97$), feminine (e.g., *dietician, bakes cookies, affectionate*) ($\alpha = .96$), and gender-neutral items (e.g., *physical therapist, plays cards, appreciative*) ($\alpha = .83$). Participants were asked to rate each item with the following instruction, “Think about a typical (target condition). How likely is it that this person would do/possess each of the following jobs/activities/characteristics?” using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 5 (*very likely*). Higher scores on each dimension reflected a stronger level of masculinity/femininity or gender-neutral attitude. The overall reliability analysis of the OAT-AM was excellent ($\alpha = .94$).

Social desirability bias:

Social desirability bias presents a significant challenge in survey methodology, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics such as LGBTQ+ research (Krumpal, 2013). This bias occurs when respondents provide answers that they believe will be viewed favourably by others rather than their true thoughts or behaviours, undermining the validity of self-report data. The core assumption of self-report surveys is that respondents accurately recall and honestly report relevant information (McIntire & Miller, 2000). However, social desirability bias can lead to over-reporting of positive behaviours and under-reporting of negative behaviours, compromising the validity of survey scores (Paulhus, 1984). To address this issue, the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding Short Form (BIDR-16; Hart et al., 2015) was incorporated as a covariate in the analysis. The BIDR-16 is a well-established tool for measuring social desirability bias, allowing researchers to detect and adjust for potential biases in participants' responses. By evaluating individuals' tendencies to present themselves in a socially desirable manner, the BIDR-16 helps reduce the impact of these biases on research findings. Its standardised and validated nature ensures reliable and accurate measurement of social desirability bias.

The BIDR-16 instructs participants to indicate how true they think each statement is about themselves. The scale is used to assess social desirability bias and asks questions such as “I always know why I like things” and “I sometimes tell lies if I have to”. The participant answered this on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very untrue) to 7 (very true). Higher scores indicated higher levels of social desirability ($\alpha = .74$).

3.6.4 Procedure

An advertisement for the study, which stated the aims and inclusion criteria, was posted on the researcher's social media (Appendix A). After following the provided link in the advertisement, the participation information was presented (Appendix B), which gave the

relevant inclusion criteria (being over the age of 18 and UK-based). This document clarified information needed to take part, such as what they would need to do, benefits and risks, right to withdraw and confidentiality. This aimed to ensure that questions about their participation in this study had been answered; however, if not, the researcher's and supervisors' emails were supplied. To identify participants' answers if they wished to withdraw, they were asked to supply a code, using the first two letters of their mother's maiden name and the last three digits of their mobile number (e.g., MA113). Participants were then asked to give their consent; when all aspects of consent were agreed, the participant could then continue; if not accepted, the online study could not move on. If they did not consent, they could then exit the study. When informed consent was completed, they were asked to complete the demographic questions (Appendix C). The participant then began the OAT-AM (Appendix C) answering as an assigned target condition (heterosexual male, heterosexual female, gay male, lesbian female). After completing the OAT-AM, the participants were then asked to complete the BIDR-16 as themselves, rather than as the target condition. This was then followed by a debrief (Appendix D), which reviewed the study aims, provided a reminder of the withdrawal procedures and included support groups if the participant wished to discuss any concerns or required further support.

3.6.5 Ethical Considerations for the Quantitative Study

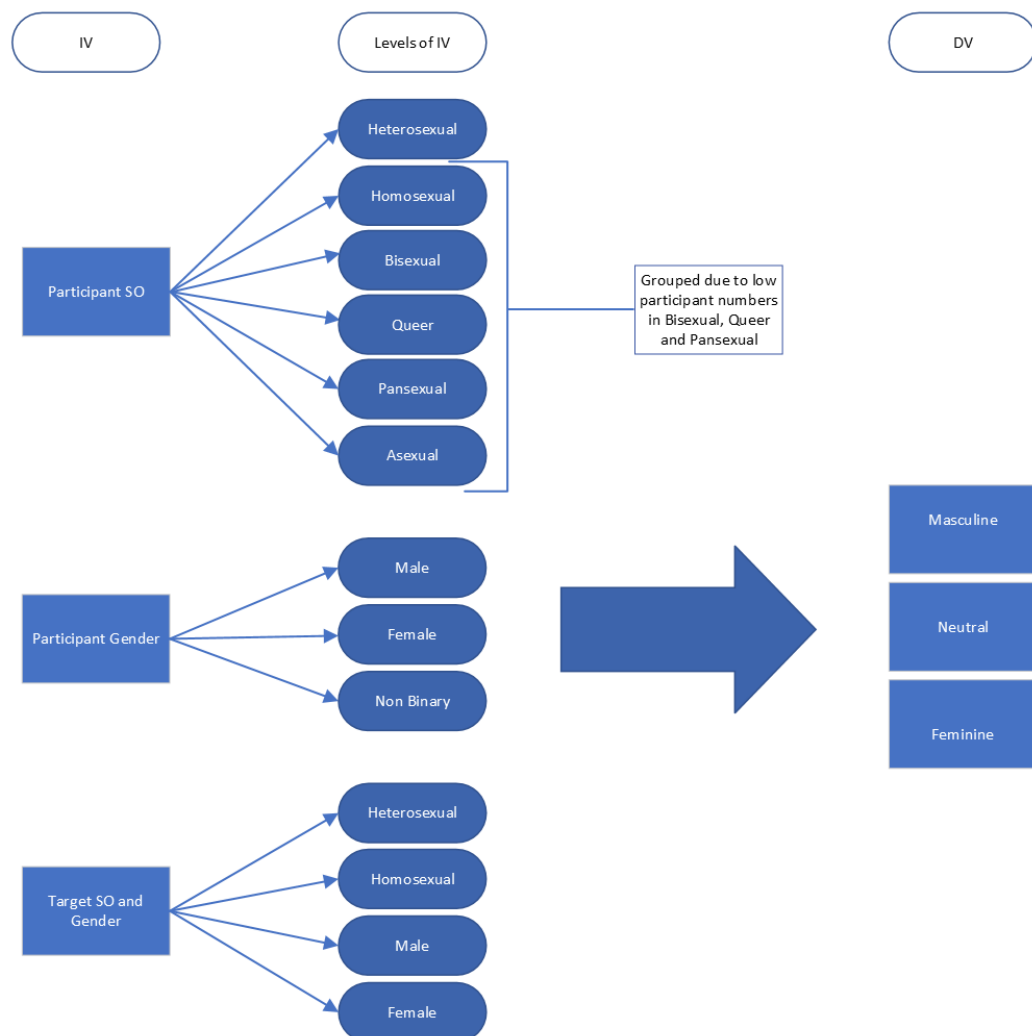
Ethical approval was granted by Birmingham City University's Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academics Ethics Committee (Appendix E). As this research addresses stereotypes, it was important to understand that this can cause sources of stress and concerns (Mays & Cochran, 2001; Rothblum & Bond, 1996). Discussing stereotypes related to gay and lesbian individuals can elicit worry due to the negative impact they have on individuals and communities. These stereotypes perpetuate stigmatisation and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, leading to apprehension about potential judgment, misunderstanding, or

mistreatment (Meyer, 2003). There is a fear of unintentionally reinforcing these stereotypes, causing distress and a sense of personal vulnerability (Pennington et al., 2016). Therefore, creating a sense of safety was of primary importance, which was mitigated through anonymisation of data and completing the questionnaire online. The demographic data supplied by the participant did not enable the researcher or anyone else to identify the individual, as only the gender and sexual orientation were supplied, alongside their identification code.

On initial collection, data were pseudo-anonymised, where any personal data was kept separate from study data, and these datasets were only linked by the identification code. The data was saved and stored in OneDrive on a password-protected, secure laptop, allowing only the researcher's access to the data. In accordance with the university data protection policy, the data will then be deleted after ten years.

3.6.6 Data analysis

To analyse the data, a three-way MANCOVA was used, providing the interactions and main effects of the independent variables (participant sexual orientation, target condition sexual orientation, participant gender, target condition gender) on the dependent variable of application of the stereotype (masculine, feminine, neutral). The use of a three-way MANCOVA was seen as a suitable statistical analysis for investigating the complex relationships between the dependent variables and multiple independent variables (Field, 2018). The use of a MANCOVA also allows for control of relevant covariates (social desirability bias) that might influence the outcomes. The flow chart below explains the interactions between the IVs and DVs:

Figure 3.1*Explanation of the interactions between the IVs and DVs*

The approach of grouping the LGBTQ+ participants was adopted to enhance statistical power, reduce type I error, and obtain a comprehensive understanding of the interactions between multiple variables to draw robust conclusions. This was also to prevent any skewing of the data due to small participant sizes within the bisexual, queer and pan identities. Careful consideration was given to the assumptions of the analysis, ensuring the appropriateness and validity of the MANCOVA design for addressing the research question. The next section of this chapter will outline and justify the qualitative study methodology.

3.7 Qualitative Study - Methods

This section will outline the methods used in the qualitative elements of this thesis, which examined gender inverted stereotypes and the perception of acceptance levels of LGBTQ+ individuals from a sample of heterosexual individuals and a sample of LGBTQ+ people. This chapter will explain the design, participants and procedures employed, before the analysis and findings are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

3.8 Design

The design was justified theoretically at the start of this chapter, highlighting how mixed methods will comprehensively explore the understanding of how gender inverted stereotypes are experienced and perceived. The purpose of the qualitative component of the research was to build upon the quantitative findings, to gain a further understanding of gender inverted stereotypes and perception of acceptance related to gay and lesbian individuals. The qualitative analyses are divided into three parts:

- Analysis of heterosexual participants' experiences of gay and lesbian stereotyping. The research aimed to answer the question: "How do people who identify as heterosexual perceive and understand gay and lesbian gender inverted stereotypes in contemporary UK society?" (Chapter 5)
- Analysis of LGBTQ+ participants' experience of gay and lesbian stereotyping. The research aimed to answer the question "How do LGBTQ+ people in the UK understand, apply, conform and/or resist gender inverted stereotypes?" (Chapter 6)
- Analysis of perceived acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals in contemporary UK society. The research aimed to answer the question "How do People Perceive current and Future Acceptance of Gay and Lesbian identities in the UK?" (Chapter 7)

The individual elements of the design will now be discussed in detail, explaining and justifying the use of the chosen interview style.

3.8.1 Interviews

These interviews aimed to examine views on gay and lesbian stereotyping from both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participants and to explore perceptions of acceptance levels. As the research explored personal experiences of behaviours such as stereotyping, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were deemed most appropriate (Kandirikirira & Botfield, 2004). This interview style enabled the participants to share their experiences and personal narratives (Hammack & Toolis, 2014), allowing for the collection of in-depth accounts of subjective viewpoints that relate to gender inverted stereotypes and LGBTQ+ acceptance (Flick, 2009). To ensure participants could expand on their thoughts, feelings and beliefs, open-ended questions were used (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Research into qualitative methods states that interviews should flow like conversations (Choak, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2011), which was important to this topic due to its content and possible sensitivities.

The use of qualitative semi-structured interviews not only considered experiences, but also informed them through societal discourses, assumptions, or ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This allowed for a deeper understanding of how gender inverted stereotypes are constructed and interpreted within cultural contexts. When conducting the semi-structured interviews, an interview schedule (Appendix H) and follow-ups were prepared, with additional probes developed in advance (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). These questions and follow-ups were developed by identifying key concepts from the literature review and the findings of Study 1. Jimenez & Orozco (2021) state that questions should align with the research in the area.

3.8.2 Interview Style

Interview research is typically conducted face-to-face; however, due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, this study had to use online interviews. Internet technologies offer additional advantages in utilising web tools for their studies (Hamilton, 2014), especially when face-to-face interviews are impractical (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). This study utilised online interviews, which provided flexibility (Lo lacono et al., 2016), as widely available video call software can be easily accessed on various devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets (Perrin & Duggan, 2015). Microsoft Teams was used for conducting the interviews, which allowed the participant recruitment to extend beyond the researcher's area of Birmingham, West Midlands. The use of online interviews allowed for participant comfort and convenience, and safely built rapport with participants, which is crucial for successful qualitative research, to enable detailed and rich descriptions of their stories and experiences (Roulston, 2012). Additionally, Deakin and Wakefield (2014) found that online interviews facilitated rapport building, which was necessary due to the topic being LGBTQ+ stereotypes and acceptance.

Research suggests that individuals may feel more comfortable sharing personal experiences within their familiar surroundings compared to unfamiliar environments (Anderson et al., 2010), which was important to this research. Mirick and Wladkowski (2019) found that the use of online video software promoted a sense of connection, solidarity, and validation for participants, facilitated by visual cues. Within the qualitative elements of the thesis, individuals were able to participate online from any location within the UK where they felt safe and at ease. The interviews were recorded through the Microsoft Teams software, and participants were informed that their recordings would only be accessible to the researcher and supervisors. Participants were advised they could pause the interview at any time to ask questions or to stop if necessary; however, this was not requested by any of the participants.

3.8.3 Photo Elicitation

During the qualitative element of this research, participants were asked to provide images to display and describe their thoughts on gender inversion and acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals. The participants were asked to share these images with the researcher before the interview took place, as they would be shared on screen during the interview. Allowing participants to supply their own images granted them the freedom to choose discussion topics that are personally relevant to gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance, encouraging a relaxed environment and allowing them to guide the interview process. The use of photos in the interview was hoped to alleviate pressure on participants and enable a more comfortable expression of their views, as there was less emphasis on eye contact and potential tension (Noland, 2006). Photo elicitation serves to build bridges between the researcher and participant, as the act of looking at images encourages communication and rapport (Hurworth et al., 2005).

Photo elicitation interviews can adopt various arrangements, and Bates et al. (2017) propose three distinct formats: participant-driven (open), where participants can provide any relevant photo; participant-driven (semi-structured), where participants are informed of the interview questions and then supply relevant imagery; and researcher-driven, where the researcher supplies images as stimuli for discussion. In this research, both participant-driven (open) and researcher-driven formats were used. Participants and the researcher provided images that represented stereotypes of gay males, lesbian females, and LGBTQ+ sexuality overall. The researcher-selected images were sourced from Google Images on December 1, 2021. Random selection was employed to minimise researcher bias, taking care to consider the relevance of the chosen images. The researcher conducted individual searches using the terms "stereotypes of gay males," "stereotypes of lesbian females," and "LGBTQ+ stereotypes", selecting the first three images shown on the webpage for each category. These selections were then reviewed with the Director of Studies to confirm their appropriateness and further reduce

any potential bias. The images provided by the researcher and participants can be found in Appendix G.

The participant information explained that during the online interview, images would be discussed that represent gay and lesbian stereotypes. There was no limit on the number of images that the participant could supply for each category (stereotypes of gay males, stereotypes of lesbian females, and LGBTQ+ stereotypes). The images provided by the participants came from online media, which is relevant in today's society; the media significantly influences the dissemination of new social representations (Rose, 2022). Social representations are knowledge structures comprised of beliefs, and when discussing stereotypes, these are beliefs about the attributes of a group (Schaller & Latané, 1996). It has been proposed that people enact two processes in the development of these social representations, anchoring and objectification, known as the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1998). Anchoring is a naming process which involves categorising and linking to other familiar information, making the unknown known by bringing it into a well-known sphere of earlier social representations, allowing comparison and interpretation. Objectification transforms a concept into an image, and visuals then become objectifications of social representations, transforming them into something concrete to be perceived. The use of this theory, within the photo elicitation element of the study, allowed the participants to display their “anchored” images that relate to gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance, whilst expanding on their “objectifications” of social concepts. Online media offered participants representations of gay and lesbian stereotypes, allowing them to provide images that explained the stereotypes they wanted to discuss.

As the topic of the research evolved around gender inversion and acceptance levels of gay and lesbian individuals, it was important to ensure the participants felt comfortable, which is a benefit of photo elicitation (Epstein et al., 2006). The use of photos enabled the participants

to engage in alternative ways; discussion alone may have led to feeling uncomfortable due to the topic. The use of photos may also pose ethical concerns; these include the nature of the questions posed, the selection of photos, and obtaining proper consent from participants. Therefore, ethical considerations and approval were necessary to ensure minimised risk for the participant. To ensure ethical procedure, a step-by-step guide developed by Bates et al. (2017) was followed. This guide includes:

1. Epistemological Decision: Researchers determined the nature of the phenomenon, the extent of participant involvement in selecting photos, and their role in guiding discussions. These decisions shaped the study's reflection of participants' experiences and influenced the power balance between researcher and participant.
2. Participant Briefing: Participants were briefed on the study's nature and ethics. For participant-driven photo elicitation, there were two briefing phases: initially, to guide photo collection, and later, to provide a comprehensive overview before the interview.
3. Photo Collection: Participants were given time to collect and organise their photos. Bates et al. (2017) suggest requesting photos within approximately two weeks.
4. Interviews: The process for both participant-driven and researcher-led semi-structured interviews was outlined and then used.
5. Analysis: Photo-elicited interviews provide richer context, leading to more comprehensive accounts of participants' lives (Tran Smith et al., 2015), which led to the choice of thematic analysis, which is commonly used (Biggerstaff, 2012; Boyatzis, 1998).
6. Dissemination of Findings: Decisions regarding dissemination, including the use of photographs, are essential due to considerations of consent and photo usage (Bates et al., 2017). Additionally, it is important to determine whether these images will be included in the dissemination outcomes. The decision was made to include images

within the analysis where relevant and include all images within the appendix (appendix G).

Following this guide and ensuring ethical standards were of the utmost importance. Additionally, the participants suggested that when the recording had stopped, they enjoyed participating in the process of collecting photos and doing this allowed them to portray the stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women.

3.8.4 Interview Schedules

To investigate the experiences, perceptions and understandings of gay and lesbian stereotypes in contemporary UK society, an interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions was developed (Appendix H). The interview questions were designed to investigate participants' perspectives on the current stereotypes associated with gay men and lesbian women, their understanding of acceptance and tolerance toward being gay in the UK, and the extent to which acceptance influences these stereotypes. Questions such as "If I ask you to think of a gay male/lesbian female, what do you think of?" were used to understand stereotypes. To understand acceptance, questions such as "Current research suggests that gay and lesbian individuals are more accepted than before. What are your thoughts on this?" and "How do you think we can promote greater LGBTQ+ acceptance in our society?" were used to explore understanding and perceptions. After those open-ended questions were completed, the interview then moved on to the photo elicitation section. The participant elicited images were shared via screen share within Teams, and they were asked to discuss and explain their chosen photos through questions like, "Would you like to talk me through this image? Why did you select it as a representation of a gay male/lesbian female?". The researcher elicited images were then displayed, and they were asked their thoughts on these also.

To expand on the experience of LGBTQ+ participants, four additional questions were included, such as "Have you ever felt the need to conform to the stereotypes we have discussed

or any other LGBTQ+ stereotypes?" and "How has your identity evolved over time, as a consequence of these stereotypes?". These questions were informed by research in the area, which suggests that conforming to the gender inverted stereotypes may be part of identifying one's sexual identity (Belous, 2015) and help with group identification (Brown, 2020). In addition to conformity, it was important to also address the resistance of these stereotypes, as findings within the literature were mixed. For example, Clarke and Arnold (2017), Kitzinger (1991), Lippa (2005), and Pillard (1991) suggest that gay and lesbian individuals resist the gender inverted stereotypes and avoid applying them to others. Further to this, the findings from the first empirical study of this thesis suggested that gender inverted stereotypes were applied with no differences, requiring further qualitative examination to gather real-life experiences and perspectives from those who identify as LGBTQ+.

3.9 Participants

This section of the methodology will outline the criteria, pilot study, recruitment and demographics of the participants.

3.9.1 Criteria

To take part in the research, all participants had to be over the age of 18 and based in the United Kingdom. No sexualities or genders were excluded from the research, ensuring a full investigation into the experiences and understandings of gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance levels of gay and lesbian individuals.

3.9.2 Sample size

A sample of 6 heterosexual participants was used with an average age of 31 years old. Then, a sample of 8 LGBTQ+ participants with an average age of 25 took part in the qualitative elements of this thesis. Recruitment of further participants was stopped after these interviews, as saturation had been reached, which is the point at which no new data is obtained, resulting

in the absence of new codes or themes (Given, 2015; Urquhart, 2013). When the images provided by participants and discussions became repetitive, this indicated that no new information was being discussed regarding stereotypes and LGBTQ+ acceptance. Qualitative methods often involve smaller sample sizes to support in-depth case-oriented analysis that aligns with the researcher's line of inquiry (Patton, 2002).

3.9.3 Pilot Study

The first participant acted as a pilot study, while the data from the subsequent 13 participants were analysed. A pilot study involved conducting a full interview to assess the structure, procedure, and question comprehension (Thabane et al., 2010). One advantage of conducting a pilot study is that it can identify any potential failures in the interview and assess the suitability of proposed methods (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Although a pilot interview was conducted, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest the interview guide should be further reviewed after more interviews to ensure that the data remains aligned with the research question.

The pilot study progressed as expected, and no major question modifications were necessary in the schedule. However, upon reflection, it was observed that when participants were asked about their views on gay or lesbian stereotypes, at the beginning of the interview, they began discussing what they saw as stereotypes of gay men and lesbian women (for instance, the belief that gay men are feminine and lesbian women are masculine), which were to be asked later in the interview. Consequently, the order of the questions was adjusted to enable participants to expand on these thoughts instead of revisiting them later. Additionally, the pilot study participant provided a large number of images for discussion, which resulted in repetitive conversations. To address this in further interviews, similar participant-driven images were grouped by the researcher before the interview and discussed collectively. If the

participant's imagery was similar to what was supplied by the researcher, participants were asked if they would like to add any more information, rather than repeating questions.

3.9.4 Demographics

The demographic data collected included age, gender and sexuality; the participant could select or self-identify these options (Appendix K). For gender, the options were female, male, nonbinary/third gender, and prefer to self-describe. For sexuality, the options were homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, queer, pansexual, asexual and prefer to self-describe. Giving the participants the option to self-describe was important; Clarke et al. (2010) suggest that research should recruit participants and allow them to self-identify their gender and/or their sexuality, as this approach respects the meanings people give to their sexual identities and gender practices. If listing genders and sexualities, researchers may need to use multiple and inclusive definitions of sexuality along the dimensions of desire, behaviour and identity, so allowing self-identification prevented exclusion from the research (Fish, 2008). In the context of gender, sexuality, and relationship diversity (GSRD), the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2024) states that self-determination means individuals have the right to define their own gender, sexuality, and relationship identities, and to express themselves authentically and truthfully without interference or coercion. The pseudonyms, age and the self-identified or pre-selected identities of the two participant samples are outlined in the tables below:

Table 3.1*Heterosexual Sample Self-identified Characteristics*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Sexuality
Grace	Female	25	Heterosexual
Sally	Female	22	Heterosexual
Tracy	Female	28	Heterosexual
Adam	Male	22	Heterosexual
Carol	Female	53	Heterosexual
Pilot	Female	37	Heterosexual

Table 3.2*LGBTQ+ Sample Self-identified Characteristics*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Sexuality
Rae	Unsure	25	Homosexual
Alicia	Female	23	Homosexual
Sean	Male	28	Homosexual
Sarah	Female	24	Non-Heterosexual
Amy	Female	21	Queer
Rachel	Female	23	Homosexual
Carl	Male	28	Homosexual
Jean	Female	28	Homosexual

3.10 Procedure

This section will outline the ethical approval, recruitment, interview and transcription procedures that were used.

3.10.1 Ethical approval for the qualitative research

The research was designed to meet the ethical standards put forward by the BPS (2018) and was granted ethical approval by the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee at Birmingham City University in February 2022 (Appendix I). To minimise harm, the researcher employed methods that were respectful and non-intrusive, ensuring that participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences without feeling pressured. To ensure the well-being of the participant, as the topic may be deemed sensitive, participants could stop the interviews at any time, skip questions, take breaks and withdraw their data up to two weeks after the interview. Additionally, support groups were provided within the debrief.

3.10.2 Recruitment

Participants were recruited through online advertisements posted on the researcher's personal social media accounts, Facebook, Twitter (now X), and LinkedIn (Appendix J). Recruiting this way also led to snowball sampling through individuals sharing the advertisement. Further to this, volunteer sampling was used; those who had previously participated in the qualitative study of this thesis and provided their email for future research were contacted to see if they wished to participate in the qualitative elements. Upon confirmation of interest, participants were sent a Qualtrics link via email, which included the necessary forms such as the participant information sheet, consent form, and demographic questionnaire (Appendix K). A mutually convenient date was then arranged for the interview via email, and once arranged, participants were asked to gather their photos and email them to the researcher in a single Word document before the interview.

3.10.3 Interview Procedure

Once both the researcher and participant were on the Teams call, the study information was verbally reviewed to ensure the participant fully understood. Consent was reconfirmed, and participants were reminded of their data protection rights, right to withdraw, and how their data and images would be used. Any remaining questions were then addressed. Participants had the option to have their video on or off, and once they were ready, recording began. Interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes per participant; however, this varied depending on the number of images supplied by the participant.

The interview opened by inviting the participant to introduce themselves, with the intention of establishing rapport and creating a comfortable atmosphere. Following the initial questions, the participants' images were displayed on the screen, and they were encouraged to discuss their choices and explain why they selected those images to represent gay male, lesbian female, and LGBTQ+ stereotypes. The researcher then shared their own set of images on the screen, prompting further discussion about the participants' thoughts on how these images portrayed gay and lesbian individuals. Moreover, the LGBTQ+ sample was also asked four additional questions regarding their personal experiences with stereotyping. Once the interview concluded and the participant indicated that they had nothing further to add, a verbal debriefing took place, accompanied by a follow-up debrief email (Appendix L). The interview recordings were downloaded from the Microsoft Teams platform and securely stored in the researcher's password-protected OneDrive account. Upon completion of this process, the video files were deleted from the Teams account.

3.10.4 Transcription

Video recordings were not used for transcription purposes; only the audio recordings of the interviews were used. These audio files were uploaded to otter.ai, a transcription software that adheres to GDPR regulations, which was pre-approved by the Business, Law and Social

Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee at Birmingham City University. The interviews were transcribed verbatim using otter.ai with the use of pseudonyms, and the resulting transcripts were exported as Word documents (Appendix M). These were solely saved to the researcher's password protected OneDrive account. Following the transcription process, the audio recordings were permanently deleted from the otter.ai server. To prepare for analysis, each line of the transcript was numbered for reference.

3.11 Analysis

To explore and understand the findings, an inductive reflexive thematic analysis (TA; Braun & Clarke, 2020) was deemed most appropriate. As inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding framework or the researcher's analytic notions, this was the preferred primary way of identifying themes. Identifying themes as either explicit or surface meanings within the data and focusing solely on the participants' words without investigating deeper led to the selection of a semantic approach to theorise the significant patterns and broader implications (Patton, 1990), often drawing connections to existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach aligns with the study's aim of objectively capturing participant perspectives on stereotypes and acceptance, allowing patterns in their responses to be explicitly understood.

When conducting TA, Braun and Clarke (2020) have outlined a six-phase framework. These phases are not intended as rigid steps to be strictly adhered to, but rather as tools to explore, interpret, and report pattern-based analysis systematically and thoroughly. The six phases are as follows:

1. Familiarisation with the data: This phase involved thoroughly reading and re-reading the data to become engaged in its content. Transcripts from both samples were read in

detail, and initial analytic notes and insights were noted, both on each data item (e.g., interview transcript) and on the dataset.

2. Generating initial codes: This phase involved creating concise labels (codes) that captured and suggested key aspects of the data relevant to addressing the research question. The entire dataset was coded through multiple rounds, developing codes that related to gay male stereotypes, lesbian female stereotypes and acceptance levels of gay and lesbian sexuality. Codes were then collated with relevant data extracts for later analysis stages.
3. Generating themes: This phase involved examining the codes and collating data to start identifying broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). These themes included codes related to gay and lesbian stereotypes, the persistence of these stereotypes and experiences of conforming or resisting. Further theme generation included LGBTQ+ acceptance and tolerance levels, plus how this can be improved.
4. Reviewing potential themes: This phase focused on validating themes against the coded data and the entire dataset to ensure they effectively reflected the data and addressed the research questions. Themes were further refined, split, combined, or discarded as needed.
5. Defining and naming themes: This phase involved conducting a detailed analysis of each theme to determine its scope, focus, and narrative. It included selecting informative names for each theme, which describe the content and link to the research question.
6. Producing the report: The final phase involved integrating the analysis and situating the analysis within the context of existing literature.

The analysis of the interviews is presented in the following chapters:

Chapter 5: Understanding the Persistence of Gender Inverted Stereotypes from a Heterosexual Perspective.

Chapter 6: How do LGBTQ+ people in the UK understand, apply and conform to gender inverted stereotypes?

Chapter 7: How do people perceive past, current and future acceptance of gay and lesbian identities in the UK?

The findings are then fully synthesised within the literature in Chapter 8, which is the thesis discussion.

3.12 Qualitative Method Summary

This section outlined the qualitative methods that will be used to explore gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance perception levels, justifying the chosen research design, participants, data collection and analysis type. The next section will summarise the methodology chapter.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology that relates to this mixed-methods thesis. Firstly, the use of mixed methods was justified. The quantitative and qualitative methods were then discussed. The next chapter will present the first empirical study, the quantitative analysis, which aims to identify the prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes.

Chapter 4 A Quantitative Investigation into the Application of Gender Inverted Stereotypes

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the first empirical study of this thesis, which uses a quantitative design to examine whether gender inverted stereotypes persist. Additionally, the study aims to identify if there is a difference in the application of gender inverted stereotypes between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals. The chapter opens by linking the literature reviewed in Chapter Two to this current study, demonstrating the rationale. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results in relation to the research questions, breaking down each hypothesis and synthesising findings within the existing literature.

4.1.1 Rationale and Present Study

As stated in chapter two, research states that pervasive stereotypes about gay and lesbian people include beliefs that the individual may conform to opposite gender norms (Peel, 2020). However, societal attitudes towards gay and lesbian individuals in the UK and worldwide have been changing (PEW, 2020; 2023), potentially impacting these stereotypes. The findings regarding gender inversion and acceptance presented in Chapter 2 led to the first research question: “Are gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women in current UK society?”. It was important to establish this finding initially to set the basis for the thesis. The second research question, “Does the self-identified sexuality and gender of the participant affect the application of the gender inverted stereotype applied to gay men and lesbian women?” was included to further understand the application of the gender inverted stereotype. Findings within the literature are mixed; for example, research from Kitinger (1991) proposes that gay and lesbian individuals are aware of these labels and may consciously reject or challenge them. Since stereotypes about gay men and lesbians are deeply linked with

gender norms, being part of a minority may heighten their awareness and conscious recognition of these biases (Clarke & Arnold, 2017). Consequently, gay men and lesbian women may be less inclined to conform to traditional gender stereotypes for both men and women and, regardless of orientation, may actively work to avoid stereotyping others. Studies further support this idea, showing that self-descriptions of gay men and lesbians often display more androgynous traits than those of heterosexual individuals (Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Klysing et al., 2021; Lippa, 2005; Pillard, 1991). Conversely, Brown (2020) suggests that when identifying with a group, gay men and lesbian women may adopt stereotypical behaviours to navigate heteronormative environments. Research, although limited, suggests that some may choose to conform to gender inverted appearance norms as a way of embodying and expressing their sexual identity. These gay and lesbian looks remain within the community, helping individuals recognise and connect with one another (Hayfield, 2013). These mixed findings around the application highlighted the need to explore this area further.

The present study employs the same established measure (OAT-AM, Liben & Bigler, 2002) used by Blashill and Powlishta (2009) and Clarke and Arnold (2017) but applies it to the context of contemporary UK society through a social psychology lens. This study's sample includes a wider range of genders and sexual identities to evaluate the application of gender inverted stereotypes to gay and lesbian individuals. To ensure inclusivity, participants were given the opportunity to select their gender and sexuality or to self-identify, ensuring that no identities were excluded. With the primary inclusion criterion being that participants are over eighteen, the study aimed to recruit a diverse sample to enhance generalisability. There is also a possibility that results may differ in the UK compared to the studies presented, as these utilise a US sample; for example, the PEW research centre (2020) reports that 72% of Americans say “homosexuality should be accepted by society,” whereas the UK reported 86%, displaying a

higher level of acceptance. Overall, this study uses the OAT-AM measure to identify if gender inverted stereotypes are applied currently and by whom.

Rather than determining whether gay, lesbian, and heterosexual individuals apply the same stereotypes to gay male or lesbian female targets, as Clarke and Arnold (2017) did, this research seeks to identify whether one sexual orientation applies gender inverted stereotypes more frequently. Clarke and Arnold's (2017) findings suggested that both gay, lesbian and heterosexual individuals applied the stereotypes. As previous findings were mixed (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Kitzinger, 1991), it was important to investigate this further in a broader UK sample, where societal shifts may have had an impact. Also, given current trends in increased tolerance and acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals (PEW, 2020; 2023), it may be possible that social desirability affects participants' responses. Social desirability bias poses a major challenge in survey methodology, especially when addressing sensitive topics like LGBTQ+ research (Krumpal, 2013). To address this, social desirability has been accounted for in this quantitative study.

A sample from the United Kingdom, aged over eighteen, was used to examine whether the gender inverted stereotype towards gay men and lesbian women persists in our seemingly more accepting societal context, and if so, by whom. This led to the following hypotheses:

1. Gender inversion will occur with a lesbian or gay target and will be demonstrated as:
 - a) The gay male target will be stereotyped as having more feminine than masculine traits/careers/roles.
 - b) The lesbian female target will be stereotyped as having more masculine than feminine traits/careers/roles.
2. The application of the gender inverted stereotype will be significantly higher in participants who identify as heterosexual (vs LGBTQ+ individuals).

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

A three-way MANCOVA was run to determine the effect of participant gender, participant sexual orientation and target condition sexual orientation and gender on three measures of gender: Masculinity, femininity and neutral. The adjusted means are reported below.

Table 4.1

Adjusted means and standard errors for the three dependent variables for each independent variable

	Masculine <i>M</i> _{adj} (SE)	Feminine <i>M</i> _{adj} (SE)	Neutral <i>M</i> _{adj} (SE)
Participant Gender			
Male	3.392 (.096)	3.305 (.088)	3.418 (.071)
Female	3.361 (.056)	3.424 (.051)	3.492 (.041)
Non-binary/third gender	2.834 (.248)	3.709 (.227)	3.329 (.182)
Sexual Orientation Group			
Heterosexual	3.293 (.091)	3.480 (.083)	3.446 (.067)
LGB+	3.289 (.082)	3.364 (.075)	3.425 (.060)
Condition Sexual Orientation and Gender			
Heterosexual Female	2.868 (.143)	3.804 (.130)	3.429 (.105)
Heterosexual Male	3.996 (.101)	2.679 (.092)	3.367 (.074)
Lesbian Female	3.428 (.110)	3.425 (.101)	3.517 (.081)
Gay male	3.123 (.107)	3.544 (.098)	3.431 (.078)

Prior to conducting the MANCOVA, the necessary assumptions were evaluated to confirm the analysis's suitability. The independent variables were categorical, while the

dependent variables were measured as scale variables, ensuring appropriate levels of measurement. The covariates were also scale variables, providing added flexibility. To maintain the independence of observations, data were collected using a random sampling method, thereby satisfying this assumption. There was homogeneity of regression slopes, as assessed by the interaction term between social desirability bias (BIDR-16) and IVs (participant gender, participant SO and target condition SO and gender), $F(99, 300) = 1.286$, $p = .056$. A Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to assess the normality of each dependent variable across the levels of the independent variable, and the results confirmed that the normality assumption was met ($p > .05$). Scatterplots were analysed to identify linear relationships among each pair of dependent variables, covariates, and between covariates and dependent variables, revealing that linearity was present. Levene's test was utilised to evaluate the homogeneity of variances across groups for each dependent variable. The results were not significant for dependent variables: Masculine $F(18,127) = 2.065$, $p = .011$ and Feminine $F(18,127) = 1.959$, $p = .017$, indicating that the homogeneity of variances assumption was satisfied. However, the neutral DV was significant, $F(18,127) = 2.484$, $p = .002$. Since the sample sizes were equal for masculine and feminine, a Box's M test was deemed unnecessary, as it could yield unstable results (Field, 2018). Correlations among the dependent variables were assessed to ensure that multicollinearity was not a concern, with correlations ranging from -0.316 to 0.618. The interaction between each covariate and the independent variable was examined to confirm the homogeneity of regression slopes, and all interactions were non-significant, indicating that the assumptions were met. The study design ensured that observations were independent, with participants assigned to only one group and no repeated measures.

4.2.2 Analysis

The three-way MANCOVA showed there was no statistically significant difference between participants' gender on the combined dependent variables after controlling for social

desirability bias, $F(6, 250) = .369, p = .898$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .982$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. This also applied to sexual orientation, $F(3, 124) = .653, p = .583$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .984$, partial $\eta^2 = .016$. This suggests that the participant's gender and sexual orientation did not affect how they applied gender inverted stereotypes to a gay male and lesbian female target, refuting hypothesis two.

However, the three-way MANCOVA showed there was a statistically significant difference between condition sexual orientation (SO) and gender on the combined dependent variables after controlling for social desirability bias, $F(9, 302) = .583, p < .001$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .503$, partial $\eta^2 = .205$ suggesting that the gender inverted stereotype was applied to the gay male and lesbian female target conditions.

Follow-up univariate one-way ANCOVAs were performed. A Bonferroni adjustment was made such that statistical significance was accepted when $p < .0167$. There were statistically significant differences in the adjusted mean for masculine ($F(3, 126) = 18.420, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .305$), and for feminine ($F(3, 126) = 22.503, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .349$) but not for neutral ($F(3, 126) = .662, p = .602$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$). Statistically significant one-way ANCOVAs were followed up with pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni adjustment. Pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni-adjusted p -value were made for all three dependent variables (masculine, feminine and neutral).

Mean Masculinity – DV.

Pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni-adjusted p -value revealed significant differences in mean masculinity across various target groups. Specifically, when comparing heterosexual males with heterosexual females, the difference was significant ($p < .001$) with a 95% Bootstrapped confidence interval (CI) ranging from 0.66 to 1.61. Similarly, significant differences were observed between heterosexual males and lesbian females ($p .001$) with a 95% Bootstrapped CI ranging from 0.17 to 0.97, as well as between heterosexual males and gay

males ($p < .001$) with a 95% Bootstrapped CI ranging from 0.48 to 1.27. Finally, when comparing lesbian females with heterosexual females, the difference was significant ($p < .013$) with a 95% Bootstrapped confidence interval (CI) ranging from -1.04 to -0.08. This suggests that heterosexual males are seen as significantly more masculine when compared to heterosexual females and gay men. However, this also applies to lesbian women, which suggests that lesbian women may not be seen as masculine as heterosexual males but are more masculine than heterosexual females. All other pairwise comparisons were not statistically significant (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Non-significant pairwise comparisons with adjusted means for mean masculinity.

Condition SO and Gender	Sig	95% confidence interval for difference Lower bound	95% confidence interval for difference Higher bound
Heterosexual female vs Homosexual Male	.948	-.738	.227
Homosexual female vs Homosexual Male	.296	-.107	.717

Mean Femininity – DV.

Regarding femininity, significant differences emerged in pairwise comparisons. Heterosexual females exhibited significantly higher femininity than heterosexual males ($p < .001$) with a 95% Bootstrapped CI ranging from 0.69 to 1.56. Furthermore, heterosexual males showed significantly lower femininity compared to both lesbian females ($p < .001$) with a 95% Bootstrapped CI ranging from -1.11 to -0.38, and gay males ($p < .001$) with a 95% Bootstrapped CI ranging from -1.22 to -0.51. As expected, and according to gender norms,

heterosexual women were seen to be more feminine than heterosexual men. These findings indicate that heterosexual men are perceived as less feminine compared to both gay men and lesbian women. This further supports the idea that while gender inversion has been associated with gay male and lesbian individuals, it may not be as gender inversed as previously believed. All other pairwise comparisons were not statistically significant (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Non-significant pairwise comparisons with adjusted means for mean femininity.

Condition SO and Gender	Sig	95% confidence interval for difference Lower bound	95% confidence interval for difference Higher bound
Heterosexual Female vs Homosexual Female	.132	-.059	.816
Heterosexual Female vs Homosexual Male	.704	-.182	.701
Homosexual Female vs Homosexual Male	1.000	-4.96	.258

Mean neutral – DV.

All pairwise comparisons in the neutral dependent variable were not statistically significant (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

Non-significant pairwise comparisons with adjusted means for mean neutral.

Condition SO and Gender	Sig	95% confidence interval for difference Lower bound	95% confidence interval for difference Higher bound
Heterosexual female vs heterosexual male	1.000	-.285	.408
Heterosexual female vs homosexual female	1.000	-.439	.263
Heterosexual female vs homosexual male	1.000	-.356	.352
Heterosexual male vs homosexual female	1.000	-.444	.145
Heterosexual male vs homosexual male	1.000	-.352	.224
Homosexual female vs homosexual male	1.000	-.217	.388

4.2.3 Overall Findings

The findings provide support for hypotheses 1a and 1b, indicating that gay men and lesbian women are perceived as gender inverted compared to their heterosexual counterparts. However, the results do not indicate that gay males are perceived to be as feminine as heterosexual females, or that lesbian women are seen to be as masculine as heterosexual males. These findings align with the hypothesis but are not as gender opposed as previous research may suggest. Hypothesis 2 had to be refuted as the findings suggest that participant gender and sexuality had no impact on the application of gender inverted stereotypes.

4.3 Discussion

This study aimed to establish whether the gender inverted stereotypes commonly related to gay men and lesbian women are still readily applied. The primary objective of this initial study was to examine the following research questions (i) Are the gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women in current UK society? and (ii) Does the self-identified sexuality and gender of the participant affect the application of gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women? The hypotheses predicted that gender inversion would occur in the application of stereotypes to gay and lesbian individuals. Specifically, it was expected that the gay male target condition would be subject to stereotyping, associating them more with feminine traits, occupations, and roles. The lesbian female target condition would be stereotyped with a higher prevalence of masculine traits, occupations, and roles. Additionally, the hypotheses predicted that heterosexual participants would apply the gender inverted stereotypes more than LGBTQ+ individuals, due to gay and lesbian people experiencing diversity within the community and actively dismissing the stereotypes (Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Kitzinger, 1991).

In line with previous studies by Blashill and Powlista (2009), Clarke and Arnold (2017), Hudson and Ghani (2023), Kite and Deaux (1987), and Mize and Manago (2018), the results reveal that gender inverted stereotypes are attributed to both heterosexual and gay and lesbian individuals. Traditional gender stereotypes are applied to heterosexual target conditions (men = masculine, women = feminine), while these stereotypes are inverted for gay men (feminine) and lesbian women (masculine). Additionally, the findings suggest that participants utilised gender inverted stereotypes when evaluating gay and lesbian individuals, regardless of their own gender and sexual orientation.

To explore each hypothesis more thoroughly, they will be addressed individually within this discussion.

4.3.1 Gender inversion will occur with a lesbian or gay target condition.

The initial part of this hypothesis proposed that the gay male target condition will be subjected to stereotypes associated with having more feminine traits, occupations, and roles compared to masculine ones. The results of this study confirm the first part of the hypothesis (H1a), indicating that the gay male target condition was stereotyped as possessing more feminine traits, occupations, and roles. The findings support the hypothesis that gay men are perceived to display significantly greater femininity than heterosexual men. However, they are not regarded as more feminine than either heterosexual or lesbian women, indicating that while gay men may possess feminine attributes, they are not viewed as the opposites of women.

The findings also provide support for hypothesis 1b, which states that the lesbian female target condition will be stereotyped as having more masculine traits, occupations, and roles. The study reveals that lesbian females are perceived to be more masculine than heterosexual females, which was predicted. However, they are not perceived to be as masculine as heterosexual males, supporting that the gender inverted stereotypes are not directly opposite as the IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987) suggests. This also contradicts empirical research supporting IIT, which demonstrates that gay men are expected to exhibit high levels of femininity, like heterosexual women, while lesbians are expected to display high levels of masculinity, similar to heterosexual men (Jackson & Sullivan, 1990; Kite & Deaux, 1987; Madon, 1997; Page & Yee, 1986; Taylor, 1983).

The results of this study align with the findings of Blashill and Powlishta (2009), Clarke and Arnold (2017), Hudson and Ghani (2023) and Mize and Manago (2018), despite being conducted during a time when shifts in acceptance and tolerance may have taken place (PEW, 2020; 2023). This research advocates for a more fluid and androgynous approach rather than a strict contrast with heterosexual counterparts, gay and lesbian individuals may possess traits related to both females and males. For example, the results suggest that gay men are seen to be

feminine but not as feminine as heterosexual women and similar findings were shown with lesbian target conditions. This finding supports Clarke and Arnold's (2017) and Klysing et al. (2021) suggestions that gender inversion may not be perceived as opposite to heterosexual counterparts, as previously believed. These findings challenge some assertions of the IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987), indicating that gay men and lesbians may be viewed as androgynous, possessing both feminine and masculine characteristics. The participants in this study may have used the orthogonal model (Biernat, 1991), which describes gay men and lesbians as having both feminine and masculine qualities, rather than the bipolar model, which suggests a sharp distinction between genders.

Due to possible recent progress regarding the acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals (PEW, 2020; 2023), this may affect the stereotypes applied within the study. With higher acceptance levels, the stereotypes assigned to gay and lesbian individuals may have shifted. To support this, Rosch's (1978) Categorisation Theory suggests that categories are created and utilised as mental shortcuts to help us comprehend the world. Each category includes a prototype that represents the typical characteristics associated with that category. This prototype represents the average or central tendency of category members and is shaped by our experiences and knowledge of those members. In the case of gay men and lesbian women, their ability to openly express their sexuality has historically been constrained, leading many individuals to only identify individuals who conform to gender inversion stereotypes as gay or lesbian. This perception can be further reinforced by media depictions; however, as society progresses towards greater equality and understanding, attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals are evolving (Savin-Williams, 2008). It is possible that more gay men and lesbians may be comfortable being open about their sexual orientation, leading to a shift in the prototypes or central tendencies associated with these categories (Clarke & Arnold, 2017). This shift in the

stereotype or prototype of the group may explain why gender inversion is not as strict as previously outlined by the IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987).

4.3.2 The application of the gender inverted stereotype will be significantly higher in participants who identify as heterosexual (vs LGBTQ+ individuals).

As stated in the literature, Blashill and Powlishta (2009) note that there is inadequate research to ascertain whether gay men and lesbian women share the same gender stereotypes as heterosexual individuals. Kitzinger (1991) previously suggested that the content of gender stereotypes for gay men and lesbian women may differ from those of heterosexuals, as LGBTQ+ individuals are aware of these stereotypes and may actively seek to reject them. However, more recent research by Clarke and Arnold (2017) indicates that both heterosexual and gay or lesbian individuals tend to hold similar gender inverted stereotypes. They propose that gay men and lesbian women might adopt the same gender stereotypes as heterosexual individuals when shaping their identities. This led to the hypothesis of whether heterosexual individuals apply gender inverted stereotypes more frequently than those from the LGBTQ+ community.

The hypothesis that participant gender and sexuality will affect application was not supported by the findings; heterosexual individuals did not apply the gender inversion stereotypes more than LGBTQ+ individuals, and both groups attributed gender inverted stereotypes to gay and lesbian target conditions with no differences. This finding may be attributed to heterosexual assumptions (Kitzinger, 1991), suggesting that gay men and lesbian women apply gay and lesbian stereotypes in the same way as heterosexual individuals due to social norms (Clarke & Arnold, 2017). The findings additionally contradict the suggestion that gay men and lesbian women actively reject these stereotypes (Kitzinger, 1991). As the participants also applied them to gay and lesbian target conditions, this suggests that there may

be no inherent reason to assume that gay and lesbian individuals would deviate from the stereotyping patterns observed in heterosexual individuals.

4.3.3 Conclusion

This study aimed to assess whether the prevalent gender inverted stereotypes associated with gay men and lesbian women still apply in contemporary UK society. Given recent advancements in societal acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals (PEW, 2020; 2023), it was anticipated that these stereotypes may be evolving. The findings of this study confirmed that gender inverted stereotypes persist, depicting gay men as more feminine and lesbians as more masculine than their heterosexual counterparts, regardless of increased acceptance (PEW, 2020; 2023).

Although gender inverted, further investigation revealed that both gay men and lesbians may not be seen to match their counterparts. For example, gay men were seen as feminine but not as feminine as heterosexual women, possessing a mix of masculine and feminine characteristics. This challenges the traditional binary view suggested by IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987), suggesting a need for further research to better reflect current perceptions. The study also explored whether heterosexual individuals applied gender inverted stereotypes more than LGBTQ+ individuals. Refuting the second hypothesis, both groups applied gender and gender inverted stereotypes, similarly, indicating widespread societal influence rather than differences based on sexual orientation. This challenges previous research that LGBTQ+ individuals reject these stereotypes (Kitzinger, 1991). Overall, this study highlights the prevalence and importance of continued research into gender stereotypes, particularly in relation to sexual orientation and how they impact gay and lesbian individuals. The findings from this study will be further synthesised in Chapter 8, where the strengths and limitations of this chapter will be discussed along with the qualitative findings. The next chapter will present the first qualitative analysis, which explores gender inverted stereotypes from a heterosexual perspective. As much

of the research in the area utilises a quantitative method, it is important to explore the topic through a qualitative lens, adding deeper nuance and understanding.

Chapter 5 Understanding the Persistence of Gender Inverted Stereotypes from a Heterosexual Perspective.

5.1 Introduction

This first qualitative analysis aims to explore the quantitative findings further, investigating the application of gender inverted stereotypes. This chapter investigates the accounts of five heterosexual individuals who discuss their understandings of stereotypes about gay men and lesbian women. The research aimed to answer the question: "How do people who identify as heterosexual perceive and understand gay and lesbian gender inverted stereotypes in contemporary UK society?"

Participants were interviewed about their perspectives on stereotypes related to gay men and lesbian women and their understandings of what gay and lesbian stereotypes are. The discussions involved both societal stereotypes commonly attributed to the lesbian and gay community and participants' own stereotypes concerning gay and lesbian individuals. Photo elicitation was used to encourage conversation. This was valuable because discussing gender inverted stereotypes can be sensitive and potentially uncomfortable, due to possible concerns about being offensive or discriminatory. Adam, Carol, Grace, Sally and Tracy were requested to provide images that they believed were relevant to gay men, lesbian women, and overall stereotypes of LGBTQ+ individuals. Photo elicitation allowed them to visually express their understandings of the stereotypes associated with gay men and lesbian women, while also serving as a starting point for discussion. The researcher also shared nine images to encourage further discussion.

When analysing the data, three themes were identified. These are summarised below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1*Themes for the heterosexual sample analysis.*

Theme
1. “They look just normal to me, like, like normal people”: Heterosexuality as the norm.
2. “You’ll always look at someone and go Oh, they’re gay or they’re a lesbian”: The ingrained nature of the gender inverted stereotype.
3. Learnt behaviours, influenced by media representations that often deviate from true representations.

5.2 Theme 1: “They look just normal to me, like, like normal people “: Heterosexuality as the norm

To expand on why gender inverted stereotypes are still applied, which was identified in the quantitative element of this research, this theme will discuss the continued presence of the stereotypes from a heterosexual perspective. Research supports that stereotypes are frequently overgeneralised, inaccurate, and resistant to change (Meyer, 2015), and despite societal changes, such as improvements in acceptance and law (PEW, 2020; 2023), the gender inverted stereotype may persist. This first theme discusses the pervasiveness of gender inverted stereotypes and how this may link with heteronormativity. Throughout the interviews, participants compared gay and lesbian individuals to heterosexual people and frequently used words such as “normal” in their descriptions. This implies that the participants were drawing on ideas relating to heteronormativity, which is a concept that suggests that heterosexuality is seen as the norm (Robinson, 2016). Heteronormativity privileges gender conformity,

heterosexuality, and nuclear family structures over other forms of gender expression, sexuality, and family arrangements (Oswald et al., 2005). This concept is seen as problematic for gay and lesbian individuals as it may lead to discrimination (Meyer, 2015). Additionally, homonormativity is a strategy used within sexual minority groups, such as LGBTQ+ communities, to maintain heteronormative social norms (Duggan, 2002). This theme aims to answer the research question by discussing the continued prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes due to heterosexual norms, from a heterosexual sample. Presented in this theme are quotes from Tracy, Adam and Grace.

As previously mentioned, participants indicated throughout the interviews that heterosexuality is perceived as the norm, a view that extended to relationships as well. The participants in this study suggested that gay and lesbian relationships follow heterosexual ideals by demonstrating masculine and feminine roles. Whilst discussing the image below presented by the researcher, Tracy suggested that the women do not fit typical lesbian stereotypes, and look “normal”



(Researcher elicited image)

“Well, these women obviously they don't have the typical stereotype, you know, for lesbian women. ... both of these women they dress like normal people, they look like normal women. And if I were to look at this picture, you could just as well be like, I don't know if they're mother and daughter...” (Lines 268-272)

Tracy implies that these women do not fit the masculine stereotypes that may be typically associated with lesbian women. She describes them as appearing "normal," suggesting they may be heterosexual and have a mother-daughter relationship, rather than a romantic one. Indeed, it is of note that she uses the phrase "normal" twice to describe how the couple in the image look and dress, suggesting that she may be drawing on heterosexual assumptions, defaulting to viewing individuals as heterosexual unless explicitly stated otherwise. Heteronormativity not only implies heterosexual attraction but also mandates gender conformity (Warner, 1999), as the women may be seen as gender conforming, heterosexuality may be assumed. This observation further supports research indicating that gender nonconformity acts as a visible marker for non-heterosexual identities; individuals who do not conform to gender norms are often assumed to be gay or lesbian (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Nielsen et al., 2000; Tolman et al., 2016).

Adam had similar views to Tracy when viewing the same image but suggested, instead, that the two women may be friends rather than family members.

"So, stereotypically if you see two women who exhibit physical feminine characteristics like hair makeup, etc, you would stereotypically look at them and think oh they're just go you know 'girlfriends' you know on a day or a night out, you know, they're just the best of friends ...but you would almost subconsciously take a step back to think well hang on, are they actually lesbian? Because one doesn't look like a lesbian? Are they really?" (Lines 340-349).

Like Tracy, Adam suggests that the women do not fit the typical stereotype of a romantic relationship, aligning with heteronormative expectations of what is considered a "normal" relationship in society, and considers them to look more like friends. This quote links with the

concept of heterosexism (also known as heterosexual assumption), which is a socially constructed ideology that disadvantages sexual minorities by assuming that people are inherently heterosexual; viewing non-heterosexual identities, when recognised, as “unnatural,” and in need of specific justification (Herek, 2007). Adam’s words suggest a certain stereotype must be conformed to for lesbian sexuality to be identified, and he then questions this assumption, as one individual is possibly masculine presenting. However, it is important to note that the possible romantic positioning of the women in the image was not identified, and they were labelled as close friends.

These comments from Tracy and Adam further imply that a couple may be expected to conform to lesbian appearance norms. Nonconformity to this stereotype may result in them being perceived as friends or family instead of romantic partners, although the image may appear to some to be of a romantic nature. This is supported by Thorne et al. (2021), who found that when discussing general concepts of romantic relationships, heterosexual participants were more likely to imagine heterosexual relationships rather than same-gender ones. This tendency is reflected in Tracy and Adam's remarks, suggesting a bias toward understanding romance within a heterosexual framework, which may reinforce heterosexism by promoting a generic view of relationship ideals.

Grace also discusses relationship roles when viewing the same image as above; however, she identified that the gender inverted stereotype was visible within the image.

“I also think it's quite interesting because this image does depict, to some extent, the butch and feminine stereotype. So, the woman on the left has slightly shorter hair; she would arguably be the more butch type of lesbian, and then the woman on the right is what you would see as a normal heterosexual woman. I think not the most obvious stereotypically what you would say as a lesbian woman. So,

she's the more feminine type of lesbian, but yeah, I think most images would depict this, of sort of having both sides of the coin there.” (Lines 618-625).

In this quote, Grace reflects on the gender stereotypes in the image, highlighting the existence of the "butch" and "feminine" stereotypes commonly associated with lesbian women. Grace identifies the woman on the left as fitting the “butch” stereotype due to her shorter hair, which aligns with societal norms of masculinity. In contrast, the woman on the right is described as resembling a "normal" heterosexual woman, suggesting that she represents traditional femininity. By associating one woman with a “butch” stereotype and the other with a “normal heterosexual woman”, she implicitly references traditional gender roles that are typically assigned to heterosexual couples. The assumption that a same-gender couple should exhibit a balance of masculine and feminine traits mirrors the heterosexist presumption that relationships must conform to traditional male-female dynamics to be understandable or relatable (Robinson, 2016). The quotes from these three participants highlight the challenges that LGBTQ+ individuals face when their relationships do not fit into these preconceived heterosexual norms. The expectation that a same-gender couple must display a balance of masculine and feminine traits not only reinforces gender inverted stereotypes but also highlights the problematic nature of heterosexual assumptions.

The following image was presented by Tracy when discussing lesbian stereotypes. The heterosexist assumption was again demonstrated here in Tracy’s explanation of her chosen image, suggesting that she perceives individuals may look for the opposite of themselves in relationships.



(Participant elicited image)

“It just made me think at the end of the day, they also attracted to other women, so probably they're looking for the opposite. So maybe a lesbian that looks, you know, like, the stereotypical feminine type, if that makes sense. So, in a way, I would say that if they are indeed Lesbian couple, I would say that the woman in the blue shirt has more masculine traits, whereas the woman in the red shirt she has, like typical feminine traits, even with the earrings and the colour of the shirt, and even the haircut is more feminine” (Lines 159-164).

Tracy identifies that lesbian women may look for the opposite in a partner, as heterosexual individuals would; for example, a masculine presenting individual may seek a feminine presenting woman and vice versa. This again may reinforce the heterosexist assumption that relationships should adhere to traditional male-female dynamics to be perceived as appropriate (Robinson, 2016). The application of these stereotypes to this image may suggest that, although this is a same-sex relationship, it is still assumed that it must follow the norms of a heterosexual relationship, one partner must be more masculine and the other feminine, regardless of their actual gender (Fischer, 2013). This quote supports the idea that heteronormativity shapes individuals' attractions, creating an expectation of attraction to gender-conforming partners (Warner, 1999). For example, nonconforming individuals may find gender-conforming

partners more appealing, as this attraction can simplify access to, or reinforce, heteronormative structures (Robinson, 2016).

Continuing with the discussion around what is seen as the norm, Tracy shares a personal experience to describe her encounter with a possible lesbian couple.

“I think that my neighbours, I think they are in same sex couple, and they do have a baby, and I’ve lived in this property for about a year. I can see that they do live together, and they look after the baby and stuff, but they look just normal to me, like, like normal people, honestly, you wouldn’t be able to be able to tell that they are like lesbian couple, unless, you know, you would have talked to them or live next to them and things like that.” (Lines 31-36).

Tracy mentioned her neighbours, whom she assumes are a lesbian couple with a baby. Since the neighbours do not conform to typical lesbian stereotypes in their appearance, Tracy describes them as looking “normal,” leading her to suggest that it is hard to identify them as lesbians. Tracy may have connected traditional norms with having a home and raising a family within the nuclear family model. From a heteronormative perspective, what is considered “normal” is rooted in an essentialist understanding of the connections between sex, sexuality, and family, which upholds and privileges the traditional nuclear family (Osmond & Thorne, 1993; Oswald et al., 2005). Additionally, the quote is supported by a queer perspective, which views same-sex families as homonormative because they may seek to replicate the concept and structure of a traditional nuclear family, conforming to heteronormative ideals to fit into society (Duggan, 2002). As the women have a child, this leads Tracey to question their relationship, which may reinforce heterosexual assumptions by trying to fit them into the norms of the ‘nuclear family’.

5.2.1 Theme Summary

Overall, the quotes within this theme support concepts such as heteronormativity, homonormativity, and heterosexual assumptions. Heteronormativity is evident in the participants' comments, which often frame relationships through a heterosexual lens, reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations. Additionally, the concept of heterosexual assumption in the participants' quotes suggests that, unless otherwise indicated, individuals are often presumed to be heterosexual. This assumption led to misinterpretations of same-sex relationships, as the lack of conformity to gender inverted stereotypes may result in the assumption of familial or friendly connections rather than romantic. Homonormativity, on the other hand, suggests that even within same-sex relationships, there is pressure to conform to heteronormative ideals, such as traditional family structures and gender roles. This is shown in the way participants described relationships, implying that deviations from the typical relationship norms led to questioning of the relationship. For example, when participants expressed confusion regarding non-conforming lesbian relationships, it highlighted the ingrained belief that these relationships should mirror heterosexual norms to be considered valid. The persistence of gender inverted stereotypes may be linked with these concepts. These factors shape how individuals perceive, understand and interpret same-sex relationships, often limiting their understanding to traditional gender norms and reinforcing societal biases against non-conforming identities. To further explore the research question, the next theme discusses the ingrained nature of the gender inverted stereotypes.

5.3 Theme 2: “You'll always look at someone and go Oh, they’re gay or they're a lesbian”: The ingrained nature of the gender inverted stereotype.

The findings from the quantitative element of this research suggested that gender inverted stereotypes persist. This theme explores qualitatively why the gender inverted stereotypes that

are applied to gay men and lesbian women may still be prominent in society, from the perspective of the heterosexual sample. The heterosexual participants in this study suggested that the gender inverted stereotypes that are attributed to gay men and lesbian women appear to be an ingrained, learned behaviour from society. Participants shared why they perceive the stereotypes to be so fixed in society by highlighting real-world examples. The theme emphasises the strength of the stereotype, whilst conversely acknowledging that gay and lesbian individuals often deviate from it. Presented in this theme are quotes from Sally, Grace and Tracy.

The strength of stereotypes was discussed by participants by suggesting that the act of applying stereotypes is a natural tendency, and whilst some stereotypes may lead to harm, the act itself is innate to human behaviour. For example, Sally provided an explanation of why these gender inverted stereotypes may be hard to eradicate.

“I don't think you'll ever get rid of stereotypes. And you'll always look at someone and go Oh, they're gay or they're a lesbian. I just, I don't even, in like 50 years, ... there will always be a barrier. And I don't know why. I don't know what it is. ... I think maybe because it's been so long that they weren't accepted. I don't know.” (Lines 67-70).

Sally suggested that the gender inverted stereotypes will remain strong, and an individual will always be identifiable as gay or lesbian. In line with Rule's (2017) concept of gaydar, Sally further highlights that it is easy to identify individuals as gay or lesbian from their outward appearance. Rule (2017) suggests that one's sexual orientation can be signalled through indirect cues such as physical appearance, body language and vocal characteristics. However, it is argued by Miller (2018) that gaydar is merely the application of stereotyping, which is

supported by this quote. This is further supported when Sally states, “You'll always look at someone and go, oh, they're gay or they're a lesbian”, implying that recognising an individual's sexuality from their appearance is easily identifiable, stereotype based gaydar might appear largely harmless if the application results in mostly accurate conclusions (Rieger et al., 2010). Linking with Sally's quotes, much of the previous research on stereotype based gaydar (e.g., Johnson et al., 2007; Rieger et al., 2010) has argued that stereotypes (e.g., associating gay men with femininity) lead to accurate judgments about sexual orientation. However, Cox et al. (2015) suggest that gaydar has become a "Legitimising Myth" (p. 9) that encourages the use of stereotypes to categorise others. Sally perceives that there will always be a barrier when trying to eliminate gender inverted stereotypes, due to a long history of non-acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals, demonstrating their ingrained nature.

Grace also discusses how history may affect gender inverted stereotypes. When asked about the similarity of the images supplied by both participant and researcher, she suggested that stereotypes may be learnt and that is why they are still prominent.

“I think they were quite similar, and I think that's because even though I don't think I hold prejudiced views, I can definitely very quickly notice a stereotype and obviously, Google, throwing up their stereotypical images, is going to relate to what I think, because that's what I was brought up with to know as a stereotype. And I think it's what a lot of people of, particularly our generation, sort of 20 and over, I'd say, even just that sort of generation would have been exposed to those stereotypes, they're still quite prominent.” (Lines 721-727)

Grace opens by suggesting that the similarity in the images presented in the interview is due to the strength of the stereotypes. She adds that Google would identify similar stereotypical

images at random due to the ingrained nature of the stereotypes in society. The issue with Google identifying similar images at random is that it highlights how easily stereotypes are recognised and perpetuated. When algorithms match and categorise images based on stereotypical traits, it emphasises how pervasive these stereotypes are, whilst perpetuating them. Grace's quote suggests that such biases are not only widespread but also may be reinforced by automated systems, perpetuating and amplifying these stereotypes rather than challenging or mitigating them. Grace also states that stereotypes may be a generational learnt behaviour, she suggests that people of her age may have been exposed to the same gender inverted stereotypes, and that may be why they are prominent and influential in society.

The participants in this study found it easy to identify the stereotypes that are applied to gay men and lesbian women, demonstrating their ingrained nature. However, they were also aware that these stereotypes are not always conformed to. Grace discusses ideas around being "obviously gay" and that the "real world" is different. She also questions how many gay and lesbian individuals conform to gender inverted stereotypes.

"This general idea that it's so obvious that they are gay, and in the real world, obviously, that's not the case all the time. Some people do fit that stereotype, which is why I put it on here, but I just find it so interesting, because I wonder, and I don't personally know, I wonder what percentage of the population does fit that stereotype versus the people who don't." (Lines 267-271).

Grace begins by suggesting that it is "obvious" when someone is gay, which reflects the enduring power of stereotypes and the immediate assumptions that arise when individuals appear to conform to gender inverted stereotypes. However, Grace acknowledges that not all gay and lesbian individuals conform to these stereotypes. This highlights a key issue, despite an awareness that LGBTQ+ individuals do not all fit a single reductive stereotype, the gender

inverted stereotypes continue to be applied. This again highlights the strength of the gender inverted stereotypes; even though the participants have real-world examples of nonconformity, the stereotype is still used. Grace then asks a question about the actual number of individuals who conform to these stereotypes, which suggests that there may be considerable diversity within the LGBTQ+ community, which is often overlooked. It is interesting that Grace considers the number of people who do conform to the gender inverted stereotypes, highlighting that, on second thought, the conformity may not be as high as assumed. Overall, Grace's quote emphasises the need to recognise and appreciate the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community, rather than relying on stereotypical assumptions about someone's appearance due to their sexuality.

Sally also suggests that she realises that the stereotype does not reflect the lived experience of gay men and lesbian women. She agrees with Grace, suggesting that there is diversity within the group.

“Just because I'm saying that, like, that is the stereotype, I know, myself, that it's not like that, and I think that's the same with other people as well. Even they know the stereotype, I think a lot of people know that it's just, it's just a stereotype. It doesn't mean that everyone is that way.” (Lines 379-382).

Sally recognises that the gender inverted stereotypes are not conformed to by most, yet they are applied to gay and lesbian individuals. Sally extends this understanding to others, implying that many people also recognise that stereotypes are not definitive truths. This is positive as it may imply that individuals might recognise that gender inverted stereotypes are overly simplistic and do not accurately represent each gay and lesbian person. Research supports the suggestion that sexual minorities report possessing traits that align both with the norms of their

own gender and with those of another gender, a phenomenon known as “gender-role flexibility” (Pillard, 1991; Riggle et al., 2008). However, this quote supports the crucial issue that, despite individuals being aware that gender inverted stereotypes are inaccurate, they may continue to use them to generalise people's sexuality.

Tracy also perceives that the stereotypes do not align with the reality of gay and lesbian people, suggesting that increased contact may be beneficial. She adds that limited exposure to lesbian and gay individuals who do not conform to gender inverted stereotypes may be why the stereotype is applied so easily.

“I'm not sure why things are the way they are because obviously, they don't reflect a reality. But it's just, I think, when you don't have firsthand experience, when you haven't actually met homosexual people, because it's not that easy to tell, you kind of create these images in your head to be able to actually make a distinction. But as with most of the time, they just don't, don't reflect reality. So, in real life, it's actually most of the time is something that's taken maybe from movies or from media, or the way we actually consume this information, that the things that we are exposed to, but this doesn't reflect real life” (Lines 345- 351).

Tracy suggests that due to individuals having a lack of experience with gay and lesbian people, they may automatically apply the gender inverted stereotypes, as they may have no other reference point. In support of Tracy's thoughts, Salvati et al. (2019) state that individuals who have no contact with gay or lesbian people are more likely to hold stereotypical beliefs, so increasing contact with gay and lesbian individuals may contribute to the reduction of gender inverted stereotypes, alongside prejudiced and homophobic attitudes. It is also suggested that knowing a gay person who defies sociocultural stereotypes can significantly decrease gay

stereotyping (Allport, 1954; Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001). Tracy also acknowledges that gender inverted stereotypes do not reflect all gay and lesbian individuals, but individuals create these gender inverted images in their heads to identify individuals.

Tracy's quote further identifies media as a possible reason for gender inverted stereotypes, she suggests that, in the absence of direct connections with gay and lesbian people, individuals may rely on simplified and often inaccurate portrayals from media sources, forming generalised images that do not truly reflect reality. This aligns with social psychological theories on stereotype formation, such as Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) and Cultivation Theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), which propose that media representations can significantly influence perceptions and reinforce stereotypes when firsthand experiences are lacking.

Grace also discusses her contact with gay individuals, suggesting that her reference point represented the typical gender inverted stereotypes

“Even as a kid when I was younger, ... that was all that I had ever come across. So, I think if I think back to when I was younger, so say 10 years ago, my sort of awareness of gay people was from one person I knew was gay, because they told me, and he was very flamboyant and camp in nature. So that was my own exposure there. And then just general depictions in the sort of media. So those very stereotype, stereotypical sort of images of masculine for females and feminine for males, if you're thinking of them being a gay person.” (Lines 25-34).

Grace reflects on her childhood and how gender inverted stereotypes had shaped her thinking about gay men and lesbian women. Due to her limited exposure with gay and lesbian

individuals, this led to the assumption that all gay and lesbian individuals fit the gender inverted stereotypes. As Grace only knew one gay man and they conformed to the feminine stereotype, she assumed that this was the reality for all gay men, which was further enforced by media portrayals. This suggests that limited exposure to the gay community could be problematic because of a narrow representation possibly shown in past media. Depicting gay individuals in the media who do not conform to gender inverted stereotypes could help reduce the reliance on these stereotypes and more accurately reflect the realities of gay and lesbian people.

5.3.1 Theme Summary

This theme investigated the reasons behind the ingrained prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes associated with gay men and lesbian women from a heterosexual perspective. While Study 1 indicated that these stereotypes persisted, this theme explored the underlying reasons for this. The heterosexual participants in this study proposed that these gender inverted stereotypes were largely learned behaviours influenced by societal norms. This theme demonstrated the resilience of the stereotype, and conversely, the participants recognised that gay and lesbian individuals frequently do not conform, but the gender inverted stereotype continued to be actively applied. One of the attributes of persistence was media, the next theme will explore this further to understand how heterosexual people perceive and understand gender inverted stereotypes.

5.4 Theme 3: Learnt behaviours, influenced by media representations that often deviate from true representations.

This theme indicates that media such as TV, film, publications and social media may contribute to reinforcing and possibly encouraging the use of gender inverted stereotypes. Research from van Meer and Pollman (2022) suggests that the media has the potential to influence the shaping of stereotypes associated with gay men and lesbian women, and is evident

in various media such as movies, publications, and television shows (Sink, 2018). Media can impact the formation of stereotypical perceptions, which may lead individuals to subconsciously establish connections between these gender inverted stereotypes and portrayals of gay characters (Hogg & Vaughan, 2018). Participants suggested that the media may help to develop perceptions and understandings of the gender inverted stereotypes. However, this may be problematic for gay and lesbian individuals, as it may promote oversimplified stereotypes that may not accurately represent their realities. Participants add that the media could be beneficial in reducing or eliminating these stereotypes. Presented here are quotes from Adam, Grace and Tracy.

When asked where he had seen the gender inverted stereotypes applied, Adam suggests the media has a significant impact.

“So, first of all, I think the media is a big one. You know, if you look at a lot of common TV shows and movies, a lot of them do have that kind of very binary lens with gender and sexuality. So, you know, if you even look at comedy programmes, you know things like The Inbetweeners. I don't know if you've watched that, but there's a lot of kind of references and insinuations to being gay, you know, and it's almost seen as like, a negative thing.” (Lines 83-87)

Adam opens with the suggestion that the media may have a large influence on the stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women, and TV shows and movies may shape societal perceptions. Adam suggests that the media often depicts gay men and lesbian women in an oversimplified manner that uses a binary view of gender. This suggests that media representations may frequently fail to capture the full spectrum of experiences and the individuality within the LGBTQ+ community.

Adam also discussed how comedy programmes, such as *The Inbetweeners*, often include negative references and insinuations related to being gay. This suggests that these programmes may actively shape social attitudes, reinforcing and normalising negative perceptions. While *The Inbetweeners* can be viewed as a product of its time (aired between 2008 and 2010), it was released during a period when phrases like “you’re gay” or “that’s so gay” were often dismissed as a joke, rather than overtly offensive. Even when not intended to cause harm, such media representations can reinforce and normalise negative perceptions of gay identities, undermining efforts toward inclusivity and respect. Adam’s words suggest that by focusing on simplified and stereotypical representations, the media can contribute to the deepening of these negative stereotypes, making them seem acceptable. More recent research from Bond et al. (2019) suggests that insults may have remained relevant in media until more recently, stating that heterosexual characters were most likely to engage in dialogue that insulted, joked, or mocked lesbian or gay sexualities.

Grace suggests that the media may encourage the use of particular LGBTQ+ stereotypes from an early age, even though she is aware that the reality for gay and lesbian individuals differs.

“Not all of those people fit the stereotype. So, I’ve got direct contradictions there to the stereotype, yet I’m still aware of the stereotype. And that’s because of the media, giving that to me and sort of expressing that to me through all of my childhood and even now... even when you know of people who perhaps don’t fit the stereotype, you still are aware of that, and it’s still quite prominent because of the things that you’re exposed to, like the media.” (Lines 740-746).

Grace suggests that while individuals may experience direct contradictions to the stereotypes presented to them, they may remain highly aware of these stereotypes due to the media. This indicates that although Grace knows of direct contradiction to the stereotypes, the media continues to encourage these perceptions, her personal encounters or observations do not seem to challenge stereotypical beliefs. Grace mentions that the media has been shaping her perceptions and understanding since childhood, and continues to do so. Early and continuous exposure to stereotypes could deeply ingrain these views, making them difficult to reduce. This points to a discrepancy between knowledge (recognising that stereotypes are inaccurate) and perception (the stereotype's continued influence). With influences, such as the media, using gender inverted stereotypes, this may encourage their persistence in society.

However, Tracy suggests that without these gender inverted stereotypes, identifying the characters' sexual orientation might be challenging.

“We’re trying to be inclusive. Look, we’ve selected, I don’t know, a gay man or lesbian woman, and we need in the media, you need to be able to make this distinction between the homosexual and the heterosexual. And I think this is the reason in movies and in media, they attribute these stereotypical features.” (Lines 361-364).

Tracy suggests that through the use of gender inverted stereotypes, the media may be trying to be inclusive by including LGBTQ+ characters. However, the characters that identify as gay or lesbian may be identified through the gender inverted stereotype. Tracy again discusses the importance of being able to distinguish an individual's sexuality, which may imply that understanding and acknowledging the differences between sexual identities is crucial. This

approach may imply that the distinction between these identities is significant in judging an individual.

Both Grace and Tracy's quotes support the findings from Rothenberg (2007), who suggests that the media can establish stereotypes about gay men and lesbian women, which influences the self-perception of viewers. Both quotes suggest that the media may depict gay and lesbian individuals through a narrow societal perspective. The absence of diverse gay characters and the use of gender inverted characters in the media could establish cognitive connections, promoting the development of gender inverted stereotypes (Sink, 2018). Although Gerbner's Cultivation Theory (1969) is outdated, it suggests that repetitive exposure to media messages can shape attitudes, particularly in areas where direct experience is limited (Morgan et al., 2009), which may highlight a possible reason why the participants continue to apply gender inverted stereotypes to gay and lesbian individuals.

However, these repetitive images could be beneficial if inclusive representations were used. Adam's next quote suggests that the media could be used to normalise LGBTQ+ identities.

"To start from an early age, but not just an early age, it needs to be for the whole process, you know, things like EastEnders, Corrie, Coronation Street. You know, things like that need to have more of these, more people from that community embedded." (Lines 457-459).

Adam argues that exposing people to diverse representations of gay and lesbian individuals from an early age is crucial. This suggests that introducing accurate representations in childhood could diminish the negative connotations and gender inverted stereotypes often associated with gay and lesbian people. This early exposure can help to normalise diverse

sexual orientations. Adam specifically suggests that popular UK TV shows, such as *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street*, should include a broader range of gay and lesbian characters, as these widely watched and influential shows have the potential to significantly impact viewers' perceptions. Additionally, these characters should display an array of identities that differ from the gender inverted stereotypes to help show the diversity of LGBTQ+ individuals. Research supports that to advance acceptance and understanding of LGBTQ+ individuals, the media needs to use accurate and diverse representation (Gonta et al., 2017). This analysis highlights that, by featuring more diverse portrayals in these mainstream programmes, rather than perpetuating traditional stereotypes, the media could help to shift societal understandings. Research from Żerebecki et al. (2021) supports that TV content that uses numerous, likeable, LGBTQ+ characters can promote positive societal attitudes. Adam's quote supports this by suggesting that if viewers see a broader and more accurate depiction of gay and lesbian individuals, it can help to reduce stigma and challenge existing stereotypes.

5.4.1 Theme Summary

Overall, this theme suggests that the media may influence the stereotypes that are applied to gay men and lesbian women. Participants view LGBTQ+ characters in the media as aligning with and reinforcing gender inverted stereotypes, which may, in turn, influence viewers' perceptions. Although participants suggested they were aware that the reality of LGBTQ+ people was different to what is portrayed in the media, the media aided the perceived prevalence of the gender inverted stereotype. By incorporating more diverse portrayals into mainstream programmes, rather than reinforcing traditional stereotypes, the media could influence and change societal attitudes. A wider and more accurate depiction could help to diminish stigma and confront existing stereotypes.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In summary, these themes suggest that the gender inverted stereotypes associated with gay men and lesbian women may still persist in society, and this analysis builds on the findings from the quantitative element by further exploring the possible reasons why. Despite the presence of diverse real-world visual examples, stereotypes were perceived by the heterosexual participants in this study as essentially being ingrained in individuals' minds. The first theme supported this by discussing how perceptions aligned with key concepts such as heteronormativity, homonormativity, and heterosexual assumptions. The persistence of gender inverted stereotypes was closely linked to these concepts, shaping perceptions of same-sex relationships and reinforcing societal biases against non-conforming identities. These findings directly respond to the research question by highlighting the ways in which heterosexual participants perceive and understand gay and lesbian stereotypes.

The second theme moved on to investigate the reasons behind the ingrained prevalence of gender inverted stereotypes associated with gay men and lesbian women. The heterosexual participants suggested that these stereotypes were learned behaviours influenced by societal norms. While recognising that individuals often deviated from these stereotypes, participants acknowledged that gender inverted stereotypes remained pervasive and did not accurately reflect the experiences of most gay and lesbian individuals. By acknowledging that these stereotypes are learned and possibly inaccurate, the theme highlights how heterosexual participants processed and internalised these perceptions regardless of contradictory real-world examples.

The third and final theme emphasised the significant impact of media on the stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women. Participants suggested that LGBTQ+ characters in media often aligned with and reinforced gender inverted stereotypes, affecting viewers'

perceptions. Despite their awareness that the reality of LGBTQ+ individuals differed from media portrayals, participants acknowledged the strong influence of media in establishing these stereotypes. The theme argued that increasing diverse portrayals in mainstream media could help change public attitudes, reduce stigma, and challenge existing stereotypes by providing wider and more accurate representations of gay and lesbian individuals.

Overall, these themes provide an analysis of how heterosexual individuals may perceive and understand gay and lesbian stereotypes, illustrating the complex relationship between ingrained societal norms, personal experiences, and media representations. The next chapter of this thesis will expand on these findings by exploring LGBTQ+ experiences with gender inverted stereotypes. Chapter 6 highlights a wider range of experiences and perspectives, increasing understanding of gender inverted stereotypes, in response to the thesis's aims.

Chapter 6 LGBTQ+ Understandings of the Gender Inverted Stereotypes, to Conform or Resist

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how LGBTQ+ individuals engage with, resist, and conform to the stereotypes that are linked to being gay or lesbian. This study aimed to investigate gender inverted stereotypes from an LGBTQ+ perspective, highlighting their individual experiences. Alicia, Amy, Carl, Jean, Rae, Rachel, Sean and Sarah were asked additional questions about stereotypes concerning gay men and lesbian women to explore their experiences with stereotypes. The research aimed to answer the question "How do LGBTQ+ people in the UK understand, apply, conform and/or resist gender inverted stereotypes?"

Three primary themes were identified and are outlined in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1

Themes for the LGBTQ+ sample analysis.

Theme
1. The Assumption of Conformity to Gender Inverted Stereotypes.
2. A journey with conforming to gender inverted stereotypes
3. The safety in resisting gender inverted stereotypes

6.2 Theme 1: The Assumption of Conformity to Gender Inverted Stereotypes.

This theme identifies possible assumptions from outside the LGBTQ+ community, suggesting that gay men and lesbian women may be expected to conform to gender inverted stereotypes. The LGBTQ+ participants indicated that they were aware of gender inverted

stereotypes and acknowledged their ingrained nature, which was also suggested by the heterosexual participants in this research. However, this theme brings personal experiences to the application of the gender inverted stereotype, highlighting a potential gap in understanding between the LGBTQ+ community and the assumptions held by those outside of it. Participants suggested that while there is significant diversity within the community, outsiders often assume that all gay men are feminine and all lesbian women are masculine. Presented here are quotes from Sarah, Carl, Rachel, Sean and Jean.

Sarah presented the image below of the actor Lea DeLaria, as their character Boo, from the TV show “Orange is the New Black” and suggested that people presume this is how all lesbian women look.



(Participant elicited image)

“She essentially portrays a stereotypical lesbian or what people presume lesbians to be like, she's butch, she's got tattoos, she's got short hair, you know, ... it kind of fits the stereotype of what I think a lot of people presume lesbians to either look like or be like ... if people could draw an image of a lesbian that's essentially what they would draw.” (Lines 300-306)

Sarah's quote reflects the persistence of the stereotypical image of lesbians, emphasising common visual markers associated with a "butch" identity, such as "tattoos" and "short hair". Rothblum (1994; 2010) identified that the most well-known and distinctive lesbian subculture is butch, where stereotypically lesbian women identify with masculine roles, clothes and short hair. Sarah recognises that these characteristics fit a culturally constructed "image" of lesbian identity, hinting at societal pressures that shape and perhaps limit the understanding of lesbian identity to a narrow representation. This finding is also supported by McLean (2008), who suggests that the butch identity has become the prominent lesbian stereotype, which erases the experiences of non-butch lesbians and enforces the assumption that butch women are authentic or "real" lesbians. Sarah uses the phrase "if people could draw an image", which may highlight the power of the masculine lesbian stereotype and the popular assumption that lesbians should present this way. It also may emphasise how deeply ingrained these gender inverted stereotypes can be and how they inform people's perceptions and expectations.

Whilst viewing the below image, Carl expressed a similar thought, suggesting this is how individuals outside the community may describe the lesbian look.



(Researcher elicited image)

"I think yeah, that is a typical image of what, as I say, people would often outside of the community would see as a lesbian. So not only has she got short hair, she has got, it's all dyed and she's wearing the rainbow T shirt, so that bit, in this sort of

image, like it's staring you right in front of the face it's like, I'll scream at you, I look like a lesbian woman, so she is clearly gay.” (Lines 329-332)

This quote reflects Carl’s perception of societal stereotypes held by individuals outside the community. Again, the description highlights a specific set of visual cues, short, dyed hair and a rainbow T-shirt, which are commonly associated with lesbian women, suggesting that these attributes create a "typical image" that people outside the LGBTQ+ community recognise. Furthermore, this quote implies that societal norms and expectations may shape perceptions of identity. The reliance on physical appearance to define sexual orientation may reinforce stereotypes and reflect a broader tendency to categorise individuals based on external traits. This aligns with research from Blashill and Powlishta (2009) that suggests conforming to gender inverted stereotypes informs gay or lesbian sexuality. As suggested by Carl, if a woman looks like the image presented above, it may be assumed that they are lesbian, especially if the viewer lacks experience.

When discussing gay men, participants suggested that people outside the community may assume that they must conform to the stereotype of being feminine. Rachel presented the following image of a drag queen, and in discussing the image, suggests that this is how gay men are perceived by “outsiders”.



(Participant elicited image)

“I think there is a bit of a ... to an outsider, a stereotype that a lot of gay men like dressing up in women's clothes, like women's clothes and that they are doing like quite feminine things, that obviously, that's not the case. I think that's maybe how people perceive that. It's probably to do with what you do see in the media” (Lines 335-338).

Rachel presented the image of the drag queen and suggested that there is a common assumption that gay men like participating in feminine activities and dressing in an effeminate way. She notes that this perception often comes from individuals outside the LGBTQ+ community, referred to as “outsiders.” This stereotype may arise from a lack of exposure and understanding, as it is frequently depicted in various aspects of society, and, as Rachel suggests, the media. However, Rachel emphasises that this gender inverted assumption may not always be conformed to, highlighting possible diversity within the LGBTQ+ community. When discussing the above image, Rachel argued that the media plays a significant role in maintaining the feminine gay male stereotype by showcasing shows related to drag culture, which promotes an association between gay men and feminine attributes. The individual presented in the image is a contestant from *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, which has been a defining LGBTQ+ series for the millennial and Gen Z generations since 2009 and has played a significant role in bringing drag into the mainstream (Montgomery, 2019). Although drag culture has long been a part of the gay community, its increased visibility in media representations may inadvertently solidify the belief that gay men are inherently feminine, particularly among those outside the LGBTQ+ community (Gonzales & Cavazosb, 2016). Rachel agrees that the media may reinforce the feminine gender inverted stereotype associated with gay men.

Sean contributes by adding that *RuPaul's Drag Race* may be catered to heterosexual individuals, allowing them to experience the gay community, but in turn, may perpetuate gender inverted stereotypes.

“Yeah, so I guess ... RuPaul's drag race is, sort of, sensationalising gay people, gay culture to heterosexual people... In a way, it's very much for us [LGBTQ+ individuals], but also, it's so flamboyant and so, kind of perpetuates stereotypes in lots of ways, that it actually is also, mainly just for straight people to get to know us and to like us almost.” (Lines 296-301)

Sean offers his view on the show and suggests that it sensationalises gay men and gay culture for heterosexual viewers. He suggests that the programme may exaggerate certain elements of gay culture to create a more dramatic or entertaining representation, making it potentially more engaging or accessible for heterosexual viewers. Unda Charvel et al. (2024) suggest that watching *RuPaul's Drag Race* affects perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community among cisgender, heterosexual individuals, resulting in individuals gaining more knowledge and experiencing shifts in their attitudes toward the community. However, Sean suggests that this can sometimes lead to an oversimplified or exaggerated representation of LGBTQ+ identities. The flamboyant nature of the show may be seen as a double-edged sword; on the one hand, it celebrates and showcases LGBTQ+ culture in a vibrant and visible way, but on the other hand, it may reinforce stereotypes by presenting an exaggerated version of gay culture. This can lead to a skewed understanding of LGBTQ+ people, where only certain aspects are highlighted, while the diversity within the community is overshadowed. It is important to note that Sean uses the words “for straight people to get to know us and to like us almost”, which is interesting as this implies that gay people are still seen as a minority, possibly still striving to be “liked”.

Carl also discusses the assumptions outside the community about gay men being feminine, but adds that this may not be the reality for all gay men.

“Outside the LGBT community, there is still that view that all gay men are expected to be, look very feminine. And not necessarily all gay men are... some look like typical normal everyday people that can look just as much as the same as any other heterosexual man out there. You still wouldn't know that they're gay.” (Lines 285-291)

Carl begins by suggesting that individuals outside of the LGBTQ+ community assume that all gay men must appear feminine. From his experience, he suggests that this is not true. Carl states that some gay men look like “typical normal everyday people”. His suggestion implies a link to heteronormativity, and that typical heterosexual men may be viewed as the standard. As mentioned in Chapter 5, heteronormativity shapes individuals' perceptions of the world and influences the criteria by which they assess and judge others (Herek, 2009). Van der Toorn et al. (2020) suggest that because these assumptions reflect the majority's experiences, individuals are often expected to conform to them. This could benefit individuals who prefer not to disclose their sexuality, but it also suggests that conforming to gender norms and adhering to societal standards is not necessarily a personal choice but rather a means of fitting in. Butler (1990) discusses conformity to a "heterosexual matrix," where actions and behaviours are learned, rather than innate, imposed by normative heterosexuality. One of the defining concepts of the matrix is the rejection of gay and lesbian sexuality (Ben Hagai & Zurbriggen, 2022), which is shown in Carl's words, where it is stated that gay men blend in when not conforming to the gender inverted stereotype. This perspective also connects to the notion that gay men's identities may be influenced by prevailing heterosexual assumptions and challenges the

suggestion that all gay men conform to feminine stereotypes, as Carl's experience indicates that many men do not identify with this stereotype.

Participants suggest that the expectation to conform is quite prevalent outside the community; however, like Carl, Jean observed that the number of individuals who fit gender inverted stereotypes may be low.

“I think there's obviously a lot of gay people that just blend in, like and look normal or whatever. Yeah, or act normally that nobody bats an eye or notices, like no one notices because they don't think about their sexuality until or unless they come out to them. And unless you have a conversation with every single person and come out to every single individual person, people are not necessarily going to be aware that you are even gay” (Lines 470-474)

Jean highlights that many gay and lesbian individuals do not conform to the gender inverted stereotypes and appear “normal”, which implies heterosexuality. Jean suggests many gay people “blend in” and present themselves in ways that conform to typical gendered societal norms. This supports the theme of assuming conformity to gender inverted stereotypes; however, in reality, they may not be as conformed to as people assume. The LGBTQ+ participants in this analysis identified that these stereotypes are not conformed to by most. Jean adds that for others to be aware of an individual's sexuality, it often requires explicit disclosure or coming out. This suggests that without this personal sharing of this information, individuals may remain perceived as heterosexual by default, reinforcing the idea that LGBTQ+ identities are not always visible or acknowledged in everyday interactions.

To conclude this theme, Sarah adds that individuals may not be aware of the diversity within the LGBTQ+ community. She suggests that increased interaction with the LGBTQ+ community helped her move away from gender inverted stereotypes.

“...because I think a lot of people aren't necessarily aware, or they're only aware of the stereotypes that fit like a feminine, you know, flamboyant man, and butch lesbian, like, they're kind of two things that I think people kind of go to. And the more I kind of immerse myself in this world, makes me realise that these stereotypes realistically aren't accurate at all, and that there's such diversity within the LGBT community. But outside of that, people are so stuck in the old, like, traditional stereotypes of gay men and lesbian women, that it's hard for them to understand that these aren't the two only ways that people can be” (Lines 25-31).

Sarah's quote reflects a critical awareness of the limitations and inaccuracies of societal stereotypes surrounding LGBTQ+ identities. Sarah identifies a prevalent tendency among people outside the LGBTQ+ community to rely on simplistic, traditional stereotypes, such as viewing gay men as “feminine” or “flamboyant” and lesbians as “butch”. The quote highlights that gender inverted stereotypes not only fail to capture the true diversity of identities within the LGBTQ+ community but also reinforce narrow, binary understandings of gender and sexuality. Sarah's connection to the LGBTQ+ community has enabled her to recognise the variety of representations that exist outside of these stereotypes. She highlights a difference between the experiences of those within the community and those outside of it, which may be due to outdated views. When Sarah states, "people are so stuck in the old, like, traditional stereotypes", this highlights the challenge in dispelling ingrained societal norms and beliefs; however, Sarah's experience suggests that connection to the community may shift perceptions.

6.2.1 Theme Summary

In summary, the theme supports the persistence of the gender inverted stereotypes that were highlighted in chapters 4 and 5. The LGBTQ+ participants felt there is an assumption outside the community that all gay and lesbian individuals should or do conform to the gender inverted stereotypes. This emphasis on the gender inverted stereotypes that the participants discuss may limit the diversity and recognition of the LGBTQ+ community. The theme demonstrates an “insider and outsider” mentality throughout, with LGBTQ+ participants stating that “outsiders” lack understanding of the diversity within. The participants' experiences suggest that most of the community does not conform to the prescribed stereotypes, demonstrating the power of the gender inverted stereotype and its assumptions. This theme links back to heteronormativity, suggesting that LGBTQ+ identities are often invisible in everyday interactions and heterosexuality is assumed. Overall, the theme highlights a disconnect between the outside assumptions of the LGBTQ+ community and the experiences of the individuals within. The next themes will explore LGBTQ+ experiences further by discussing conforming to and resisting the gender inverted stereotypes.

6.3 Theme 2: A Journey with Conforming to the Gender Inverted Stereotypes.

This theme will explore the LGBTQ+ experiences that relate to the conformity of gender inverted stereotypes. Participants suggested that due to the ingrained societal belief that gay men are feminine and lesbian women are masculine, they felt the need and pressure to appear this way. The reasons to conform also included a wish to signal their membership in the LGBTQ+ community or to display their sexual identity to others. The interviews highlighted a journey of progressing through stages that linked to levels of conformity. With conformity being highest upon identifying their sexual orientation, the participants wanted to share this information with others through their appearance and mannerisms. Participants made changes

to their physical appearance as a way to navigate and express their identities, which may be a key element in social interactions. According to Hutson (2010), individuals often use appearance adjustments to signal their sexuality when developing their gay or lesbian identities. This strategy helps them communicate their sexual orientation, influencing how they are perceived and how they interact with others. Then, finally, participants identified when their identity was fully developed, conformity was no longer a requirement. Presented here are quotes from Rachel, Rae, Jean and Sean.

Rachel expresses that she is beginning a journey of identifying her sexuality, suggesting that as she becomes more open to her lesbian sexuality, she feels the need to appear and conform to the lesbian gender inverted stereotypes.

“So, I'm kind of like only like, the past like, year, two years, have I like, kind of accepted myself in my head. ... But I think recently, now I'm kind of getting more and more out, sometimes I wish that I looked, well looked more gay and I think sometimes I do want to go out and buy like clothes that I might not necessarily otherwise buy, just to look gay.” (Lines 530-534)

Rachel highlights that she has recently begun to accept her lesbian identity and is experiencing a desire to conform to the stereotypes. This suggests that she may wish to fit the gender inverted stereotypes, so her sexuality becomes obvious to others. Rachel's desire to "look more gay" links with increasing evidence from sexual orientation perception research, suggesting that judgments about others' sexual orientation are often based on theories of gender inversion (Kite & Deaux, 1987; Johnson et al., 2007; Lyons et al., 2014; Rieger et al., 2010; Stern et al., 2013). Rachel adds that typically, she may not purchase these items of clothing; research supports that when individuals develop gay and lesbian identities, they often express these identities through

appearance choices (Hutson, 2010). Stereotypes not only characterise others but also shape individuals' self-perceptions (Bem, 1974). Through self-stereotyping, people may align their identities with stereotype-consistent traits, internalising these characteristics as part of their gender identity and, consequently, their self-concept (Wood & Eagly, 2015). This is further supported by historical research from Stone (1970, p.397), who suggests that appearance enables the "identification of one another" and plays a vital role in social interactions, including nonverbal cues through which people perceive others' identities before any words are exchanged. This may provide an insight into how sexual identity evolves and links with the gender inverted stereotypes, suggesting that when identifying as gay or lesbian, an individual may feel the need to conform to feel that they are that sexuality.

Rae adds that they also changed their appearance to appear gay to others. They suggest that they were concerned that if they did not conform, people would be unaware of their sexuality.

“You know, I don't think there was anyone else pushing me to that [conforming]. I think it was more of that sense of like, I want to, like, I want other people to know this about me. Yeah, and no one's going to read me that way unless I actively change my exterior...Feeling like I have to maybe, like maybe overcompensate for that [being LGBTQ+] by dressing more masculine than I normally would do or like, like having more visible markers, like a Venus symbol or ... like the chequered shirt. Because, you know, if I don't do that, then no one's going to recognise that about me. ...I think I do try to bring stuff around gender and sexuality up quite early in conversation, just because I want people to know these things about me.” (Lines 719-736)

Rae suggests they may intentionally conform to stereotypes and amplify aspects of their appearance to make their sexuality more visible to others. This indicates a desire for people to recognise that they are not heterosexual. Rae aims to signal their sexuality before any interaction, by adopting a more traditionally masculine look through specific clothing and style choices. They highlight actions like wearing a Venus symbol or a chequered shirt and how this may serve to clearly communicate their sexual orientation, minimising ambiguity and reducing the likelihood of being misidentified. This may link with Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner et al., 1987), which proposes that an individual's personal self (consisting of unique characteristics) and social self (defined by prototypical group attributes) are positioned at opposite ends of a spectrum. As the social self becomes more prominent (the gender inverted stereotype conformity), the personal self undergoes depersonalisation, causing ingroup members to align their self-definition with prototypical group traits (Turner & Reynolds, 2012).

Participants seemed to want to signal their sexuality to others. Jean also explained that she may have conformed to the gender inverted stereotypes due to this.

“Yeah, when I was younger, I did [conform to the gender inverted stereotypes] ... But I think it was more to get, like get a potential partner or to kind of show, to signal [homosexuality] ...like wearing chinos and vans and things,...like a stretcher in your ear or like trying to shave like the side of your head or underneath or wear your hair a certain way or wearing like a snapback cap or like, baggy t shirt, like just anything that would be like oh, I'm not, by the way, I'm not straight.” (Lines 577-585)

Jean reflects on her experience of conforming to gender inverted stereotypes. She remembers making style choices and altering her appearance to show that she was not heterosexual. Jean

highlights that the reason she made these choices was to potentially attract a partner, allowing her to stand out to other lesbian individuals. Jean's words are supported by research that states that gay men and lesbian women may adopt stereotypical behaviours to navigate heteronormative settings (Brown, 2020). This suggests that individuals may feel the need to conform to the gender inverted stereotypes initially, to show their sexuality to others, including fellow LGBTQ+ individuals. Signalling their sexuality to others through their appearance may allow them to form bonds with others that fit the prototype of the in-group, allowing them to identify connections to the community. This is further supported by Tajfel (1978), who suggests that when a person identifies with a group, they see themselves through the key characteristics of that group (self-stereotyping). Since group prototypes may shape the appropriate gender inverted thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, individuals may think, feel, and act in ways that align with the group norms. This process of self-categorisation leads to typical behaviour among group members (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which implies that conforming may allow individuals to identify people from their ingroup and form connections.

Participants further described a journey of conformity, indicating that while they initially felt compelled to conform, they have since come to realise that they no longer need to do so and now feel confident in their identity. In support, Clarke and Turner's (2007) research indicates that individuals initially chose to conform to stereotypes upon recognising their sexuality, using this conformity to affirm and communicate comfort with their identity to others. Then, as individuals grow more secure in their inner identity and find alternative ways to express it, the need for visual displays lessens, allowing them to move from embodying a stereotype to expressing their individuality. In relation, Sean shares his journey of conforming.

“I think you struggle as a gay person, generally, to kind of find your own identity. I think that's the general theme when I speak to other gay people. ... So, I sort of went one way of being like, quite feminine and very, like, yeah, kind of fitting the gay stereotype that goes to show the world so everyone can see that's what I was, because for so long, I hadn't wanted to show anybody that. And then, yeah, you kind of move through to oh okay, actually, um, maybe that's not who I am, actually, maybe somewhere in between those things that I can sort of find myself. I think for you to get to that place where actually like, no, I'm doing this because I'm comfortable doing that. And that's who I am, that's what I want to do versus this is what I feel like I should be doing.” (lines 606 – 614, 627-630)

Sean discusses the general struggle for gay individuals and finding their identity, suggesting that this is a common theme in discussions with other gay individuals. He then goes on to discuss his personal journey and the internal conflict with conforming to gender inverted stereotypes. Sean identifies that when coming out, he feminised his appearance to show others that he was gay, by fitting the gender inverted stereotype, which aligns with the research presented by Clarke and Turner (2007), and the quotes from Rae and Jean. Sean adds that he conformed to the stereotypes due to feeling the need to “show the world” his sexuality that he had previously hidden. This may align with research that suggests that when gay or lesbian identity is disclosed, it may be expected that heterosexual gendered expectations are left behind, and the individual is fully committed to a gay identity (Clarke et al., 2010). Sean then suggests that he moved on to realise that the gender inverted stereotype may not be his true identity and adapted to an appearance he felt more comfortable with. Interestingly, Sean says, “And that's who I am, that's what I want to do versus this is what I feel like I should be doing”. This part of the quote demonstrates the tension between societal expectations and personal authenticity,

highlighting the importance of living in a way that feels true to himself rather than conforming to external pressures.

Like Sean, Jean also discusses her identity and how this has shifted alongside acceptance of her identity.

“I think when you're first coming to terms with and accepting yourself and like, being gay and what that means and whatever, and yeah, like you wear the plaid shirts or whatever they're called, and you do all the, what you think are like the typical things you should be doing. You do that for so long, and then you kind of realise, okay, ...I'm happy to just do this. And this is me, and then you kind of accept yourself and figure out what you personally like and don't like, and then you just are that person, and some people fit the stereotype more than than others.” (Lines 602-609)

Jean shares her journey in coming to terms with her sexual identity. She highlights the initial phase where she conformed to gender inverted stereotypes; however, over time, she gradually learned to accept her sexual identity and the need to conform reduced. This may further support the idea that individuals travel through stages, a journey of self-discovery, where they conform to the gender inverted stereotypes initially but then move to a point where they are comfortable in their identity, and no longer feel the need to conform. This aligns with the research question by highlighting the process of navigating identity and societal expectations within the LGBTQ+ community. Jean and Sean's words show a process with conforming to external societal expectations to embracing an authentic self, highlighting a journey from trying to fit a stereotype to developing an individual identity.

When displaying the following image, Rachel suggested that individuals may reach a point where they are not concerned about following the societal norm and feel comfortable in presenting how they wish.



(Participant elicited image)

"I feel like she's quite, she doesn't seem to care about like being gay and stuff. Yeah, she's like, to me, like I think you will get past the point of caring well, like, if you're out, you're just like whatever, I'm already out, mate. It doesn't matter... she's not bothered about following the norms and stuff. She's doing what she wants." (Lines 124-129)

Rachel identifies that the individual in the image looks comfortable in their identity, admiring the individual's apparent disregard for societal expectations and norms related to being gay. The expression "she doesn't seem to care" suggests that the individual is comfortable with their identity and has no concerns about how others may perceive them. Rachel contrasts this attitude with the idea of "caring" about being gay, implying that there is a stage or process where one's sexual identity might be a significant concern. However, she suggests that once someone has come out, they reach a point where they are no longer preoccupied with others' opinions or societal norms, captured in the phrase "whatever, I'm already out, mate." Rachel's admiration

for this attitude suggests a recognition of the power and freedom that may come with embracing one's identity fully, without being limited by conformity and external pressures.

Sean, Jean, and Rachel describe going through stages similar to those outlined by the Cass Identity model (1979), moving through the stages of confusion and denial and then coming to tolerance and acceptance, where they wish to display their sexuality through the gender inverted stereotypes. Then, finally, individuals find themselves where they are comfortable in their identity. This links to identity synthesis (Cass, 1979), where individuals establish an identity that may contain some aspects of the gender inverted stereotype but not all, realising their sexual identity is not their only defining aspect.

6.3.1 Theme summary

This theme suggests that individuals may go through a journey of acceptance, which may involve conforming to gender inverted stereotypes. Participants indicated that initially, they felt the need to conform to the gender inverted stereotypes, whether that be to fit in, display their sexual orientation or fit societal norms. This highlighted that individuals may conform to stereotypes as a means of communication. Throughout the theme, it became evident that as the participants began to feel comfortable with their sexual identity, the need to conform reduced, allowing them to present how they wished. This may suggest that feeling self-assured in their identity allowed them to remove parts of the gender inverted stereotype, making this element just part of their identity, not their whole self. The presented findings within this theme directly link to the aims of this thesis by explaining how LGBTQ+ individuals may understand, apply and conform to the gender inverted stereotypes. However, the participants further added that they also felt the need to resist these stereotypes, which will be explored in the next theme.

6.4 Theme 3: The Safety in Resisting the Gender Inverted Stereotypes

The challenges faced in navigating and resisting the gender inverted stereotypes are discussed within this theme. It was highlighted by the participants that resisting the stereotype was often a conscious effort used to protect themselves from harm and exposure. Most participants discussed how they would resist gender inverted stereotypes, highlighting that this is a common experience for gay and lesbian. This theme includes quotes from Carl, Amy, Jean, Rachel and Alicia.

Research states that individuals within the same stigmatised group may share a common identity but often have diverse experiences with prejudice and discrimination (Beam & Wellman, 2024; Blair et al., 2004; Kaiser & Wilkins, 2010; Maddox & Gray, 2002). Further to this research states that discrimination tends to disproportionately impact those perceived as highly representative of their group in terms of prototypicality and group identification (Beam & Wellman, 2024; Blair et al., 2004; Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009). When asked if he had ever felt compelled to resist the gender inverted stereotypes, Carl shared he may resist to avoid discrimination.

“In a way, yes, I'd say in a way to protect myself because I do get a fear of like if I was to walk out the door and dress in drag or dressed in makeup, or say, have my hair dyed or all those sorts of things I would probably get abuse shouted at me or might get attacked in the streets.” (Lines 492-495)

Carl suggests the reason he may deviate from conforming to the gender inverted stereotypes is due to the need to protect himself. Research on the experiences of openly gay men has found that most have faced harassment, discrimination, and physical violence (Huebner et al., 2004). Carl expresses a genuine fear of conforming to gender inverted stereotypes, as this may lead to

him being harmed physically or verbally. This is supported by research from Beam and Wellman (2024), who found that prototypical individuals were assigned more negative stereotypes than less prototypical gay men. Carl's worries about being abused are concerning, which may reflect the harsh realities for gay men and lesbian women when they do not conform to societal standards. These harsh realities are also reflected in research from Stonewall (2023) that states hate crimes based on sexual orientation have gone up by 112% in the last five years, contradicting previous research that states increases in acceptance (PEW, 2020;2023).

This sense of resistance may also be relevant in specific situations. Due to the potential for negative consequences, Amy notes that she would carefully consider her outfit choices as a teenager in school to avoid appearing gay.

“Well, there has maybe been times where I felt like my outfit has made me look very butch, but so I've gone, oh, maybe people will think I'm gay if I wear this...Especially when I was a teenager, I think there was a couple of times where I'd look at one of, because there was a girl in my friendship group who was lesbian, and I think I'm dressed in the same way as [name], and [name] looks very gay. So, I don't want to look gay. The only thing that maybe comes to mind is that maybe when I was younger, I did sort of resist looking a certain way.” (Lines 500-506)

Amy pre-empts a reaction that individuals will identify her sexual orientation if wearing a certain outfit. This may suggest that people may avoid certain outfit choices that conform to gender inverted stereotypes due to the negative connotations associated. Amy goes on to discuss that, particularly in her youth, at school, she would avoid appearing gay to prevent others from assuming her sexual identity and to protect herself. She uses the example of a friend who was openly gay, so she did not want to look like that individual to avoid being outed. This may

highlight not only the negative connotations with being gay, but that individuals from a young age may avoid conforming to gender inverted stereotypes to prevent being outed and to protect themselves from bullying and abuse. This is supported by Kosciw et al. (2018), who suggest that youth who identify as sexual and/or gender minorities often face frequent peer harassment in school settings.

It was also suggested by participants that the need to resist in certain environments may carry on from school into the workplace. For example, Jean shares her concern regarding her career and worries that her sexual identity will affect her job.

“I have been concerned when it comes to my career, I suppose ...Like, if, if I'm wearing like, polo shirts and, like, I sit in quite masculine ways...sometimes I'll dress kind of, ... maybe a suit or type thing or something, and I have worried like, will they be able to tell, and will that affect me, like, will I get sacked because of this?[being LGBTQ+] Or will they make assumptions because of this? Or like, not leave me alone with another woman or not trust me to do like certain things because of, they've like, perceived me as oh, yeah, she's definitely gay because of how she dresses and stuff.” (Lines 618-625)

Jean's anxiety about being identified as lesbian or judged based on her appearance highlights a fear of discrimination that LGBTQ+ individuals may often face in the workplace. Most studies on workplace discrimination against gay men and lesbian women provide evidence of discrimination in both hiring practices and wage levels (e.g., Baumle & Poston, 2011; Elmslie & Tebaldi, 2007; Mishel, 2016, 2020; Tilcsik, 2011). Jean's specific worry about being perceived as LGBTQ+, because of dressing in a certain way, reflects the pressure to conform to heteronormative standards and the fear of violating these norms. Jean is aware that the way

she presents herself may not represent the typical traditional expectations for women, leading to fear about her sexuality being exposed, which in turn may affect her career. Previous qualitative studies indicate that such stereotypes can significantly impact the workplace experiences of gay men and lesbians. For instance, Giuffre et al. (2008) found that assumptions about lesbians being masculine in their personalities and behaviours, and gay men being feminine, expose both groups to various forms of sexism in the workplace.

Moreover, Jean fears being distrusted, perhaps seen as a threat or denied certain responsibilities or opportunities, simply because of how she is perceived. In contrast to Jeans' thoughts, researchers such as Stone (2019) argue that gay men and lesbians have become less culturally and politically central to "stranger danger" narratives compared to the early 1990s. However, Mishel (2020) supports Jeans' ideas and suggests significant workplace backlash against gay and lesbian individuals, suggesting that a considerable portion of the population continues to uphold these narratives. This reflects the broader issue of bias and discrimination in the workplace, where LGBTQ+ individuals often must navigate the complexities of gender and sexual orientation to avoid prejudice and any impacts on their careers.

Rachel also addresses broader issues of resistance in the workplace, acknowledging that she would resist gender inverted stereotypes to avoid being identified as gay and potentially seen as a minority.

“Yeah. I think with me, like, at work I probably wouldn't dress fully gay, because yeah. I feel like I'm the only gay one there. Probably, yeah, I don't want to be the gay one, like, you don't want to be the gay one, you just want to be a person.” (Lines 582-584)

Rachel states that at work, she would resist the gender inverted stereotypes to avoid being identified as gay, due to her concern about being the only gay person at her workplace. This may suggest that this decision is due to not wanting to be identified at work as the minority, which may lead to other consequences. Sexual minority employees may navigate their work environments by considering how, if, and when to disclose their sexual identity to colleagues (King et al., 2017). LGBTQ+ identities are frequently viewed as stigmatised subjectivities that can be concealed (Colgan & Wright, 2011; King et al., 2017), or even hidden or invisible (Rumens & Broomfield, 2014). Rachel's feelings around not wanting to be the only openly gay individual may link with internalised homophobia and the worry that if she does not conform to heterosexual societal standards, then she may face consequences. Rachel also adds that she wants to be seen as a person, which suggests that gay and lesbian individuals may want to be seen as more than their sexuality, which reduces them to a singular trait, which could be unfair and problematic.

Additionally, one participant identified that they felt the need to resist the gender inverted stereotype due to her family pressure, cultural and religious beliefs. When asked about whether she adheres to the gender inverted stereotypes, Alicia shared the following perspective.

"I've not been able to, I cannot act in a certain way, although I have certain urges, because I have the risk of it being, of giving it away to my family members, I have to really, erm, what's that word?... kind of suppress it. Yeah, suppress. Which is really hard to do at times." (Lines 276-280)

Alicia explains that she is not able to conform to gender inverted stereotypes. She highlights that she must act a certain way, and although she has urges to conform, the risk is too high. This quote suggests that conforming to gender inverted stereotypes may be dangerous for some

individuals, due to their cultural beliefs. Alicia's quote highlights the need to resist the gender inverted stereotypes to avoid family members identifying her sexuality, and to protect herself from harm. Alicia also highlights that this is "really hard to do at times", further supporting how difficult suppressing one's authentic self can be. Having to constantly monitor and resist one's authentic self could cause significant psychological damage and can lead to mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression (Meyer, 2003).

6.4.1 Theme Summary

Overall, this theme suggests that LGBTQ+ individuals may feel the need to resist the gender inverted stereotypes, to protect themselves from harm and/or discrimination. This fear of being identified as LGBTQ+ may be instilled by the included statistics, which highlighted the high number of LGBTQ+ hate crimes that take place within the UK. Additionally, participants suggested that resistance may occur in certain contexts, such as work, hiding their sexuality due to fear of impact on their career. The decision to either conform or resist seems to be a common experience for LGBTQ+ individuals and something they must constantly navigate to evaluate their safety. The quotes and analysis presented within this theme highlight the problematic nature of the gender inverted stereotypes and how they impact prejudice toward LGBTQ+ individuals.

6.5 Overall Chapter Summary

The themes presented within this chapter directly address the research question by exploring LGBTQ+ experiences of gender inverted stereotypes. The themes highlight the persistent stereotypes surrounding gay and lesbian identities, particularly the assumptions that all gay men are feminine and all lesbians are masculine. These stereotypes reflect societal pressures that shape perceptions and limit the recognition of diversity within the community. Participants noted that the expectation for LGBTQ+ individuals to conform to these gender

inverted stereotypes is primarily held by those outside the community. The findings further suggest that many gay and lesbian individuals may not conform to stereotypes and often “blend in”, deemed as heterosexual. These results build on those from the quantitative element, which indicated that such stereotypes are widely held. However, the lived experiences shared in this study reveal low levels of conformity, calling into question the accuracy and validity of these stereotypes. Furthermore, many LGBTQ+ individuals may need to disclose their sexual orientation explicitly for it to be acknowledged, reinforcing the notion that their identities can often be rendered invisible in a predominantly heterosexual society. Overall, the first theme reveals a disconnect between the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals and the perceptions held by individuals outside the community.

The second and third themes explored the LGBTQ+ experiences that relate to conforming and resisting the gender inverted stereotypes, directly answering the research question. The second theme demonstrated a journey of conformity that linked with expressing sexual orientation and building connections. Once the individual had developed their authentic self, the need to conform reduced, allowing them to choose elements of the gender inverted stereotypes. The third theme explored experiences related to resistance of gender inverted stereotypes and identified a link to fear. The negative media and reports on LGBTQ+ hate crimes seemed to instil a fear of conforming and being identified as LGBTQ+. The ongoing decision to conform or resist revealed problematic elements of these stereotypes that LGBTQ+ individuals must navigate daily. Overall, the second and third themes explore the societal pressures that lead to evaluating whether to conform or resist the gender inverted stereotypes. This possible constant evaluation by participants of whether to conform or resist may further highlight how LGBTQ+ individuals understand and use these stereotypes daily.

Whilst debating the stereotypes related to gay men and lesbian women, participants discussed their perceptions of acceptance and tolerance of gay and lesbian individuals,

suggesting this may impact the application of the stereotype. The thesis aims anticipated that higher levels of acceptance would lead to a diminished prominence of gender inverted stereotypes. The following chapter will focus on the perceptions of acceptance from both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals. This chapter is distinct from the previous chapters to display these findings, providing a clearer response to the overarching thesis question and addressing the final aim, to explore the perceived acceptance levels related to UK gay and lesbian individuals.

Chapter 7 Perceptions of Past, Current and Future Acceptance of Gay and Lesbian Identities in the UK.

7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question “How do people perceive past, current and future acceptance of gay and lesbian identities in the UK?”. This analysis was included to understand the current perception of acceptance within the UK and address the third primary objective of the thesis, “To understand if there has been a change in the perceived acceptance of lesbian and gay individuals, and to what extent”. Given recent legal reforms and ongoing shifts in societal acceptance, contemporary research is essential to examine acceptance levels in the UK and the effects on LGBTQ+ individuals.

As outlined in the literature review, research on attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals suggests there has been a continued rise in acceptance over the past 50 years, with more pronounced changes occurring in the last 25 years (BSA, 2019; PEW, 2020; 2023). Throughout the interviews with both participant samples, all participants discussed the acceptance levels of LGBTQ+ individuals and connected these discussions to stereotypes. The following chapter contains three themes, which are outlined in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Themes for participants’ perceptions of acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Theme
1. “We have become like; you have to kind of accept gay people “: Perceptions of conditional acceptance.

2. “As my grandkids grow up, then it’ll just be accepted more”: generational influence on acceptance.

3. Educating to Improve Future Acceptance.

7.2 Theme 1: “We have become like; you have to kind of accept gay people “:

Perceptions of Conditional Acceptance.

This theme will aim to address the overall research question and thesis objective, which was to understand the extent to which participants perceive that there has been a shift in the levels of acceptance related to gay and lesbian individuals. As discussed above, recent evidence (BSA, 2019; PEW, 2020; 2023) suggests that there may have been a positive shift in acceptance, which was supported by participants’ perceptions in this study. However, this theme suggests that whilst there is a perceived increase in acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals, it may only ever be conditional. The theme may suggest that someone is accepted only if they conform to specific criteria, behaviours, or norms set by the accepting party.

This first theme explores the acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals through interviews with both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participants. It reveals that despite advancements in visibility and legal reforms, barriers and differing personal beliefs regarding LGBTQ+ identities persist. The perception of increased acceptance may be shaped by policy changes that alter social norms, which could lead some individuals to hide their true beliefs. Subtle forms of discrimination and discomfort around gay men and lesbian women may persist, often going unnoticed as challenges to societal norms of acceptance. Presented here are quotes from Amy, Sally, Sean, Tracy, Grace and Rachel.

Throughout the interviews, the participants suggested a prevailing narrative that the UK has become more accepting, yet significant work remains, with partial or conditional acceptance still evident. Amy, who identifies as queer, presented the following image when asked to supply images that related to LGBTQ+ individuals and stated.



(Participant elicited image)

“I think it's just how much it's changed over the years and the fact that how views have completely changed. And how now, you know, no one questions it now. Everyone just views it as a positive, well, not saying everyone views it as a positive thing. I think it still can be viewed in a very negative way, but, you know, I think no one, really, the majority of people do accept it.” (Lines 176-179)

Amy recognises the significant shift in societal views over time, with acceptance becoming more common and generally positive, which suggests an underlying social move toward inclusivity and supports the findings from BSA (2019) and PEW (2020; 2023). Additionally, Amy suggests that “no one questions it now”, which may suggest that recent progress in LGBTQ+ rights and visibility has contributed to the increasing normalisation of LGBTQ+ identities, which is supported by Chevrette (2020). However, this may also suggest a level of conformity to social norms, where individuals must be seen to support LGBTQ+ rights to not seem discriminatory. Amy adds that not everyone views LGBTQ+ identities positively and that negative perceptions may still exist. Research indicates that while most social groups have become more progressive in their views on LGBTQ+ issues, certain social and demographic

characteristics remain associated with oppositional attitudes. Specifically, studies show that older adults (Takács et al., 2016; Treas, 2002), individuals with lower levels of education (Halman & van Ingen, 2015; Ohlander et al., 2005), and those who are highly religious (Gerhards, 2010; Jäckle & Wenzelburger, 2015) are more likely to reject gay and lesbian sexuality. By acknowledging both acceptance and remaining prejudice, Amy implicitly references the idea that while progress has been made, acceptance is not universally experienced, reflecting an uneven distribution of support across different social contexts or groups.

Sally, a heterosexual participant, perceives the UK to be far more accepting than previously, but suggests that there is still a way to go to achieve full equality. She highlights that this may be due to past beliefs and stereotypes that surround gay and lesbian individuals.

“I think we are more accepting, but I still think there's a long way to go. It's like I said, at the start, I don't think you'll ever get rid of stereotypes, and you'll always look at someone and go Oh, they're gay or they're a lesbian ... even in like 50 years... there will always be a barrier, and I don't know why...I think maybe because it's been so long that they weren't accepted.” (Lines 66-70).

Sally highlights the perceived improvement in societal acceptance but adds that there is still further work to be done to gain full equality. Sally identifies that there are barriers to full acceptance and suggests stereotypes as a cause. She further identifies that she thinks that we may never get rid of stereotypes, which in turn may restrict acceptance levels and equality. These past beliefs may still affect the views of individuals in contemporary society, as research states discrimination against gay men and lesbian women has a long-established history (Redman, 2018).

Sean shares his personal perspective as a gay man and highlights that there is more awareness and representation now, but this doesn't necessarily represent all areas of society.

"I think now, there's a lot more awareness. I think that is the key is that there's a lot more awareness now than there ever has been. There's lots of, you know, representation of gay people in more places than there's ever been. So, I think that brings with it more acceptance in some regards. Also, a lot of non-acceptance, I think, from people who... because of the society that we live in, or backgrounds or whatever it is, feel uncomfortable, or yeah, kind of rejected us almost, which is kind of sad." (Lines 129-134)

Sean suggests that there is far more awareness and representation of gay men and lesbian women now, and that this increased visibility may contribute to improved perceptions of acceptance and equality. The suggestion of "there's a lot more awareness now than there ever has been" shows the importance of displaying equality, but this also may affect individuals' true expression of acceptance. However, Sean perceives that acceptance may not apply to all societal backgrounds and contexts, particularly in areas where social norms are less equality focused. He recognises that with more representation and awareness, there has also been a rise in non-acceptance among certain groups. Sean attributes this resistance to several factors, such as societal norms or personal discomfort. This suggests that while progress has been made in terms of visibility and awareness, it may also increase feelings of being threatened or uncomfortable. Sean's tone reveals a sense of disappointment and sadness over this rejection. He seems to acknowledge that, despite the progress, increased representation may not mean higher acceptance.

Tracy, who identifies as heterosexual, also discusses societal norms and suggests that personal beliefs can vary and that non-accepting views may be concealed beneath the surface.

“I think in the UK, people are quite accepting, acceptant, they do have the acceptance, although maybe it would be, I don't know how to explain it, but maybe in the social context, they say, oh, yeah, we do accept people this and that is fine, but that doesn't necessarily mean that this reflects their personal beliefs” (Lines 54-57)

Tracy begins by expressing her perception that the UK is seen to be accepting of gay and lesbian individuals. However, she counteracts this by suggesting that this may not be a true portrayal of acceptance, as individuals' personal beliefs may differ from what they suggest socially. While societal norms may dictate a certain level of public acceptance, these norms do not necessarily change deeper, privately held views. Research supports that recent successes in social movements and ongoing debates have established a social context in which the overt discrimination of individuals who do not conform to cisgender or heterosexual norms may be met with either affirmation or condemnation (Burke, 2016; Pfeffer, 2014; Sumerau et al., 2016). According to Sumerau et al. (2018), individuals navigate modern society without knowing whether explicitly homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic comments will be received positively or negatively. In this environment, the ability to at least appear tolerant of sexual and gender diversity becomes crucial for maintaining a positive self-image (McQueeney, 2009). As highlighted in Tracy's quotes, to be able to seem accepting, people may adopt strategies of conditional acceptance (Sumerau et al., 2018).

Grace supports the tendency to hide negative views in response to social norms. She perceives acceptance as potentially being more about refraining from expressing negative views rather than genuinely embracing inclusivity.

“I wonder if we have moved on or if maybe the people who hold those negative views of homosexuality are more sort of avoiding it now because it is becoming more normal for the rest of the population ... And that's a difficult one, I guess, because it's then, are they accepting or avoiding? That's a very difficult thing to separate.” (Lines 137-144).

Grace suggests that individuals may be altering their behaviour to fit in with the societal views of gay and lesbian individuals. Individuals' attitudes and behaviours are inherently shaped by social contexts, with social norms playing a crucial role in this contextual influence (McDonald & Crandall, 2015; Pettigrew, 2018). Rather than embracing acceptance, Grace suggests individuals may avoid the topic, which is significant as it highlights challenges in assessing the true level of acceptance. The quotes presented here may suggest that if individuals who take part in acceptance related surveys conform to societal norms, where LGBTQ+ prejudice is discouraged, the results may be influenced.

Rachel, who identified her sexuality as homosexual, further highlights a pressure to seem accepting.

“We have become like; you have to kind of accept gay people. Like it's become like, if you don't do it, it's bad, but then people really don't necessarily want to be doing it. They're just presenting that way, if that makes sense.” (Lines 76-79).

Rachel suggests that there may have been a societal shift towards acceptance; however, this may be an obligation rather than a choice. Again, there may be an assumption that it is frowned upon not to accept gay and lesbian individuals, leading people to hide their true views. Rachel suggests that to avoid negative consequences and conform to societal expectations, people may present as accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals. The quote highlights the impact that societal norms have on perceptions of acceptance. Individuals may appear accepting, but their internal beliefs may differ. These quotes from Tracy, Grace and Rachel highlight a possible issue that may affect the reported acceptance levels of LGBTQ+ people in the UK.

7.2.1 Theme Summary

The quotes presented here perceive an increase in acceptance but highlight an element of partial or conditional acceptance, where internal beliefs may differ from what is portrayed. The reason that individuals may appear as accepting could be due to equality mainstreaming. This approach attempts to promote fairness, reduce inequalities, and create more inclusive environments by making equality central to planning, implementation, and evaluation activities (Taylor & Woodhams, 2022). However, in doing so, individuals may feel less able to express their true feelings regarding acceptance, which may be demonstrated in the presented quotes from the participants. As equality mainstreaming becomes the standard, it may shift social norms within society, behaviours and attitudes that were once more openly expressed could become socially unacceptable, which was also outlined by the participants in this study. As equality becomes a fundamental part of societal culture, individuals might internalise these values to some extent, even if they don't fully agree with them. Internalising these beliefs may also lead to self-censorship, where people hide their true beliefs, as they are concerned that they conflict with societal norms.

The analysis indicates that there has been progress and shifts in views in society, which is marked by reduced stigma, increased visibility, and apparent greater acceptance levels.

However, there are barriers such as individuals' beliefs and certain areas of society that may not be as accepting. Equality mainstreaming may additionally influence individuals, as they do not wish to disrupt societal norms and appear prejudiced; in doing so, this may affect the levels of acceptance reported. The next theme will explore further acceptance differences that relate to age, and how this may link to the overall theme of partial acceptance.

7.3 Theme 2: “As my grandkids grow up, then it’ll just be accepted more”:

Generational Influence on Acceptance.

This next theme highlights generational differences as a possible contribution to differing perceptions of acceptance levels. The participants in this study suggested that older individuals may hold fewer LGBTQ+ accepting views. Although it was perceived that younger generations are more open-minded, over time, this may have a positive effect on acceptance levels. Presented here are quotes from Adam, Carol and Grace.

Adam suggests the legislation at the time of their grandparents' era may have affected how accepting they are towards sexual diversity.

“It's just been severely criminalised and demonised in the past, but it wasn't as acceptable then. But if you go back to my grandparents' generation, we're talking the 1940s. Like, you know, it was extremely taboo ... And whilst they're accepting of it, they knew many people at the time that weren't. So yeah, I think it certainly is a generational thing... the old generations, because people are products of their time.” (Lines 466-472).

Adam, who identifies as heterosexual, recognises that in the past, being gay was “criminalised and demonised” both socially and in legislation. Adam uses an example of his grandparents,

who were born in the 1940s, and highlights that being gay or lesbian at this time was considered “extremely taboo”. Littauer (2018) supports that the portrayals of gay and lesbian individuals, in the post-war era, were linked to being contagious and sick, deviant and dangerous, which impacted perceptions. Although Adam does describe his grandparents as “accepting of it”, despite acknowledging the wider societal discourses that they were subject to throughout their lifetime. Adam’s grandparents are compared to others of the same generation whom he perceives as being less accepting, implying a perception of lesser acceptance amongst that generation. Adam's suggestions imply that due to current social and cultural norms, alongside legislation, he perceives younger generations to have more progressive views.

Carol also puts forth a similar idea, proposing that overall acceptance of sexual diversity is high and differs within generations.

“I think I would say about 90% of the population accept homosexuality, and it's their choice. But I do, I do feel there's some stigma still within, especially with the older generation, those born in the 1930s. I do feel that there is a stigma still, but generally, for my year of birth, in the 60s, it's more, a lot more accepted. “(Lines 54-57)

The perception of increased acceptance is clear from the beginning of this quote, where Carol suggests that 90% of the population accepts gay and lesbian individuals. However, Carol identifies a generational divide, highlighting that individuals from the 1930s may hold stigmatised views and are perceived to be less accepting of LGBTQ+ individuals. Research suggests that many members of this generation were children during World War II, when LGBTQ+ identities were discriminated against (Bitterman & Hess, 2020), which may affect their understanding of LGBTQ+ identities. This era was characterised by limited freedom and

little tolerance for expressing gender or sexual orientation outside of established societal norms (Chauncey, 1995). Carol also mentions her generation and suggests that acceptance has appeared to improve with people of her age group, which may be due to the social revolution, the sexual revolution and liberation movements of the 1960s, which relaxed social restrictions on the expression of sexual orientation and gender identity, particularly for LGBTQ+ individuals (Drasin et al., 2008). Carol's quote highlights a possible shift in perceptions of acceptance through generations.

Participants further perceived that altering the long-held stereotypical beliefs held by older generations may be challenging. For example, Grace suggested that these views could be hard to change due to older generations holding these beliefs for a long period of time.

"I don't have a lot of hope for the older generations who hold very stereotypical, prejudiced views. I think that's a tricky one because when you have gone 60 years, for example, with a stereotypical prejudice view, trying to change that... because it's something that they truly believe in... I'm not saying that older people can't change their views. I've seen it happen. But I think it's a lot more difficult, and our efforts would definitely be wasted, focusing on the older generations." (Lines 770-782)

Grace's quote demonstrates scepticism about changing the deeply ingrained beliefs that may be held by older generations. These long-standing prejudices may have been held over decades, making them difficult to alter. Grace goes on to highlight that it may be more resourceful to educate younger, more open-minded individuals. Bitterman and Hess (2021) highlight a concept known as generational acceptance, where younger generations may be more accepting due to evolving social norms; however, older age groups may resist the change due to their

lifelong beliefs. While the statement does recognise the possibility of change, it may be interpreted as ageist because it generalises the ability of older people to change their views.

Some participants also perceived that acceptance may not be fully obtainable. Carol suggests that there will always be a small percentage of people who do not accept sexual diversity, but adds that she hopes that each generation will improve.

“I think there's always going to be that, that 10, One or 10% that will not agree with it, shall we say, but I think certainly as my grandkids grow up, then it'll just be accepted more readily than it was. And I think because, like in my generation, and back from that it was illegal. So, I think that was another point as well, if anything that was illegal was frowned upon. And ... when they made it not a crime, I think it got really, really more accepted.” (Lines 371-376)

Carol implies that there will always be a small number of people who will not be accepting of gay and lesbian individuals. Carol further adds that in previous generations, being gay or lesbian was a criminal offence, leading to a belief that being anything other than heterosexual was a serious problem, which may be instilled in the beliefs of the older generations. This is evident in the provided quotes from the participants, which suggest that the generations from the 1930s and 1940s generally hold fewer accepting views compared to younger generations. However, Carol suggests that acceptance will likely increase with each generation, which reflects the idea that younger generations may be more open-minded compared to older generations (Hammack et al., 2018). Carol implies that acceptance will improve with time and uses her grandchildren as an example. This aligns with the concept of cultural and generational evolution (Greenfield, 2009). The concept states that as younger generations replace older, there will be a natural progression towards greater acceptance of sexual diversity.

Grace also suggests that younger generations are more open-minded, due to possibly having more diverse life experiences.

“So yeah, I think it's a generational thing that we need to view this problem as... I have a lot of hope for the younger generation and the way that we sort of talk to them about homosexuality from the very start and making those conversations, ... And I think it is really, really important.” (Lines 848-853)

Grace argues that the generational divide is the main issue; however, she has optimism for the younger generations, as they may have early conversations on the topic of LGBTQ+ acceptance. This may suggest that societal progress is driven by newer generations challenging social norms and developing greater acceptance. Grace also highlights the importance of having early conversations that discuss gay and lesbian identities, suggesting that conversations are vital in encouraging acceptance and understanding. In 2019, the government introduced new guidelines for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in England; these regulations led to significant shifts in equality (Epps et al., 2023). The change reflected a positive step towards inclusivity, with young people and children being educated on LGBTQ+ relationships and identities (Stonewall, 2019). This trend is particularly notable in early years and primary school settings, where 75% of schools adopt the new RSE approach, supporting Grace's thoughts around early conversations. Research adds, however, that although British education has become more inclusive, there remains room for improvement, particularly in moving beyond heteronormativity to fully embrace LGBTQ+ identities (Epps et al., 2023).

7.3.1 Theme Summary

This theme highlights that there may be a generational divide regarding the acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals. The examples given here demonstrate that participants perceive that older generations may hold more negative views, whereas younger generations may hold

more open thoughts due to the policy and social norms of their era. A generational divide may be due to greater sexual diversity in younger individuals; for example, a survey by IPSOS (2020) indicated that 54% of Gen-Z (born 1995-2012) report being attracted to the opposite sex. However, in older generations, heterosexual identity increases: 66% of Millennials (1981-1994), 76% of Generation X (1965-1980) and 81% of Baby Boomers (1946-1964). This data and the findings from this study may suggest a trend toward increasing sexual diversity in each successive generation, which in turn may also explain why beliefs towards gay and lesbian sexuality differ and why older generations may seem to be less accepting.

The participants also highlighted that aiming to change the view of older generations may not be resourceful due to the ingrained level of these stereotypical beliefs. This may suggest that resources should be aimed at younger generations, who may be more open and challenge social norms to create a more accepting future. It is also important to note that it was highlighted by participants that complete acceptance may never be obtainable due to barriers such as generational differences. Overall, this theme highlights a perceived generational divide in acceptance towards gay and lesbian individuals, which hopefully will improve with each generation.

7.4 Theme 3: Educating to Improve Future Acceptance.

The final theme of this chapter focuses on participants' perceptions of how acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals could continue to be improved, and consequently how this may involve challenging the gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women. The most prominent idea within this theme was around education and how this may normalise sexual diversity. It is worth noting that the participants' age ranges fall within a time when the current RSE programmes were not in place. Their school years may have predated the repeal of Section 28, a law that prohibited discussions of same-sex relationships in schools (UK

Parliament, 2019). Consequently, this outdated guidance failed to include LGBTQ+ individuals and families. The updated guidelines released in 2019 mean that all students attending schools in England will receive education on what constitutes safe and healthy relationships and how to engage in them; however, the guidance does not explicitly state the inclusion of LGBTQ+ related content (GOV, 2021). Presented here are quotes from Grace, Alicia, Sarah, Carol and Carl.

Both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participants highlighted the importance of education at school and its crucial role in increasing understanding of sexual diversity. Grace recommends educating children on a diverse range of sexualities rather than just heterosexuality as part of Relationship and Sex Education in schools.

“Teaching children that there's not just one type of sexuality, there's not just one type of relationship. So yeah, I think that's super, super important in moving forward to increase acceptance” (Lines 207-209)

Grace emphasises the need to educate children on various sexualities and relationship types. As previously highlighted, UK schools have made efforts to increase LGBTQ+ related education; however, Epps (2023) suggests that work is still needed to improve RSE education. Grace highlights that more than one sexuality exists, and individuals should be aware of and taught about these to gain a full understanding of the diversity of relationships. This level of education may play a key role in reducing prejudice and promoting inclusivity. Children having education early on could lead to a shift in understanding and ultimately reduce the marginalisation of LGBTQ+ identities.

Alicia agrees that education in schools is important but suggests that there may be resistance from parents who may not agree.

“Learning about it would help it, but they [the parents] think that they're imposing it on them to be homosexual. It's not that at all, it's just the education of that there is people like this, they exist and how to be around them... I think education is an important factor and needs be put in place. People are taking it the wrong way, they think they are imposing, imposing it on them” (Lines 336-341)

Alicia supports Grace's views and suggests the importance of education in school and how this can encourage acceptance. She emphasises that the goal of education about diverse sexual orientations is not to impose these identities on anyone, but rather to inform students about their existence and how to interact respectfully with people who identify as such. Alicia goes on to identify that individuals may assume that RSE enforces non heterosexual identities; however, it is important to clarify that this is not the goal of diversity education, it is to educate and increase understanding. Alicia's concerns have also been reflected in news articles, for example, in 2022, a judicial review was launched in the High Court, and parents attempted to remove their children from sex education lessons for the same reasons that Alicia discusses (BBC, 2022). However, the court found the introduction of mandatory RSE had been the product of a process of careful consideration, allowing its continuation in schools. Alicia's quote and the news article may highlight a lack of understanding of what would be taught, for example, awareness, tolerance and respect, rather than changing one's sexual orientation. This may further imply that LGBTQ+ related education may be needed for all ages, rather than school age alone.

Grace supports these ideas by suggesting that just teaching children is not enough to improve acceptance; educating parents is also needed.

“So, I think, ultimately, what is needed is education that is accepting and inclusive. And I think that will start, probably, first of all with schools, and also then involving parents within that education... there's little point in schools delivering this education if the child is going to go home and hear from their parents very prejudiced and discriminatory views.” (Lines 759-764)

Grace acknowledges the significant role schools have in delivering RSE, then argues that educating children is not enough; parents also need to be involved. Involving parents in education can ensure a consistent, inclusive message at home, as Grace highlights, but there could be conflicts at home. This quote also links back to the theme of generational divides, as the older individuals may have prejudiced views that may not reflect what is being taught at school, impacting children's beliefs and attitudes. It is important to have a consistent message between school and home to increase acceptance and understanding, supporting that education may be beneficial for all ages.

Alongside the education of parents, Sarah proposes that education in the workplace may be advantageous in teaching adults.

“But like even diversity and inclusion training courses and stuff in workplaces ...Actually educating people, like sit people down and actually have a discussion about what their, you know, initial perspectives are, what the actual reality of life is, and then how they can kind of take that forward because there's so many people that don't actually know about, like gender diversity and sexual diversity and all these important factors” (Lines 923-930)

Sarah implies that workplace training programmes might offer only surface-level information without addressing deeper issues or encouraging genuine understanding among participants. Sarah suggests that to encourage genuine acceptance, individuals may need more than basic information; they need a thorough understanding of diverse experiences and identities. Interactive and discussion-based training could enable deeper empathy and connection by allowing individuals to engage with and reflect on the realities faced by others. Addressing these knowledge gaps through education may also help dismantle stereotypes and prejudices. APA (2013) states that active sharing by LGBTQ+ people of their lived experiences is likely to reduce prejudice and increase equality. Overall, Sarah advocates for education that goes beyond surface-level training, proposing that creating space for people to openly discuss their initial perspectives, confront misunderstandings, and learn about lived realities could be more impactful.

Carol also adds to Sarah's thoughts and discusses the importance of experiences, what she refers to as 'experiential learning.'

"I think it's more about education and learning and actually experiential learning.

Being in their, being in their shoes." (Lines 341-342)

Carol suggests that forming connections with gay and lesbian individuals can lead to a shift in beliefs, allowing individuals to view the world from a different perspective. She highlights the importance of education and the value of learning from people's experiences. She uses the phrase "being in their shoes", which suggests that individuals should experience situations from the perspective of others. This immersive approach can lead to a more profound understanding of different perspectives and challenges; experiential learning may be particularly effective in building empathy because it allows individuals to experience the realities of others firsthand.

This direct engagement may help to break down stereotypes and prejudice, encouraging a more genuine connection with the experiences of others.

Finally, Carl suggests that forming connections with gay and lesbian people would enhance education and lead to further acceptance.

“Yes, that's all that thing of contact and personal experiences. So, like, more personal experiences they have they have in their life of, with this sort of community that the more open, be open to it, so that they've become experienced to it and then see it as a norm, see it as a normal accepted culture” (Lines 539-542)

Carl's quote highlights how firsthand experiences and direct contact with a community significantly influence openness and acceptance. When individuals interact with members of a particular community, their understanding of that community may deepen, leading to greater familiarity and normalisation of its values and practices. This exposure may help individuals transition from viewing the community as something abnormal to seeing it as a regular, accepted part of society. Carl's thoughts, alongside Carol and Sarah's, may align with The Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954), which proposes that direct interaction between members of different social groups can reduce prejudice, enhance intergroup relations, and encourage mutual understanding. This theory further suggests that, under certain conditions, interpersonal contact can lead to positive attitudes, reduced stereotypes, and greater acceptance between individuals from diverse groups. However, it is important to recognise that while personal experiences generally promote acceptance, responses can vary among individuals. Some may become more open and understanding, while others may not, depending on their pre-existing beliefs and attitudes. Additionally, other factors such as societal attitudes, educational background, and the nature of interactions may also influence the degree of acceptance.

7.4.1 Theme Summary

This theme highlights the crucial roles that education and representation may play in shaping acceptance levels of LGBTQ+ identities. Participants emphasised the significant impact that education can have on reducing stereotypes and encouraging a culture of acceptance. This educational approach may help to build a foundation of understanding and empathy from an early age, contributing to a more inclusive environment. Additionally, the participants highlighted the necessity of extending educational efforts beyond schools to include adult populations. This is essential for ensuring that consistent and accurate messages about LGBTQ+ identities are communicated across all age groups. Educating adults is crucial for reinforcing the values of acceptance and inclusivity, thereby creating a supportive environment for younger generations and ensuring that societal norms evolve collectively. Participants further suggested that experiential learning would be beneficial, emphasising the importance of learning from the experiences of gay and lesbian individuals to deepen understanding and expand knowledge. Overall, this theme emphasises the complex nature of gaining a more inclusive and accepting society, acknowledging that it may not be an easy task. It highlights the need for both robust educational initiatives and diverse representation to effectively combat prejudice and promote acceptance.

7.5 Overall Chapter Summary

This chapter explored perceptions of past, current and future acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals, drawing from interviews with both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participants. While progress in visibility and legal rights has been made, significant barriers and variations in personal acceptance may remain. For example, policy changes may have influenced social norms, leading some to conceal their true beliefs. Participants additionally noted a perceived generational divide, perceiving older generations as more likely to hold negative views, while

younger individuals, shaped by greater educational access and evolving norms, appear more open. The analysis highlights the critical role of education and representation in encouraging acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities. Participants suggested that integrating LGBTQ+ topics into school curricula can reduce stereotypes and increase acceptance from an early age. However, they also stressed the importance of extending these educational efforts to adults to reinforce consistent messages across all ages.

Overall, the analysis answers the research questions and the final thesis aim by revealing that despite progress in LGBTQ+ acceptance, through greater visibility and legal advancements, challenges may remain, contributing to the perception of a conditional and generational acceptance. The next chapter will integrate the findings from this analysis with those from the previous studies to offer a comprehensive understanding of the overall results.

Chapter 8 Discussion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the thesis, discusses both the quantitative and qualitative findings and highlights the strengths and limitations of the research. Additionally, the thesis's contributions are outlined, recommendations for future research are offered, the researcher's role is reflected, and conclusions are presented. The chapters of this thesis examined whether gender inverted stereotypes are applied to gay and lesbian individuals and explored related perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, acceptance was investigated to understand perceptions, using both LGBTQ+ and heterosexual samples. By utilising mixed methods and photo elicitation, this thesis has introduced a novel approach to investigating gender inverted stereotypes. The key objectives of this thesis were:

4. To examine stereotypical viewpoints of gay and lesbian individuals from individuals who identify as heterosexual or LGBTQ+.
5. To explore personal perspectives of adhering to stereotypical viewpoints in individuals who identify as LGBTQ+.
6. To understand if there has been a change in the perceived acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, and to what extent.

8.2 Findings and Literature Synthesis

The literature presented in Chapter 2 discussed stereotypes and acceptance levels relating to LGBTQ+ individuals, exploring historical and scientific impacts. When reviewing the literature, both quantitative and qualitative research were examined. Much of the research in the area used a quantitative method to examine gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance levels; there were limited qualitative findings exploring the topic further. Additionally, it was identified that there is currently a lack of research that utilises a mixed method. Combining both

quantitative and qualitative research will allow for a full exploration of the topic and expand on the current research in the area. The next sections will synthesise the thesis findings within the aims and current literature.

8.2.1 To examine stereotypes of gay and lesbian individuals from people who identify as heterosexual and LGBTQ+.

The first empirical study of this thesis used a quantitative design, with a sample of 146 volunteers from the United Kingdom, to examine whether gender inverted stereotypes persisted in a seemingly more accepting climate (PEW, 2020; 2023). The findings of this study suggested that gender inverted stereotype application persists in occupations, personality traits and interests. The results showed that when compared to their heterosexual counterparts, gay men were depicted as more feminine and less masculine, and lesbian women as more masculine than feminine. Additionally, there were no differences between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals' application of gender inverted stereotypes. These findings provided a baseline for the remainder of the thesis and aligned with the first aim by identifying the existence of gender inverted stereotypes in current UK society.

The quantitative results presented in Chapter 4 are consistent with the findings shown by Blashill and Powlishta (2009), Clarke and Arnold (2017), Hudson and Ghani (2023), Kite and Deaux (1987) and Mize and Manago (2018). These studies support the IIT, developed by Kite and Deaux (1987), by suggesting that gender inversion is applied to gay men and lesbian women. Additional contemporary research suggests that pervasive stereotypes about gay and lesbian people include beliefs that the individual conforms to opposite gender norms (Peel, 2020); however, the data from this research highlighted a partial inversion rather than full gender inversion. The findings suggested that gay men are perceived as more feminine than heterosexual men, but not as feminine as either heterosexual or lesbian women. This was also similar in the lesbian findings; lesbian women were seen as more masculine than heterosexual

women, but not as masculine as heterosexual men. These findings are supported by both Clarke and Arnold (2017) and Klysing et al. (2021), who also suggest androgyny, a partial inversion, rather than full gender inversion. These findings may suggest that the IIT could need revisions, as the gender inverted stereotypes applied to gay men and lesbian women may contain elements of both masculine and feminine traits. Further research may be needed to explore the gender inverted stereotypes and how they may impact the accuracy of the IIT; the improvements within acceptance, law and societal understandings may have contributed to this shift.

Using a mixed method to explore gender inverted stereotypes aimed to address gaps in the area, for example, Clarke and Arnold (2020) suggested that further research was needed to understand the effect of gender inverted stereotypes and how gender, sexuality and stereotypes connect. Adding a qualitative element allowed for further expansion of individual experiences and understandings of both gender inverted stereotypes and perceptions of LGBTQ+ acceptance. The quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that, despite real-world examples that refute the gender inverted stereotypes, they persist within society and may be actively applied. Within the qualitative analysis, the heterosexual individuals identified that these stereotypes are ingrained, which aligns with Zhang et al. (2023), who suggest that stereotypes are rigid and oversimplified and often lead to generalised views about a specific group. Additionally, gender stereotypes are seen to be consistent through time when compared to stereotypes based on age and class (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2021), the consistency of gendered stereotypes may explain the persistence of the gender inverted stereotype, as they both use genders as a basis. A further interesting theme raised by the heterosexual participants was that these stereotypes were learnt behaviours, which are developed at an early age through societal norms. Research supports this finding and suggests that stereotypes are learnt from an early age through socialisation (Eagly, 2002) and are reinforced through environmental factors such as media, teachers, and authority figures (Powell, 2018). This indicates that while there are

instances where the gender inverted stereotypes are not adhered to, individuals may continue to actively apply them, highlighting the rigid, generalised, biased assumptions applied to gay and lesbian individuals.

Within the first aim of the thesis, it was important to establish whether gender inverted stereotypes were applied by both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals. This research focus aligned with mixed results in the area, for example, Kitzinger (1991) suggested that differences in gender stereotypes might exist between gay men, lesbian women, and heterosexuals, with gay and lesbian individuals potentially resisting these stereotypes. Blashill and Powlishta (2009) noted that their research could not determine whether gay men and lesbian women held the same stereotypes as heterosexual individuals. However, more recently, research from Clarke and Arnold (2017) suggested that the gay and lesbian participants in their study held the same gender inverted stereotypes as the heterosexual individuals. As the findings in the area were mixed, exploring this further was warranted. The results from the first empirical study of this thesis suggested that the gender inverted stereotype was applied with no difference. These findings proposed that there is no difference in application, which may be attributed to heterosexual assumption (Kitzinger, 1991). This suggests that gay men and lesbian women may apply these stereotypes in the same way as heterosexual individuals, due to social norms.

The heterosexual qualitative analysis further highlighted that perceptions were shaped by heterosexual assumptions, heteronormativity, and homonormativity. Heteronormativity is the widespread belief that heterosexuality is the norm and is seen as the standard and favoured sexual orientation (Robinson, 2016), which marginalises non heterosexual identities and relationships (Meyer, 2015). Heteronormativity and heterosexual assumption idealised heterosexual relationships as the norm throughout the interviews, which was reflected in participants' tendency to view relationships through a heterosexual lens. For example, the findings suggested that within a same-sex relationship, there should be one masculine

presenting individual and one feminine; these discussions erase the diversity within gay and lesbian relationships and may be influenced by beliefs related to heteronormativity. Furthermore, another concept highlighted by Robinson (2016), known as homonormativity, suggests that there is a pressure for same sex relationships to conform to heteronormative ideals. Participants seemed to doubt relationships that did not conform to the typical standard that heterosexual relationships present, suggesting they may be friends or family members. The strength of these beliefs, which align with heteronormativity and homonormativity, may encourage the persistence of the gender inverted stereotypes by shaping expectations of same sex relationships and reinforcing biases that link to gay and lesbian sexuality.

The findings presented within the LGBTQ+ interviews further suggested that there was a heteronormative expectation and assumption that gay and lesbian individuals should conform to the gender inverted stereotypes. These LGBTQ+ participants indicated that the application of the gender inverted stereotypes was applied more by heterosexual individuals, contradicting the results presented within the first empirical study, where no differences were found in application. When exploring this finding further, the LGBTQ+ participants suggested that heterosexual individuals may apply the gender inverted stereotype more, due to a lack of experience and understanding, creating ingroups and outgroups. This finding aligns with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which suggests that individuals may favour their ingroup; in this case, heterosexual individuals may be categorising themselves within their sexuality group, leading to unawareness of the diversity within the LGBTQ+ community.

Additionally, social categorisation suggests that individuals classify themselves based on attributes, which include gender and sexuality (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These theories highlight the underlying intergroup behaviours that relate to bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Using these theories to understand the findings from the heterosexual sample may suggest that heterosexuality is seen as the in-group and LGBTQ+ individuals as the out-group, then the

opposite for the LGBTQ+ sample. Gender inverted stereotypes may arise from the application of in-group norms to out-group members, especially when these individuals deviate from traditional gender expectations. This adds to the idea that the LGBTQ+ participants were creating an “us and them” dynamic, highlighting that inside the community, these stereotypes were less apparent than the assumptions held by heterosexual individuals. The LGBTQ+ participants highlighted that many gay and lesbian individuals do not conform to these stereotypes and do not fit the prototype of the group. Stating that they blend into society, which may entail conforming to typical gendered norms that relate to heterosexuality. It may be that, as gay and lesbian individuals are identified through gender inverted stereotypes, this enforces the prototype and dictates the behaviours linked to the group membership. Furthermore, as the LGBTQ+ participants suggested that conformity to stereotypes is low, this could aid in the reduction of prejudice. Research has shown that personal connections with non-stereotypical LGBTQ+ individuals can significantly reduce stereotyping and prejudice (Allport, 1954; Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001). Research further states that stereotypes related to sexuality link with prejudice and negative attitudes (Bettinsoli et al., 2020), which is in line with these findings and the thesis results, demonstrating the importance of addressing these biases. The LGBTQ+ individuals within this study shared their life experiences, which seemed to differ from the gender inverted stereotypes that remain persistent in society.

Interestingly, the media may play a significant role in the beliefs surrounding gender inverted stereotypes. The findings suggested that participants perceived gay and lesbian characters within media as typically conforming to the gender inverted stereotypes, which encouraged the application of these stereotypes in the real world. Van Meer and Pollmann (2022) support these findings and suggest that stereotypes related to gay men and lesbian women can be shaped by the media. This may be demonstrated in movies, publications and television shows (Sink, 2018)). The role the media is playing may be problematic, encouraging

the application of gender inverted stereotypes. Participants discussed popular television shows that may increase the use of gender inverted stereotypes, research suggests that this leads individuals to subconsciously link these stereotypes to LGBTQ + people (Hogg & Vaughan, 2018). It is important to not only investigate this further but also ensure that media portrayals use characters that do not conform to gender inverted stereotypes and show diversity. Showing characters that do not conform to the gender inverted stereotypes who identify as gay or lesbian could potentially reduce the gender inverted stereotype strength. The participants supported this by suggesting that greater diversity in media portrayals could help change public attitudes, reduce stigma, and challenge stereotypes by offering more accurate representations of gay and lesbian individuals.

This research sought to answer the first aim of the study, which was to examine the stereotypes of gay and lesbian individuals through heterosexual and LGBTQ+ perspectives. By exploring this aim, the findings suggested that gender inverted stereotypes persist despite awareness of their inaccuracy. Interestingly, the quantitative findings highlighted a partial inversion, which may require further investigation, as this does not align with previous theories such as the IIT. The qualitative elements explored this further, suggesting that within the LGBTQ+ community, conformity to gender inverted stereotypes is low, which may imply a difference in implicit and explicit stereotypes that requires further investigation. These gender inverted stereotypes seem to be deeply rooted in societal norms and learned through socialisation and media portrayals, which often amplify these stereotypes, shaping public perceptions. These findings may be linked to heteronormativity and homonormativity, which reinforce traditional relationship norms, marginalising non-conforming LGBTQ+ identities.

8.2.2 To explore personal perspectives of adhering to stereotypical viewpoints in individuals who identify as LGBTQ+.

The second aim of this thesis was to examine LGBTQ+ experiences of adhering to gender inverted stereotypes. The LGBTQ+ analysis of the qualitative data identified a journey with conforming and resisting the stereotypes, dependent on the level of outness. The findings suggested that LGBTQ+ individuals initially conformed to these stereotypes to express their sexual orientation, fit in, or connect with others. Research supports that individuals who strongly identify with their ingroup typically define themselves in terms of their group membership, feel a deep connection to the group, demonstrate commitment to it, and act in its interests (Begeny et al., 2022). Additionally, Allen et al. (2022) suggest that, as humans are inherently social beings, the need to conform and self-stereotype may occur to feel they belong to a group, satisfying fundamental needs that relate to safety and survival. The presented findings from this thesis and the research in the area indicate that when identifying as gay or lesbian, conforming to the gender inverted stereotype may become part of the coming-out process. In the initial stages of coming out, higher self-stereotyping may occur, and this may decrease as the individual becomes more comfortable within their identity. These findings are supported by research from Belous et al. (2015), who state coming out is representative of a journey, which includes adherence to stereotypes. Belous et al.'s (2015) research further states that individuals pass through a “transitional” stage where they conform to gender inverted stereotypes before reaching their “true” identity. The final stage of the model may or may not include elements of the gender inverted stereotypes that relate to gay men and lesbian women and are seen as choices rather than conformity. This identification of moving through stages may also be reminiscent of Cass’s (1979) identity model, where gay and lesbian individuals pass through a developmental process of identity confusion, comparison, tolerance, acceptance, pride and synthesis. The use of these models, alongside the thesis findings, may help to

understand the process and adherence to gender inverted stereotypes, which may be stronger when identifying one's sexuality. Conforming to these stereotypes within the early stages of coming out may be beneficial in finding others and building connections within the LGBTQ+ community. Then, once "synthesis" and a "true identity" are formed, self-stereotyping may reduce, as the individual may be more comfortable within their identity.

The findings relating to conformity and building connections are important and interesting as they highlight a positive aspect of the gender inverted stereotypes. The thesis findings suggest that the gender inverted stereotype may be beneficial to gay and lesbian individuals, enabling them to find like-minded people by using these stereotypes, creating a form of communication that leads to connection and safety. Research supports that gender inverted stereotypes may be useful in identifying other LGBTQ+ individuals (Hayfield, 2013) and used to communicate within a heteronormative environment (Brown, 2020). The gender inverted stereotype may be conformed to, allowing the individual to display their sexuality, helping to form connections with other LGBTQ+ individuals and safe spaces (Hutson, 2010). However, there are criticisms that relate to this finding. Research suggests that gay and lesbian individuals actively try to avoid the gender inverted stereotypes and avoid applying them to others (Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Lippa, 2005; Kitzinger, 1991; Pillard, 1991). The suggestion that gay and lesbian individuals actively counteract the stereotypes is contradicted in both the quantitative and qualitative elements of this research. These differences may be attributed to the use of US samples and the dated nature of the cited research (Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Kitzinger, 1991; Lippa, 2005; Pillard, 1991). This variation could reflect cultural differences and evolving understandings of sexuality. However, the findings from this thesis highlight that each person's experiences differ; some may conform, and others resist, and this may be impacted by societal norms.

The qualitative findings suggested some support for the resistance to these stereotypes, but as a form of self-protection rather than avoidance. Research highlights that perceptions of sexual orientation significantly impact how individuals are treated (Bjornsdottir & Rule, 2020), and discrimination often disproportionately affects individuals who are seen as strong representatives of their group in terms of prototypicality and group identification (Beam & Wellman, 2024; Blair et al., 2004; Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009). This may suggest that resistance to appearing as gay or lesbian is to avoid prejudice and discrimination. Participants discussed that they resisted gender inverted stereotypes to protect themselves from harm, including emotional and physical abuse. This finding is problematic and is supported by the hate crime report from Galop (2021), which revealed that two-thirds (64%) of respondents had experienced anti-LGBT+ violence or abuse. More recently, according to the Office for National Statistics (2023), hate crimes based on sexual orientation have increased by 112% over the past five years. These surveys highlight the prevalence of sexuality related hate crime, which may encourage individuals to resist gender inverted stereotypes to protect themselves. More specific figures from the Statista survey (2024) state that in 2023/24, in England and Wales, 22,839 sexual orientation hate crimes were recorded by police forces, which had reduced from the previous year, which was reported at 24,777 and then 26,152 in 2021/22. Although the report displays a decrease in the reporting of sexual orientation hate crimes, the figures are still alarmingly high and do not include the crimes that go unreported due to fear. The presented report statistics, alongside the findings around resisting the gender inverted stereotypes, may be linked to protection, and the avoidance of being recognised as gay or lesbian through the gender inverted stereotypes may be due to fear of harm.

The findings on resistance further stated that LGBTQ+ individuals may avoid stereotypes within certain contexts, such as work. Research supports this by suggesting that discrimination towards sexual minorities affects hiring practices and wage levels (Baumle & Poston, 2011;

Elmslie & Tebaldi, 2007; Mishel, 2016; 2020; Tilesik, 2011). Additionally, contemporary research from Maji et al. (2024) suggests that workplace discrimination towards sexual minority groups tends to affect career outcomes. The LGBTQ+ participants within this research felt that conforming to the stereotypes would identify their sexuality to others, affecting their career progression. Workplace discrimination is seen as a significant barrier to progression for LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace, alongside bias in hiring and promotions, lack of inclusive policy and fear of being outed (Ivanovic, 2023). The findings from this research add further support that workplace discrimination may continue to be problematic for LGBTQ+ individuals. This can also lead to work stress through having to manage appearance and avoid sexual identity being identified (Maji et al., 2024). The participants supported this notion by saying they felt mistrusted at work due to their sexual identity, which led to feelings of stress. These findings suggest careful attention must be paid by LGBTQ+ individuals when deciding to conform or resist the gender inverted stereotypes, even in contemporary UK society, where acceptance is seen to have improved (PEW, 2020; 2023).

The second aim of this research was to explore adherence to the gender inverted stereotypes. The findings suggest a journey with conformity which is complex, often playing a role in the identification of one's sexuality, influenced by levels of outness, community bonding and safety. Over time, this conformity may decrease as the individual becomes comfortable with their identity. While conformity to gender inverted stereotypes serves as a tool for communication, identity signalling, and community building, resistance to these stereotypes was identified, driven by self-protection against prejudice, discrimination, and violence. The constant decision to conform or resist reflects the challenges LGBTQ+ individuals face in navigating societal expectations and safety concerns in environments that may remain heteronormative and, at times, problematic.

8.2.3 To understand if there has been a change in the perceived acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, and to what extent.

The final aim of the thesis was to understand heterosexual and LGBTQ+ perceptions of acceptance in the UK. The findings suggested acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals had improved, but this may be partial, and not as high as stated in research. For example, the Pew Research Centre (2020) reported a rise in gay and lesbian acceptance from 74% in 2002 to 86% in 2019. Additionally, the World Values Survey (2022) suggested that gay and lesbian sexuality is “justified” 66% of the time, whereas originally in 1981 this figure was only 12%, demonstrating an increase in tolerance and acceptance. However, this analysis highlighted a novel finding, despite advancements in visibility and legal reforms, varying personal beliefs about LGBTQ+ identities persist. Throughout the analysis, there seemed to be a common theme of “The UK is accepting but...,” highlighting that acceptance had improved, but more is needed for full equality. Increased acceptance seemed to stem from policy changes that shaped social norms, encouraging conformity to a conditional form of acceptance. This suggests that acceptance levels may not be as high as demonstrated, requiring further investigation to identify current accurate figures. However, conducting this research may be difficult, research states that people act based on the beliefs they perceive as prevalent in their society, community, or group (e.g., Jetten, et al., 2002; Latané & Darley, 1968; Mead, 1934; Newcomb, 1961) and frequently rely on what they perceive to be common beliefs or social representations (Moscovici, 1998). The findings support that individuals may align with societal beliefs, and this was labelled in the study as equality mainstreaming, which may discourage individuals from openly expressing their true beliefs, potentially resulting in an overestimation of the levels of equality and acceptance.

The acceptance analysis further suggests that individuals may conceal their true beliefs to avoid being seen as prejudiced and deviating from acceptance related social norms. Research

in the area states that individuals are highly motivated to avoid being labelled as prejudiced, and this motivation can shape attitudes, including conforming to equality related policy (Walker et al., 2015), which supports the thesis findings. In further support of these findings, a study by Gabriel et al. (2007) suggested that individuals were more likely to donate money and sign a petition for a local LGBTQ+ organisation in public than in private, demonstrating how individuals may be concerned about sexual prejudice and how they are perceived by others. These findings may help to understand how internal and external pressures may affect the measurement of acceptance levels within the UK. The concealment of true beliefs to seem anti-prejudiced may be affecting the levels of acceptance reported, suggesting that further research is needed to establish an accurate level of acceptance and how societal pressures may influence this.

To add to the research presented on the acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, the findings implied a generational divide. It was demonstrated that older generations were deemed to have more discriminatory views, whilst younger individuals were seen to be more open-minded. This is supported by research from Hammack et al. (2018), who suggest that younger generations are more likely to accept and display individual values and freedom that relate to self-expression of sexuality. This suggested shift in beliefs and acceptance could lead to a continuation in the improvement of equality and acceptance levels, which is supported by the thesis findings that imply that the replacement of older generations (with younger individuals) will play a significant role in acceptance increases. Surveys that investigate LGBTQ+ acceptance, such as British Social Attitudes (2019) and Pew Research Centre (2020), further support that with each generation, acceptance levels will improve. Additionally, a survey from Stonewall (2022) suggests that younger generations feel more comfortable identifying with LGBTQ+ labels, which was also demonstrated by the younger participants within this research. These findings

highlight a possible generational shift in perceptions of acceptance towards LGBTQ+ individuals and suggest this may continue to develop.

The analysis of Chapter 7 highlighted the importance of education when aiming to improve acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. Participants emphasised the significant impact of education, particularly in schools, in reducing stereotypes and promoting a culture of acceptance. Within the interviews, both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participants suggested they had a lack of sexual education in their school. However, it is important to note that the age group of the participants did not align with the current policy, which outlines the study of sexual education in schools as compulsory (GOV, 2020). Importantly, due to these policy changes in sex education, research has documented an emergent shift in the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth (McCormack & Anderson, 2010; White & Hobson, 2017), which is promising. However, recent research from Stonewall (2022) surveyed LGBTQ young people in the UK and found that although 60%–80% had been taught about contraception, safe sex, violence in relationships, and consent, only 20% had been taught about these issues from a same-sex partner's perspective. The findings presented highlighted a lack of sex education, and although policy has been introduced, it may not include LGBTQ+ related topics. Current research in the area highlights that more is still needed in terms of sex education in schools, moving away from heteronormativity to being inclusive of LGBTQ+ identities (Epps et al., 2023). Additionally, the National Education Union (2022) surveyed LGBTQ+ staff in schools and suggested that, despite 92% of respondents recognising the importance of having LGBTQ+ inclusive content in the curriculum, the majority indicated that such content is either not taught at all or only addressed opportunistically. This highlights that although the participant's experiences may be dated, there may still be issues within the education system that marginalise and erase LGBTQ+ experiences.

Having LGBTQ+ related content in school may not be enough; extending educational efforts beyond schools to adult populations may ensure consistent and accurate messages about LGBTQ+ identities across all age groups. The participants suggested that connecting and learning from the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, through experiential learning, may be beneficial in developing understanding. The Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) proposes a similar concept, suggesting that contact with different social groups can improve relationships and reduce prejudice. Furthermore, in alignment with the participants' discussions, the theory suggests that positive interaction reduces stereotypes and can lead to positive attitude changes. However, more recent research using the Contact Hypothesis from Cramwinckel et al. (2021) suggests that the effects of contact with gender and sexual minority groups may be temporary. Their findings imply that LGBTQ+ negativity reduced initially; however, the effect did not remain and disappeared after 7 days. Presented alongside the findings of this thesis, this demonstrates that more research may be needed to investigate the long-term implications of experiential learning and contact with gender and sexual minorities, and how this may be used to improve acceptance levels.

The final aim of the thesis sought to examine the perceptions of LGBTQ+ acceptance. The heterosexual and LGBTQ+ participants in this study suggested that there was an increase, but this may be conditional and based on societal norms. Conforming to these societal norms was labelled as equality mainstreaming, where individuals align with the majority to avoid seeming prejudiced, possibly leading individuals to hide their true beliefs. Importantly, generational differences emerged as a key factor, suggesting that LGBTQ+ acceptance may continue to grow as societal norms evolve. However, the findings emphasise that education is key to improving acceptance, for both children and adults, highlighting a possible need for further educational guidance on LGBTQ+ individuals and their experiences.

8.3 Contribution to knowledge

This section of the discussion will outline the thesis's contribution to existing knowledge on gay and lesbian gender inverted stereotypes and perceptions of acceptance levels within the UK. This thesis offers several original contributions to the field by providing new empirical evidence and advancing theoretical understanding in these areas. A quantitative approach was used, followed by a novel qualitative approach to explore these areas further. These findings demonstrate the persistence and examine how they continue to be applied. A further contribution to knowledge from the findings suggests a benefit of the gender inverted stereotype, its role in forming connections within the LGBTQ+ community. Finally, the acceptance analysis highlighted a partial and conditional form of acceptance that may link with equality mainstreaming and social pressures of not wanting to appear discriminatory. The following sections will discuss these contributions in detail.

8.3.1 The Use of Mixed Methods

The research in the area is dominated by quantitative methods to explore gender inverted stereotypes and survey-based research to examine the acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. This thesis used a mixed method, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, firstly to quantify the prevalence of the gender inverted stereotype and its applications. While the qualitative component further explored through experiences and understandings of both gender inverted stereotypes and the perception of LGBTQ+ acceptance. Using both of these methods ensured a thorough examination of the topic, expanding on current literature in the area.

Much of the literature in the area uses a quantitative method or survey-based research. This thesis addressed this limitation by exploring the topic using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method used a mixed sample of heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals, where all sexualities and genders could participate, to ensure full

generalisation. The qualitative elements conducted separate analyses for both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals, recognising the differing lived experiences and attitudes that may affect gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance. By separating heterosexual and LGBTQ+ experiences and exploring with a mixed method, this research provides a more accurate and inclusive account of gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance perceptions. As these groups have differing lived experiences of gender inverted stereotypes and LGBTQ+ acceptance, they will engage and interpret these differently. Treating them as separate groups for the qualitative analysis ensured these differences were captured, as they are overlooked in previous research. This addresses a key gap in the literature and contributes empirical evidence that highlights the importance of considering the differences between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ experiences.

8.3.2 The Persistence and Application of the Gender Inverted Stereotype

Existing research on gender inverted stereotypes (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Hudson & Ghani, 2023; Kite & Deaux, 1987; Mize & Manago, 2018) has demonstrated the existence of gender inverted stereotypes. Research from Clarke and Arnold (2017) explored whether the gender inverted stereotype was applied by heterosexual and gay/lesbian individuals in the same manner, but research has not explored who applies them more (heterosexual vs LGBTQ+). This is important to establish as it reveals how stigma and biases are produced, maintained and by which groups, highlighting differences in lived experiences and knowledge. Additionally, previous research had limited its recruitment; the studies from this thesis expanded recruitment to individuals from heterosexual and all LGBTQ+ backgrounds, to then establish whether one sexuality applied the gender inverted stereotypes more. The first empirical study of this thesis explored the gender inverted stereotype and its application using a quantitative approach. The study highlighted that the gender inverted stereotypes persist and are applied by both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals, with no differences. Demonstrating that gender inverted stereotypes are part of

societal norms that people across both sexualities use. These findings contribute to the persistence of the gender inverted stereotypes and suggest that they are used by both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals to identify gay and lesbian individuals.

As suggested in the findings and literature synthesis section, the majority of the findings in the area support Kite and Deaux's (1987) theory of implicit inversion; however, this study highlights a partial inversion. This form of an "androgynous" or "partial" gender inverted stereotype is supported by limited research from Clarke and Arnold (2017) and Klysing et al. (2021). With the support of the findings from this thesis, the IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987) may need revisions due to evolving social attitudes. The findings not only confirm the prevalence of the gender inverted stereotype but also extend the theoretical understandings by suggesting a shift towards a more "androgynous" partial form of gender inversion, which could affect the stereotype application.

8.3.3 The Benefits of the Gender Inverted Stereotype

There has been little consideration in the literature discussing any benefits of the gender inverted stereotypes. Limited research from Hayfield (2013) highlights that these stereotypes are useful in identifying others, and Brown (2020) adds that they help with communication in heteronormative environments. The qualitative elements of this thesis expanded to suggest that the gender inverted stereotype may help individuals to form connections and find like-minded individuals, which relates to findings from Hutson (2010). The gender inverted stereotype was used by LGBTQ+ participants in this study as a form of communication to identify others from the community, which led to feelings of safety. Although this finding supports the limited research in the area, it also disputes research that states that gay and lesbian individuals actively avoid the gender inverted stereotypes (Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Lippa, 2005; Kitzinger, 1991; Pillard, 1991). These findings contribute to knowledge by suggesting a positive aspect of the gender inverted stereotypes, used as a social function to build connections and safety, extending

previous research that may frame these stereotypes negatively. This challenges the prevailing narrative of the gender inverted stereotype being problematic, rather than perpetuating stigma the gender inverted stereotype may have adaptive purposes. Further research on the benefits of the gender inverted stereotypes may be beneficial to explore and understand any positive elements.

8.3.4. The Perception of Acceptance in the UK

This thesis provides clear evidence that the perceptions of acceptance are not as high as previously suggested.. The surveys in the area support a rise in acceptance levels (PEW, 2020;2023; WVS, 2022); however, this analysis highlights a novel contribution that states that acceptance levels may not be perceived by heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals as high as these surveys have suggested. The perceptions of high acceptance seemed to relate to policy change and the fear of appearing discriminatory, encouraging people to suggest that they have accepting views, but internal thoughts and feelings may differ. This concept of partial acceptance, where LGBTQ+ individuals are only accepted under certain conditions, is important as these perceptions may challenge the assumption of rising acceptance, requiring a deeper critical examination of what LGBTQ+ acceptance entails. This finding requires further investigation that explores implicit biases and social desirability to fully understand the true levels of LGBTQ+ acceptance in the UK.

8.3.5 Contributions Summary

This thesis used a mixed method approach to address gaps in research related to gender inverted stereotypes and LGBTQ+ acceptance. By combining the findings from the quantitative element with separate qualitative analyses, the overall findings demonstrated not only the generalised understandings but also the differences between heterosexual and LGBTQ+ experiences. The quantitative findings supported the persistence of the gender

inverted stereotype and that its application is applied with no differences. The results also suggested a shift away from theories such as the IIT (Kite & Deaux, 1987) with a more “androgynous” or partial form of gender inversion. Importantly, the findings add that the gender inverted stereotype may not always be problematic, highlighting a potential benefit to these stereotypes, where LGBTQ+ people may use them to identify each other, build connections and feel safe. Finally, the thesis findings suggest that the perceived acceptance of LGBTQ+ people in the UK is lower and more conditional than surveys may suggest. Overall, this thesis contributes to findings in the area offering new evidence, refining of theory and highlighting the experiences and complexity of gender inverted stereotypes and LGBTQ+ acceptance perceptions.

8.4 Strengths, Limitations and Future Research Directions

This thesis integrates qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing for a thorough understanding of gender inverted stereotypes and acceptance perceptions in the UK. While the quantitative element provided statistical insights into stereotype application, the qualitative interviews offered depth and personal context, helping to explain why participants hold certain beliefs and how these beliefs are expressed. This mixed methods approach enhanced the validity of the findings, as it captured both the generalisable trends and the subjective experiences of individuals. To further expand on these findings, it would be beneficial to analyse age ranges independently, as age was not collected in the first study. Examining the gender inverted stereotypes and including age could be used to corroborate the qualitative findings, which suggested age may impact the stereotype application. Additionally, exploring how perceptions around gender inverted stereotypes may shift between age groups could offer further understanding into the factors that influence individual perceptions. Since the quantitative element focused solely on explicit stereotypes, exploring both implicit and explicit stereotypes

could deepen the understanding of the topic. Stereotypes are likely to exist in both forms, as highlighted in the qualitative analysis. Data collection methods such as assessing reaction times to visual stimuli, words, or expressions (as demonstrated by Greenwald et al., 2009) may have the potential to uncover implicitly held stereotypes.

This research benefits from a diverse participant sample, which included both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals. This diversity allowed the research to examine how people from different social groups perceive and apply gender inverted stereotypes and perceive acceptance levels. The recruitment strategy was an opportunity sampling method; while this approach offered practicality and ease of access to participants, it may limit the generalisability of the findings across the entire UK. For instance, certain geographical regions or communities may not have been represented within the sample, leading to a potential lack of diversity in perspectives. Differences in views, social norms, and cultural beliefs between regions could significantly influence attitudes and behaviours, potentially affecting the applicability of the results. Additionally, sample bias may have affected the uptake, as individuals with more favourable views may have chosen to take part rather than individuals with negative beliefs. This effect may have arisen from the poster used, as the wording may have encouraged certain individuals to apply, reflecting intellectual and sample biases. For example, the study advertisement may have attracted participants who were curious, open-minded or had an interest in the topic. If an individual believed the study was framed in a way that appears supportive of LGBTQ+ identities (e.g., language that suggests acceptance is expected), individuals with negative beliefs may have felt excluded. To encourage broader participation, using additional recruitment approaches to address these barriers would be beneficial. It would be important to ensure a non-judgmental environment and recruitment approach to include views of those with negative beliefs, allowing for further expansion on the topic.

As previously mentioned, a key and novel finding from this thesis is the element of partial acceptance, whilst there has been progress in LGBTQ+ rights, acceptance is often conditional and may differ from personal beliefs. This is a critical contribution to the research area of LGBTQ+ acceptance and highlights a need for further investigation into the effect of social desirability. The first empirical study of this research controlled for social desirability bias as a covariate; the analysis highlighted that this was significant, suggesting the participants may have controlled their answers to align with societal beliefs. Although this risk was mitigated through confidentiality, this could affect study results, as the participants may have aligned with societal beliefs rather than personal ones. Future research could utilise both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the differences between public and personal beliefs, to add further expansion to the findings presented from surveys (e.g., BSA, 2019; PEW, 2020; 2023; WVS, 2022). To investigate personal beliefs, the use of methods, such as Implicit Association Tests, may expand upon the findings.

The LGBTQ+ identity of the researcher was initially deemed as a strength to the study, allowing for connection, understanding and rapport with participants. However, this may also have posed as a limitation due to experiences within the community; interpretations of the findings may have been subconsciously biased. Research suggests that connections with the LGBTQ+ community may lead researchers to interpret their findings through a particular lens (Berger, 2015), overlooking alternative explanations (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). To avoid this limitation and biased analysis, it was important to keep the research participant informed throughout, minimising potential biases by using participant provided imagery and semi structured interviews. Additionally, to remain objective, advice was sought from supervisors to ensure authenticity within the findings.

The identity of the researcher also posed a further limitation that was identified during the interviews with heterosexual participants. As the researcher is deemed to fit the masculine

lesbian stereotype, this seemed to affect the responses of the participants. For example, some participants would compare the appearance of the researcher by saying phrases such as “Lesbians have tattoos... but not like yours, they are feminine” or “lesbians have short hair... not like yours though, yours is not masculine.” This may have limited the participant's full disclosure regarding gender inverted stereotypes due to concerns about offending the researcher. The participants' willingness to please may have distorted research findings, particularly as the studies involved social attitudes and behaviours. Further research could anonymise or obscure the gender and sexuality of the researcher during data collection to minimise potential biases or influences on participant responses. This could be achieved by using neutral or automated methods of interaction, such as online surveys, chatbots, or pre-recorded interview prompts, where the researcher's identity is not directly apparent. By doing so, participants may feel less influenced by perceived researcher characteristics, enabling more authentic and unbiased data collection.

In conclusion, there are both strengths and limitations within the research. At the time of writing this thesis, there were few mixed-methods studies specifically examining gender inverted stereotypes and perceptions of LGBTQ+ acceptance, making the present thesis a valuable and novel contribution to the field. Most research in this area has relied solely on quantitative approaches, providing insights into patterns of attitudes but often lacking depth in understanding the personal and social contexts influencing these stereotypes. By incorporating the qualitative element, this study offered a deeper exploration of participants' understandings and perspectives.

8.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings from both the heterosexual and LGBTQ+ qualitative analyses, and literature within the area (e.g. Epps et al., 2023; National Education Union, 2022), it is

recommended that sexual education in schools may need further revisions. Research from the area suggests an increase in positive attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals (Clements & Field, 2014; Ellis & High, 2004), however, Stonewall (2017) found that although 60%–80% had been taught about contraception, safe sex, violence in relationships and consent, only 20% had been taught about these issues from a same-sex partners perspective. The findings from the qualitative elements of this thesis suggest that education is needed to improve acceptance and understanding. A more embedded and comprehensive approach may be required, where LGBTQ+ experiences are integrated throughout lesson content rather than occasional or supplementary topics. For example, in collaboration with schools and LGBTQ+ charities, such as Stonewall and the LGBT Foundation, the findings of this research would support the development of workshops, lessons and assemblies that include LGBTQ+ lived experiences. These workshops would include experiences from LGBTQ+ individuals sourced through local community organisations, demonstrating their daily lives and how these may differ from the stereotypes. The session would also include a facilitated Q&A discussion, allowing active engagement and the space to explore different identities. To close the session, students would be signposted to local resources and practical resources to embed the learning from the session.

Additionally, including this form of education throughout the curriculum can benefit LGBTQ+ students by seeing representations of individuals like themselves. However, it is important to ensure that the content is delivered. The National Education Union (2022) suggests that despite 92% of respondents recognising the importance of LGBTQ+ content, the majority indicated that such content is only addressed opportunistically, if at all. LGBTQ+ inclusion could be further embedded into teacher training and frameworks through mandatory training modules and CPD. I recommend developing mandatory training modules and CPD sessions that equip teachers with the tools to deliver LGBTQ+ content. To ensure authenticity and relevance, these sessions should be delivered in partnership with local LGBTQ+ individuals and charities.

To guarantee that teachers have the correct tools, a government backed online teaching resource hub such as lgbteducation.scot should be used, which is a national platform that includes age-appropriate lesson plans, resources and case studies that embed LGBTQ+ content into teaching. Over the long term and in line with the Equality Act 2010, policymakers should advocate for a curriculum review to ensure full inclusion of LGBTQ+ content across the school. To ensure this element, OFSTED should introduce specific criteria that assess LGBTQ+ discrimination, requiring schools to demonstrate an inclusive policy and the positive impact on students. This could be achieved by campaigns highlighting the importance of LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools, which may support a cultural shift.

Throughout the findings, it was deemed that education in all contexts is beneficial, including all age groups. Creating intersectional content from the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, and written by such individuals (co-production), would ensure the content is relatable and precise, empowering LGBTQ+ people. Also, the use of LGBTQ+ speakers and role models would provide further understanding, allowing for authentic experiences to be shared that challenge the gender inverted stereotypes. However, to tackle such a large area may take varied approaches, within a variety of contexts. A starting point should include discussions with stakeholders such as local authorities and community leaders to establish the level of education received and the steps to improve this. In the short term, a programme could then be developed. For example, a pilot programme within communities that teaches people about gender and sexuality through lived experiences, the effectiveness of the programme could then be evaluated over time to assess its impact and ensure it remains appropriate.

The thesis findings further suggest that the media plays a large role in the persistence of gender inverted stereotypes, ensuring diverse representation is recommended. Research in the area suggests that media can enforce and shape the stereotypes that relate to gay and lesbian individuals (Sink, 2018; Van Meer & Pollmann, 2022). Whilst there has been improvement

regarding the diversity within media's LGBTQ+ characters and frequency (Bond et al., 2019), participants from the qualitative elements of this thesis suggest characters are identified through the exaggerated gender inverted stereotypes. In support of this, findings from an OFCOM survey in 2018 suggested that LGBTQ+ individuals felt their characters were often displayed with extreme stereotypes and their sexuality was their central feature. Collaborating with OFCOM to further explore this area and collect up-to-date data could be a starting point for moving forward with how LGBTQ+ people are presented in media.

Research from this thesis, Bond and Compton (2015) and Gonta et al. (2017) suggests that greater exposure to positive media that represent gay males and lesbian women will lead to more positive attitudes and less stereotypical application. Including characters that reflect the diverse backgrounds of LGBTQ+ individuals, rather than reductive gender inverted stereotypes, is important to continue to progress and encourage understanding. Media producers from television and online content should collaborate with LGBTQ+ staff, consultants and individuals to ensure diversity and accurate reflections of the LGBTQ+ community. For example, public campaigns like the award winning E45 'This is me. This is my space' campaign and Levi's 'Not my first rodeo' that showed real-life LGBTQ+ stories through television and social media, challenging gender inverted stereotypes and promoting acceptance.

In summary, incorporating initiatives that challenge the gender inverted stereotypes within both real-world contexts and media can help to promote understanding and further acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals. Embedding authentic and diverse experiences across the curriculum and media, whilst engaging with stakeholders and evaluating the outcomes, could contribute to a more accurate understanding of LGBTQ+ individuals. Gender inverted stereotypes may not apply to all gay and lesbian individuals, and further research and education may help to increase the understanding of LGBTQ+ lives and experiences.

8.6 Personal Reflections

My experience within the community, as a lesbian individual, developed my interest in the topic of gender inversion and led to my initial research at undergraduate level. The findings from my dissertation, which used a gay and lesbian sample, suggested that the gender inverted stereotype was not applied by the participants, and that acceptance may have had an impact on this. This finding aligned with my experience within the community, where many individuals did not conform to the gender inverted stereotypes, and this inspired me to further explore the topic at a postgraduate level. The incorporation of a mixed sample, and the use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis, aimed to further expand on the findings and explore the area further.

Due to my connection to the LGBTQ+ community, it was important that I remained objective and aware of my personal biases and experiences of gender inverted stereotypes. For example, I have also conformed and resisted these stereotypes, and they have been applied to me by others, so ensuring this did not affect the interpretation of results was important. To mitigate this, using a design that was led by the participant and regular consultation with peers and supervisors ensured I remained objective. Additionally, these discussions provided further unconsidered viewpoints, allowing me to critically reflect on the data and interpret it accurately.

In reflection, the findings on gender inversion have broadened my own understanding by highlighting the positive elements of the gender inverted stereotype. These stereotypes allow people to find like-minded individuals and feel safe. I also realised that I use the gender inverted stereotype when entering a crowded room to find others that are like me, a finding I had not previously considered. However, it is crucial to note that from these findings, the gender inverted stereotypes may also be associated with fear and discrimination. While acceptance and tolerance of LGBTQ+ identities seem to be improving, discriminatory attitudes that link to gender inverted stereotypes may remain. Ultimately, I realised the goal may not be to eradicate

the gender inverted stereotypes but to aim to challenge and dismantle the discrimination that is linked to them.

8.7 Conclusion

This mixed methods approach provided a thorough understanding of how gender inverted stereotypes are applied to gay men and lesbian women. The findings highlighted the prevalence of these stereotypes in current society and explored their broader implications. The quantitative analysis suggested that although gender inverted stereotypes are applied, the application may be a partial rather than a full inversion, refuting previous findings (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Kite & Deaux, 1987). There may be several factors to explain this, for example, increased acceptance of gay and lesbian individuals, alongside societal shifts in understanding. However, the findings suggest that these stereotypes may remain embedded in societal norms, maintained by media, and reinforced by heteronormativity. The qualitative findings further revealed that conformity to these stereotypes is low within the LGBTQ+ community, highlighting a gap between societal stereotypes and LGBTQ+ individuals' lived experiences. Overall, these findings addressed the first aim of the thesis, which was to examine the stereotypes associated with gay and lesbian individuals.

The second aim of the thesis was addressed through the qualitative LGBTQ+ analysis, which suggested a journey of conformity and resistance to gender inverted stereotypes. Conformity often aided in identity development and expression during early stages, but decreased as individuals became more comfortable with their identities. Resistance to these stereotypes was due to fear of prejudice, discrimination and harm, suggesting the constant need for LGBTQ+ individuals to evaluate their surroundings to maintain safety in heteronormative environments. These qualitative findings further explored the understandings of LGBTQ+ people and provided lived experiences, and the reality of the gender inverted stereotypes.

The third aim of the research was achieved through investigating the perceptions of acceptance levels of gay and lesbian individuals. Whilst surveys on UK acceptance present high levels of acceptance (BSA, 2019; PEW, 2020; 2023), the findings in this thesis may suggest a partial and conditional level of acceptance, which may be affected by conforming to social norms of acceptance. Further research may be needed to explore implicit and explicit beliefs relating to acceptance to gain true and relatable evidence. However, the participants did suggest an interesting finding that related to younger generations being more open-minded, showing a promising trend for increased acceptance by each future generation. Although to ensure these stereotypes continue to be challenged, education is key in expanding and developing understandings of diverse LGBTQ+ identities.

The findings presented within this mixed method thesis relate to social psychology, gender studies and LGBTQ+ research, providing novelty and answers to the presented aims. This research suggested that the gender inverted stereotype is still present in UK society, and is applied by heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals with no differences. However, the qualitative findings from this thesis expand further, providing deeper meaning to the beliefs and understanding around these stereotypes, highlighting not only a journey of conformity, but also resistance. It is suggested that the application of these stereotypes is reductive and does not apply to all gay and lesbian individuals as assumed. Although the use of the gender inverted stereotype does allow gay and lesbian individuals to find other like-minded individuals, it demonstrates both strengths and weaknesses of the stereotype. Regarding the perceptions of acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, it appears to be rising; however, the experience of both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ individuals shows a level of partial acceptance that is influenced by social desirability and societal norms. The use of mixed methods to investigate this area makes a significant contribution and highlights where further research may be needed to address societal norms and advance equality.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Quantitative Recruitment Poster



The poster features a background with a rainbow gradient and several 3D gender symbols (male, female, and combined) in various colors. The text is centered and reads:

Understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population: A mixed methods exploration

Despite increasing tolerance in the UK there is still a belief that gay men and lesbian women possess gender inverted characteristics (Reyna et al., 2014; Smith, 2011). However, more recently it is noted that our current climate is far more accepting, and public attitudes toward homosexuals are quickly shifting to reflect greater tolerance, with younger generations leading the way (Smith, 2011). This study will aim to explore stereotyping of LGBTQ+ people.

To take part please follow the link or scan QR Code



https://bliss.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3rZQVIVKwEPv0IC

For further information please contact Laura Gee at
Laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Appendix B: Quantitative Study Invitation to participate in and Consent Form

Understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population: A mixed methods exploration

Invitation to Participate

You are being asked to take part in a research study on gay stereotypes. This study will aim to explore stereotyping of LGBTQ+ people.

This study has been granted ethical approval by the Birmingham City University BLSS Ethics Committee in accordance to the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2019).

What will you need to do

This online questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes. A consent form must be completed first, which includes age, gender, and sexuality. You must be over the age of eighteen years to participate. You will then be guided through the online questionnaire, powered by Qualtrics where you will be asked questions regarding stereotypes. Once complete a debrief will follow.

Benefits and risks

Participation may lead you to assess your own stereotypes of LGBTQ+ people.

If you feel that you might be upset or if you are concerned about answering questions about your thoughts of LGBTQ+ people, then you should not participate, and I thank you for considering my project.

If you feel you would like support regarding LGBTQ+ matters a list of support group contact details are supplied at the end of the questionnaire.

Cost, reimbursement, and compensation

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

Right to withdraw

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered.

If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should contact the researcher before taking part.

You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to be withdrawn/destroyed. To do this you must contact the researcher and supply your anonymous code, details on how to generate this code are given below.

Confidentiality/anonymity

The data we collect does not contain any personal information about you except age, gender, and sexual orientation. To identify your answers if you wish to withdraw please supply code below, using the first two letters of your mother's maiden name and the last three digits of your mobile number (e.g. MA113). No one will link the data you provided to the identifying information you supplied as it is stored numerically, so it will be meaningless to anyone outside of this study. The data will then be saved to OneDrive on a password protected laptop. You can decide not to consent to having your data included in analyses, which will take place on 1st August 2021. To do this please contact the researcher and state your code.

For further information

The researcher Laura Gee will be glad to answer your questions about this study. If you want to find out about the results of this study, email her at Laura.Gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Supervisors:

Dr Deborah Earnshaw: Deborah.Earnshaw@bcu.ac.uk

Dr Elle Boag: Elle.Boag@bcu.ac.uk

Dr Samuel Parker: Samuel.Parker@bcu.ac.uk

If you have questions about your rights in this research, or you have any other questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints that you do not feel can be addressed by the researcher, please contact the BLSS Research Ethics committee at blssethics@bcu.ac.uk

Please insert your anonymous code here (first two letters of mother's maiden name and last three digits of mobile number, e.g. MA113)

(text box included)

Consent form in Qualtrics, using a tick box to agree to each statement. A force response is also included here to ensure consent is received.

By clicking yes below, you are agreeing that:

You are over the age of 18

You have read and understood the invitation to participate sheet

Questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily

You are aware of the potential risks (if any)

You are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion)

You understand how your data will be stored and used as part of this study

A page break is included here and the next page states:

I UNDERSTAND THAT CLICKING “NEXT” IS EVIDENCE OF MY AGREEMENT TO TAKE PART.

Appendix C: Quantitative Study Demographics and Questionnaire

Demographics form in Qualtrics.

The section for gender uses a drop-down box but also utilises a text answer box to allow for further genders.

I identify as...

Male

Female

Non-Binary/third gender

Prefer not to say

The section for sexual orientation uses a drop-down box but also utilises a text answer box to allow for further sexual orientations.

My sexual orientation is..

Heterosexual

Homosexual

Bisexual

Queer

Pansexual

Asexual

My sexual orientation has not been listed above. I identify as...

Page break is included here then the following information is supplied

The questionnaire will now begin. You will be guided through the questions where you will be asked about levels of masculinity and femininity and gay stereotype application. Once complete a debrief will follow containing the research aims. If needed, contact details for LGBTQ+ support groups will be provided.

Questionnaire: Qualtrics

Firstly, Qualtrics will assign a random target gender and sexuality (Male heterosexual, Male homosexual, Female heterosexual, Female homosexual). The question will then be shown as follows

On the OAT-AM scale (Liben & Bigler, 2002) all answers are given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 very unlikely to 5 very likely. Each section will be shown on a different page in Qualtrics.

Think about a typical *Male heterosexual, Male homosexual, Female heterosexual, Female homosexual*. How likely is it that this person would do/possess each of the following jobs

- 1. dishwasher in a restaurant**
- 2. refrigerator salesperson**
- 3. artist**
- 4. elevator operator**
- 5. interior decorator**
- 6. auto mechanic**
- 7. telephone installer**
- 8. librarian**
- 9. cook in a restaurant**
- 10. secretary**
- 11. plumber**
- 12. nurse**
- 13. ballet dancer**
- 14. hair stylist**

15. engineer
16. police officer
17. umpire
18. dental assistant
19. ship captain
20. florist
21. welder
22. electrician
23. manicurist
24. dietician
25. physical therapist

Think about a typical *Male heterosexual*, *Male homosexual*, *Female heterosexual*, *Female homosexual*. How likely is it that this person would do/possess each of the following traits

1. be emotional
2. be affectionate
3. be good at English
4. enjoy English
5. be cruel
6. be talkative
7. be appreciative
8. be good at physical education
9. enjoy physical education
10. be gentle
11. be good at foreign languages

12. complain
13. enjoy math
14. be good at math
15. be dominant
16. cry a lot
17. be neat
18. enjoy art
19. act as a leader
20. try to look good
21. be good at science
22. enjoy science
23. be good at music
24. study hard
25. be brave

Think about a typical *Male heterosexual*, *Male homosexual*, *Female heterosexual*, *Female homosexual*. How likely is it that this person would do/possess each of the following activities

1. fly a model plane
2. knit a sweater
3. sew from a pattern
4. go to the beach
5. wash clothes
6. fix a car
7. build with tools
8. play cards

9. shoot pool
10. ride a motorcycle
11. fix bicycles
12. do gymnastics
13. practice a musical instrument
14. read romance novels
15. practice martial arts
16. watch soap operas
17. baby-sit
18. shoot a bow and arrow
19. bake cookies
20. sketch (or design) clothes
21. grocery shop
22. draw (or design) cars
23. build model airplanes
24. sing in a choir
25. participate in political activities

This will then be followed with the BIDR16 this scale is used to measure Social desirability

Bias and use a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 very untrue to 7 very true.

Instruction: Please indicate how true you think each statement is about yourself.

1. I have not always been honest with myself (-)
2. I always know why I like things
3. It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought*
4. I never regret my decisions

5. I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough*
6. I am a completely rational person
7. I am very confident of my judgements
8. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover*
9. I sometimes tell lies if I have to*
10. I never cover up my mistakes
11. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone*
12. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget*
13. I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back*
14. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening
15. I never take things that don't belong to me
16. I don't gossip about other people's business

After a page break the questionnaire will then ask

If you would be willing to participate further (e.g. Interviews), please supply your email address.

A text box will be included

Appendix D: Quantitative Study Debrief

The debrief will be supplied after the questions are completed. Please note it is stated in bold that the participant must read the debrief and then click next to complete the study.

Please read the debrief below and then click next to complete the study.

As stated in the information about the study, historically research into gay stereotypes has clearly identified that despite an increase in tolerance, UK society still believes that gay men and lesbian women adhere to gay stereotypes (Reyna et al., 2014). However, recently a shift has occurred, and the current climate is far more accepting and public attitudes toward homosexuals are quickly shifting to reflect greater acceptance and a clear trend toward greater tolerance of homosexuality, with younger generations leading the way (Smith, 2011). Intuitively, this shift could in turn influence how people uphold the gay stereotype and view sexual diversity and fluidity (Hammack, Frost & Hughes, 2018). However, to explore this potential impact, more up to date research is needed around the queer paradigm, especially due to changes in laws, the continuing shift and impact on non-heterosexual individuals. It may be possible that this belief now only exists within certain communities and that age may also play a role in this belief, as it is reported that younger generations are more open to sexuality and change.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore stereotyping of homosexual individuals in the UK. The research will investigate heterosexual and homosexual perspectives through surveys (study 1) and interviews (study 2 & 3), which will help to provide a comprehensive insight into perceptions of stereotyping homosexuality. It is predicted that gay stereotyping will be evident across all participants, but that there will be a significant difference between heterosexual and non-heterosexual participants.

If you wish to see the final analysis and write up, please email the researcher at

Laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Right to withdraw reminder

You can withdraw your information at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied is destroyed. To do this please contact the researcher stating your anonymous code (The first two letters of your mother's maiden name and last three digits of your mobile number).

You can decide not to consent to having your data included in analyses, which will take place on 1st August 2021. To do this please contact the researcher and state your code.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered. If you have any questions as a result of reading this debrief sheet, please contact the researcher (laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk).

No one will link the data you provided to the identifying information you supplied. Your data is anonymised.

The data we collect does not contain any personal information about you except age, gender, and sexual orientation. The data will be saved on a password protected laptop in OneDrive.

If you have any ethical concerns, please contact BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk.

Thank you for your time.

Laura Gee

Laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

If needed here is a list of support groups that you can access if you would like to discuss any feelings that have arisen due to this survey around homosexuality or stereotype application.

Switchboard LGBTQ+ helpline

www.switchboard.org.uk

phone number: 0300 330 0630. Open 10:00-22:00 every day

LGBT Foundation: 03453 30 30 30

Stonewall

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-and-advice>

Information and support for LGBT communities and their allies. Contact Stonewall's

Information Service FREEPHONE 0800 0502020 Lines are open 9:30 - 4:30 Monday to Friday.

Local Mind services, such as MindLine Trans+

Our local Minds deliver mental health services across England and Wales, with some offering specific support for LGBTQ+ people.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/local-minds/>

Albert Kennedy Trust

contact@akt.org.uk

Supports young LGBTQ+ people (16-25) who are made homeless or living in a hostile environment, by providing appropriate homes through supported lodgings, fostering and other specialist housing schemes.

Broken Rainbow

Helpline: 0300 999 5428

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic violence.

GMFA: <https://www.gmfa.org.uk/>

GMFA develops a wide range of health promotion, including web and print advertising campaigns, booklets, websites, community building events, a magazine and group work.

Imaan <https://imaanlondon.wordpress.com/contact/>

Supports LGBTQI Muslim people, their families, and friends to address issues of sexual orientation within Islam.

LGBT Foundation

Helpline: 0345 3 30 30 30

info@lgbt.foundation

London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

Helpline: 0300 330 0630

chris@llgs.org.uk

Provides information and support through a confidential helpline. Also maintains an online database of LGBT services and organisations throughout the UK and has an instant messaging service.

MindOut

01273 234839

info@mindout.org.uk

mental health service run by and for lesbians, gay men, bisexual, and trans people. Based in Brighton and Hove, they provide local services as well as several national initiatives.

Pink Therapy

Online directory of qualified therapists who have adopted a positive stance on minority sexual and gender identities.

Mind

0300 123 3393

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Mind provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Samaritans

Call: 116 123

Email: Jo@samaritans.org

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

CALM

Phone: 0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)

Website: www.thecalmzone.net

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably. A charity providing a mental health helpline and webchat.

Please click next to complete the study.

Appendix E: Quantitative Study Ethical Approval



Faculty of Business, Law & Social Sciences Research Office
Curzon Building, 4 Cardigan Street
Birmingham
B4 7HD

HLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

08/Apr/2021

Mrs Laura Goe

Laura.goe2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Dear Laura,

Re: Goe /99203 /sub2 (R/A) /2021 /Mar /HLSS F AEC - Understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population: A mixed methods exploration

Thank you for your application and documentation regarding the above activity. I am pleased to take Chair's Action and approve this activity.

Provided that you are granted Permission of Access by relevant parties (meeting requirements as laid out by them), you may begin your activity.

I can also confirm that any person participating in the project is covered under the University's insurance arrangements.

Please note that ethics approval only covers your activity as it has been detailed in your ethics application. If you wish to make any changes to the activity, then you must submit an Amendment application for approval of the proposed changes.

Examples of changes include (but are not limited to) adding a new study site, a new method of participant recruitment, adding a new method of data collection and/or change of Project Lead.

Please also note that the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee should be notified of any serious adverse effects arising as a result of this activity.

If for any reason the Committee feels that the activity is no longer ethically sound, it reserves the right to withdraw its approval. In the unlikely event of issues arising which would lead to this, you will be consulted.

Keep a copy of this letter along with the corresponding application for your records as evidence of approval.

If you have any queries, please contact HLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

I wish you every success with your activity.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Stefania Paladini

On behalf of the Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee

Appendix F: Quantitative Study SPSS Output

Reliability

Scale: Femininity

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	145	99.3
	Excluded ^a	1	.7
	Total	146	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.963	30

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OAT_Q5	3.64	.933	145
OAT_Q8	3.35	1.044	145
OAT_Q10	3.19	1.107	145
OAT_Q12	3.57	1.053	145
OAT_Q13	3.29	1.213	145
OAT_Q14	3.63	1.207	145
OAT_Q18	3.28	.984	145
OAT_Q20	3.34	1.132	145
OAT_Q23	3.03	1.266	145
OAT_Q24	3.52	.898	145
OAT_Q26	3.51	1.042	145
OAT_Q27	3.81	.908	145
OAT_Q28	3.55	.807	145
OAT_Q29	3.39	.774	145
OAT_Q31	3.56	.798	145
OAT_Q35	3.44	.927	145
OAT_Q37	3.47	.755	145
OAT_Q41	2.83	.905	145
OAT_Q42	3.18	.863	145
OAT_Q45	3.81	.858	145
OAT_Q52	2.80	.997	145
OAT_Q53	2.80	1.065	145
OAT_Q55	3.86	1.007	145
OAT_Q62	3.17	.890	145

OAT_Q64	2.97	1.017	145
OAT_Q66	3.32	.889	145
OAT_Q67	3.31	.954	145
OAT_Q69	3.32	.911	145
OAT_Q70	3.26	1.012	145
OAT_Q71	3.97	.979	145

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
OAT_Q5	97.52	394.099	.568	.962
OAT_Q8	97.81	388.004	.654	.962
OAT_Q10	97.97	383.700	.717	.961
OAT_Q12	97.59	383.562	.760	.961
OAT_Q13	97.87	376.337	.812	.960
OAT_Q14	97.53	378.792	.761	.961
OAT_Q18	97.88	388.165	.694	.961
OAT_Q20	97.82	380.829	.768	.961
OAT_Q23	98.12	376.471	.772	.961
OAT_Q24	97.64	393.926	.597	.962
OAT_Q26	97.65	382.980	.784	.961
OAT_Q27	97.35	393.355	.607	.962
OAT_Q28	97.61	400.574	.458	.963
OAT_Q29	97.77	398.399	.551	.962

OAT_Q31	97.60	398.283	.537	.962
OAT_Q35	97.72	390.399	.676	.961
OAT_Q37	97.69	409.688	.189	.964
OAT_Q41	98.32	389.568	.717	.961
OAT_Q42	97.98	389.951	.743	.961
OAT_Q45	97.34	398.505	.490	.963
OAT_Q52	98.36	387.051	.713	.961
OAT_Q53	98.36	384.093	.738	.961
OAT_Q55	97.30	390.130	.626	.962
OAT_Q62	97.99	390.604	.700	.961
OAT_Q64	98.19	386.296	.718	.961
OAT_Q66	97.83	388.389	.766	.961
OAT_Q67	97.85	387.199	.744	.961
OAT_Q69	97.84	387.745	.765	.961
OAT_Q70	97.90	385.255	.749	.961
OAT_Q71	97.19	395.194	.511	.963

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
101.16	416.023	20.397	30

Reliability

Scale: masculine

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	143143	97.9
	Excluded ^a	3003	2.1
	Total	146146	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.972	30

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OAT_Q30	3.10	.791	143143
OAT_Q33	3.49	.843	143143
OAT_Q34	3.50	.818	143143
OAT_Q38	3.25	.684	143143

OAT_Q39	3.29	.657	143143
OAT_Q40	3.48	.792	143143
OAT_Q44	3.55	.825	143143
OAT_Q46	3.34	.689	143143
OAT_Q47	3.32	.706	143143
OAT_Q50	3.71	.850	143143
OAT_Q2	3.24	.948	143143
OAT_Q6	3.34	1.170	143143
OAT_Q7	3.19	1.071	143143
OAT_Q11	3.21	1.152	143143
OAT_Q15	3.53	1.070	143143
OAT_Q16	3.66	.931	143143
OAT_Q17	3.29	.987	143143
OAT_Q19	3.21	1.146	143143
OAT_Q21	3.23	1.216	143143
OAT_Q22	3.32	1.132	143143
OAT_Q51	3.04	.960	143143
OAT_Q56	3.38	1.023	143143
OAT_Q57	3.54	.966	143143
OAT_Q59	3.54	.899	143143
OAT_Q60	3.40	.962	143143
OAT_Q61	3.29	1.008	143143
OAT_Q65	3.48	.783	143143
OAT_Q68	3.20	.882	143143
OAT_Q72	3.27	.931	143143
OAT_Q73	3.05	.985	143143

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
OAT_Q30	97.34	429.037	.354	.973
OAT_Q33	96.95	417.938	.656	.972
OAT_Q34	96.94	417.684	.685	.971
OAT_Q38	97.19	423.820	.603	.972
OAT_Q39	97.15	425.918	.550	.972
OAT_Q40	96.97	419.170	.662	.972
OAT_Q44	96.89	419.725	.617	.972
OAT_Q46	97.10	423.398	.614	.972
OAT_Q47	97.12	421.898	.651	.972
OAT_Q50	96.73	421.880	.535	.972
OAT_Q2	97.20	413.559	.696	.971
OAT_Q6	97.10	400.740	.836	.971
OAT_Q7	97.25	406.415	.781	.971
OAT_Q11	97.23	400.292	.860	.970
OAT_Q15	96.91	404.939	.817	.971
OAT_Q16	96.78	415.309	.661	.972
OAT_Q17	97.15	410.776	.738	.971
OAT_Q19	97.23	403.663	.788	.971
OAT_Q21	97.21	399.148	.837	.971
OAT_Q22	97.12	401.394	.851	.970

OAT_Q51	97.40	409.543	.793	.971
OAT_Q56	97.06	405.307	.848	.970
OAT_Q57	96.90	408.763	.808	.971
OAT_Q59	96.90	414.343	.714	.971
OAT_Q60	97.04	411.232	.746	.971
OAT_Q61	97.15	406.818	.822	.971
OAT_Q65	96.97	418.820	.681	.971
OAT_Q68	97.24	414.366	.728	.971
OAT_Q72	97.17	408.581	.846	.971
OAT_Q73	97.39	407.682	.820	.971

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
100.44	441.271	21.006	30

Reliability

Scale: neutral

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	146146	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	146146	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.827	15

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OAT_Q1	3.33	.795	146146
OAT_Q3	3.75	.842	146146
OAT_Q4	3.16	1.077	146146
OAT_Q9	3.65	.888	146146
OAT_Q25	3.67	.845	146146
OAT_Q32	3.46	.892	146146
OAT_Q36	3.17	.676	146146
OAT_Q43	3.32	.817	146146
OAT_Q48	3.42	.720	146146
OAT_Q49	3.34	.780	146146

OAT_Q53	2.82	1.073	146146
OAT_Q58	3.60	.856	146146
OAT_Q63	3.45	.759	146146
OAT_Q74	3.15	.879	146146
OAT_Q75	3.57	.875	146146

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
OAT_Q1	47.53	43.770	.393	.821
OAT_Q3	47.11	41.153	.617	.806
OAT_Q4	47.70	46.800	.039	.849
OAT_Q9	47.21	42.862	.420	.819
OAT_Q25	47.18	42.918	.443	.818
OAT_Q32	47.40	41.774	.517	.813
OAT_Q36	47.68	42.709	.608	.810
OAT_Q43	47.54	41.975	.556	.811
OAT_Q48	47.43	41.917	.654	.806
OAT_Q49	47.51	41.757	.612	.808
OAT_Q53	48.04	43.533	.272	.832
OAT_Q58	47.25	44.847	.258	.829
OAT_Q63	47.40	41.501	.660	.805
OAT_Q74	47.71	41.797	.525	.812
OAT_Q75	47.29	42.685	.445	.817

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
50.86	48.534	6.967	15

Frequencies**Statistics**

		Gender	SO	SO_group	Mean_Masc	Mean_Fem	Mean_neutral	meanBIDR
N	Valid	146	146	146	146	146	146	146
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.76	1.88	1.49	3.3652	3.3817	3.4658	4.2827
Std. Deviation		.516	1.136	.502	.70983	.68767	.47555	.47124

Frequency Table**Gender**

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Male	41	28.1	28.1	28.1
	Female	99	67.8	67.8	95.9
	Non-binary / third gender	6	4.1	4.1	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

SO					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Heterosexual	75	51.4	51.4	51.4
	Homosexual	35	24.0	24.0	75.3
	Bisexual	20	13.7	13.7	89.0
	Queer	10	6.8	6.8	95.9
	Pansexual	6	4.1	4.1	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

SO_group					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Heterosexual	75	51.4	51.4	51.4
	Non-Heterosexual	71	48.6	48.6	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

		Mean_Masc			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	1.83	1	.7	.7	.7
	2.13	1	.7	.7	1.4
	2.17	1	.7	.7	2.1
	2.20	1	.7	.7	2.7
	2.23	2	1.4	1.4	4.1
	2.33	4	2.7	2.7	6.8
	2.37	1	.7	.7	7.5
	2.40	2	1.4	1.4	8.9
	2.43	1	.7	.7	9.6
	2.50	1	.7	.7	10.3
	2.53	1	.7	.7	11.0
	2.57	3	2.1	2.1	13.0
	2.60	2	1.4	1.4	14.4
	2.63	2	1.4	1.4	15.8
	2.67	1	.7	.7	16.4
	2.70	1	.7	.7	17.1
	2.80	1	.7	.7	17.8
	2.83	1	.7	.7	18.5
	2.87	1	.7	.7	19.2
	2.90	3	2.1	2.1	21.2
	2.93	1	.7	.7	21.9
	2.97	4	2.7	2.7	24.7
	3.00	22	15.1	15.1	39.7

3.03	3	2.1	2.1	41.8
3.07	3	2.1	2.1	43.8
3.10	6	4.1	4.1	47.9
3.13	1	.7	.7	48.6
3.17	1	.7	.7	49.3
3.23	2	1.4	1.4	50.7
3.27	3	2.1	2.1	52.7
3.30	2	1.4	1.4	54.1
3.33	3	2.1	2.1	56.2
3.37	1	.7	.7	56.8
3.40	5	3.4	3.4	60.3
3.41	1	.7	.7	61.0
3.43	5	3.4	3.4	64.4
3.47	2	1.4	1.4	65.8
3.50	2	1.4	1.4	67.1
3.57	2	1.4	1.4	68.5
3.60	1	.7	.7	69.2
3.67	2	1.4	1.4	70.5
3.73	1	.7	.7	71.2
3.77	1	.7	.7	71.9
3.80	1	.7	.7	72.6
3.83	1	.7	.7	73.3
3.87	1	.7	.7	74.0
3.90	5	3.4	3.4	77.4
3.93	2	1.4	1.4	78.8
4.00	5	3.4	3.4	82.2

4.03	1	.7	.7	82.9
4.07	1	.7	.7	83.6
4.13	3	2.1	2.1	85.6
4.17	1	.7	.7	86.3
4.20	1	.7	.7	87.0
4.30	1	.7	.7	87.7
4.33	2	1.4	1.4	89.0
4.47	2	1.4	1.4	90.4
4.52	1	.7	.7	91.1
4.53	1	.7	.7	91.8
4.62	1	.7	.7	92.5
4.63	1	.7	.7	93.2
4.73	1	.7	.7	93.8
4.77	3	2.1	2.1	95.9
4.87	3	2.1	2.1	97.9
4.97	2	1.4	1.4	99.3
5.00	1	.7	.7	100.0
Total	146	100.0	100.0	

		Mean_Fem			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	1.37	1	.7	.7	.7
	1.97	1	.7	.7	1.4
	2.00	1	.7	.7	2.1

2.13	1	.7	.7	2.7
2.17	3	2.1	2.1	4.8
2.23	2	1.4	1.4	6.2
2.30	1	.7	.7	6.8
2.33	1	.7	.7	7.5
2.37	2	1.4	1.4	8.9
2.40	1	.7	.7	9.6
2.47	2	1.4	1.4	11.0
2.50	1	.7	.7	11.6
2.60	1	.7	.7	12.3
2.67	1	.7	.7	13.0
2.73	1	.7	.7	13.7
2.77	1	.7	.7	14.4
2.80	3	2.1	2.1	16.4
2.83	2	1.4	1.4	17.8
2.87	2	1.4	1.4	19.2
2.90	2	1.4	1.4	20.5
2.93	1	.7	.7	21.2
2.97	2	1.4	1.4	22.6
3.00	15	10.3	10.3	32.9
3.03	3	2.1	2.1	34.9
3.07	4	2.7	2.7	37.7
3.10	3	2.1	2.1	39.7
3.13	4	2.7	2.7	42.5
3.20	3	2.1	2.1	44.5
3.23	4	2.7	2.7	47.3

3.27	3	2.1	2.1	49.3
3.30	1	.7	.7	50.0
3.33	3	2.1	2.1	52.1
3.37	2	1.4	1.4	53.4
3.43	3	2.1	2.1	55.5
3.47	4	2.7	2.7	58.2
3.50	2	1.4	1.4	59.6
3.53	4	2.7	2.7	62.3
3.60	3	2.1	2.1	64.4
3.63	1	.7	.7	65.1
3.67	3	2.1	2.1	67.1
3.70	2	1.4	1.4	68.5
3.73	2	1.4	1.4	69.9
3.77	4	2.7	2.7	72.6
3.80	1	.7	.7	73.3
3.87	2	1.4	1.4	74.7
3.90	2	1.4	1.4	76.0
3.93	2	1.4	1.4	77.4
3.97	3	2.1	2.1	79.5
4.00	5	3.4	3.4	82.9
4.03	1	.7	.7	83.6
4.07	1	.7	.7	84.2
4.10	2	1.4	1.4	85.6
4.13	4	2.7	2.7	88.4
4.20	1	.7	.7	89.0
4.27	1	.7	.7	89.7

	4.30	1	.7	.7	90.4
	4.33	2	1.4	1.4	91.8
	4.43	2	1.4	1.4	93.2
	4.53	1	.7	.7	93.8
	4.60	1	.7	.7	94.5
	4.67	2	1.4	1.4	95.9
	4.70	1	.7	.7	96.6
	4.77	1	.7	.7	97.3
	4.79	1	.7	.7	97.9
	4.83	2	1.4	1.4	99.3
	5.00	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

		Mean_neutral			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	2.20	1	.7	.7	.7
	2.40	1	.7	.7	1.4
	2.60	1	.7	.7	2.1
	2.73	1	.7	.7	2.7
	2.87	1	.7	.7	3.4
	2.93	3	2.1	2.1	5.5
	3.00	25	17.1	17.1	22.6
	3.07	6	4.1	4.1	26.7
	3.13	5	3.4	3.4	30.1

3.20	8	5.5	5.5	35.6
3.27	8	5.5	5.5	41.1
3.33	9	6.2	6.2	47.3
3.40	9	6.2	6.2	53.4
3.47	6	4.1	4.1	57.5
3.53	10	6.8	6.8	64.4
3.60	4	2.7	2.7	67.1
3.67	7	4.8	4.8	71.9
3.73	5	3.4	3.4	75.3
3.80	6	4.1	4.1	79.5
3.87	4	2.7	2.7	82.2
3.93	4	2.7	2.7	84.9
4.00	5	3.4	3.4	88.4
4.07	5	3.4	3.4	91.8
4.13	2	1.4	1.4	93.2
4.20	1	.7	.7	93.8
4.27	1	.7	.7	94.5
4.33	1	.7	.7	95.2
4.47	2	1.4	1.4	96.6
4.53	1	.7	.7	97.3
4.60	1	.7	.7	97.9
4.73	1	.7	.7	98.6
4.93	1	.7	.7	99.3
5.00	1	.7	.7	100.0
Total	146	100.0	100.0	

		meanBIDR			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	3.13	2	1.4	1.4	1.4
	3.19	1	.7	.7	2.1
	3.31	1	.7	.7	2.7
	3.40	1	.7	.7	3.4
	3.44	1	.7	.7	4.1
	3.50	1	.7	.7	4.8
	3.56	3	2.1	2.1	6.8
	3.63	4	2.7	2.7	9.6
	3.69	1	.7	.7	10.3
	3.75	6	4.1	4.1	14.4
	3.81	6	4.1	4.1	18.5
	3.88	6	4.1	4.1	22.6
	3.94	4	2.7	2.7	25.3
	4.00	8	5.5	5.5	30.8
	4.06	8	5.5	5.5	36.3
	4.13	3	2.1	2.1	38.4
	4.19	12	8.2	8.2	46.6
	4.25	4	2.7	2.7	49.3
	4.31	4	2.7	2.7	52.1
	4.38	5	3.4	3.4	55.5
	4.44	11	7.5	7.5	63.0
	4.50	10	6.8	6.8	69.9

4.56	11	7.5	7.5	77.4
4.63	4	2.7	2.7	80.1
4.69	6	4.1	4.1	84.2
4.75	3	2.1	2.1	86.3
4.81	4	2.7	2.7	89.0
4.88	2	1.4	1.4	90.4
4.94	1	.7	.7	91.1
5.00	3	2.1	2.1	93.2
5.06	2	1.4	1.4	94.5
5.13	4	2.7	2.7	97.3
5.19	2	1.4	1.4	98.6
5.38	1	.7	.7	99.3
5.50	1	.7	.7	100.0
Total	146	100.0	100.0	

Bootstrap

Bootstrap Specifications

Sampling Method	Simple
Number of Samples	1000
Confidence Interval Level	95.0%

Confidence Interval Type	Percentile

General Linear Model: MANCOVA

Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
Gender	1	Male	41
	2	Female	99
	3	Non-binary / third gender	6
SO_group	1	Heterosexual	75
	2	Non- Heterosexual	71
CONDITION_Target_SO	1	Hetero_female	32
	2	Hetero_Male	39
	3	Homosexual_fe male	36
	4	homosexual_ma le	39

Descriptive Statistics

Gender	SO_group	CONDITION_Target_SO	Mean	Std. Deviation	N

Mean_Masc	Male	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.6111	.48343	3
			Hetero_Male	3.5857	.73153	7
			Homosexual_female	3.8778	.86431	3
			homosexual_male	2.9571	.08759	7
			Total	3.2633	.68866	20
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.4667	.04714	2
			Hetero_Male	4.1460	.71856	4
			Homosexual_female	3.5444	.82507	6
			homosexual_male	3.1148	.82211	9
			Total	3.4675	.81726	21
		Total	Hetero_female	2.9533	.58052	5
			Hetero_Male	3.7894	.74557	11
			Homosexual_female	3.6556	.80000	9
			homosexual_male	3.0458	.60832	16
			Total	3.3679	.75492	41
	Female	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.8939	.58610	11
			Hetero_Male	4.2167	.52234	18
			Homosexual_female	3.0241	.24462	13
			homosexual_male	3.2361	.48958	12
			Total	3.4422	.73089	54
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.9111	.58072	12
			Hetero_Male	3.9487	.69363	10
			Homosexual_female	3.3619	.48532	14
			homosexual_male	3.2481	.34404	9
			Total	3.3493	.64032	45
		Total	Hetero_female	2.9029	.56995	23

			Hetero_Male	4.1210	.59098	28
			Homosexual_female	3.1993	.41829	27
			homosexual_male	3.2413	.42333	21
			Total	3.4000	.68931	99
	Non-binary / third gender	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.4000	.	1
			Total	3.4000	.	1
	Non-Heterosexual		Hetero_female	2.4778	.59286	3
			homosexual_male	2.9000	.28284	2
			Total	2.6467	.49922	5
	Total		Hetero_female	2.7083	.66854	4
			homosexual_male	2.9000	.28284	2
			Total	2.7722	.54218	6
	Total	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.8711	.56003	15
			Hetero_Male	4.0400	.64082	25
			Homosexual_female	3.1842	.51565	16
			homosexual_male	3.1333	.41006	19
			Total	3.3940	.71462	75
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.9000	.59126	17
			Hetero_Male	4.0051	.67881	14
			Homosexual_female	3.4167	.58963	20
			homosexual_male	3.1533	.59189	20
			Total	3.3348	.70854	71
		Total	Hetero_female	2.8865	.56770	32
			Hetero_Male	4.0275	.64597	39
			Homosexual_female	3.3133	.56250	36
			homosexual_male	3.1436	.50490	39

Mean_Fem	Male	Heterosexual	Total	3.3652	.70983	146
			Hetero_female	3.7222	.57381	3
			Hetero_Male	2.6095	.50174	7
			Homosexual_female	3.8310	.93155	3
			homosexual_male	3.3143	.32821	7
			Total	3.2063	.69187	20
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.5500	.16499	2
			Hetero_Male	2.3083	.70573	4
			Homosexual_female	3.5778	.80544	6
			homosexual_male	3.7148	.79671	9
			Total	3.3921	.88700	21
		Total	Hetero_female	3.6533	.42466	5
			Hetero_Male	2.5000	.56882	11
			Homosexual_female	3.6622	.79903	9
			homosexual_male	3.5396	.65095	16
			Total	3.3015	.79347	41
	Female	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	4.2545	.48103	11
			Hetero_Male	3.0037	.66174	18
			Homosexual_female	3.1205	.27840	13
			homosexual_male	3.5222	.41202	12
			Total	3.4019	.68142	54
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	4.0444	.35343	12
			Hetero_Male	2.6967	.41587	10
			Homosexual_female	3.2762	.37174	14
			homosexual_male	3.4259	.36960	9
			Total	3.3822	.60221	45

	Total	Hetero_female	4.1449	.42326	23
		Hetero_Male	2.8940	.59650	28
		Homosexual_female	3.2012	.33340	27
		homosexual_male	3.4810	.38781	21
		Total	3.3929	.64346	99
	Non-binary / third gender	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	.	1
			Total	.	1
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	.87369	3
			homosexual_male	.04714	2
			Total	.62494	5
		Total	Hetero_female	.74087	4
			homosexual_male	.04714	2
			Total	.59054	6
	Total	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	.50993	15
			Hetero_Male	.63698	25
			Homosexual_female	.50965	16
			homosexual_male	.38765	19
			Total	.68645	75
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	.46703	17
			Hetero_Male	.51751	14
			Homosexual_female	.53421	20
			homosexual_male	.58708	20
			Total	.69306	71
		Total	Hetero_female	.49112	32
			Hetero_Male	.60846	39
			Homosexual_female	.51911	36

Mean_neutral	Male	Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.5094	.49748	39
			Total	3.3817	.68767	146
			Hetero_female	3.1778	.46825	3
			Hetero_Male	3.1238	.55167	7
			Homosexual_female	3.8889	.97601	3
			homosexual_male	3.2762	.47986	7
			Total	3.3000	.60078	20
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.8000	.00000	2
			Hetero_Male	3.0833	.36667	4
			Homosexual_female	3.7222	.73202	6
			homosexual_male	3.5407	.50160	9
			Total	3.5302	.55955	21
	Female	Total	Hetero_female	3.4267	.47516	5
			Hetero_Male	3.1091	.47260	11
			Homosexual_female	3.7778	.76158	9
			homosexual_male	3.4250	.49464	16
			Total	3.4179	.58443	41
		Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.7273	.43149	11
			Hetero_Male	3.6704	.62892	18
			Homosexual_female	3.1487	.17030	13
			homosexual_male	3.4056	.32840	12
			Total	3.4975	.49377	54
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.5889	.31377	12
			Hetero_Male	3.4533	.36352	10
			Homosexual_female	3.4571	.36125	14
			homosexual_male	3.4148	.35242	9

		Total	3.4830	.34235	45
		Total			
		Hetero_female	3.6551	.37262	23
		Hetero_Male	3.5929	.55164	28
		Homosexual_female	3.3086	.32140	27
		homosexual_male	3.4095	.33018	21
	Non-binary / third gender	Total	3.4909	.42957	99
		Heterosexual			
		Hetero_female	3.8667	.	1
		Total	3.8667	.	1
		Non-Heterosexual			
		Hetero_female	3.2889	.34211	3
		homosexual_male	3.2667	.56569	2
		Total	3.2800	.37238	5
		Total			
		Hetero_female	3.4333	.40185	4
		homosexual_male	3.2667	.56569	2
		Total	3.3778	.41024	6
	Total	Heterosexual			
		Hetero_female	3.6267	.46857	15
		Hetero_Male	3.5173	.64730	25
		Homosexual_female	3.2875	.48912	16
		homosexual_male	3.3579	.38311	19
		Total	3.4498	.52666	75
		Non-Heterosexual			
		Hetero_female	3.5608	.32237	17
		Hetero_Male	3.3476	.39064	14
		Homosexual_female	3.5367	.49582	20
		homosexual_male	3.4567	.42785	20
		Total	3.4826	.41793	71
		Total			
		Hetero_female	3.5917	.39231	32
		Hetero_Male	3.4564	.56889	39

	Homosexual_female	3.4259	.50175	36
	homosexual_male	3.4085	.40441	39
	Total	3.4658	.47555	146

Multivariate Tests ^a									
Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^d
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.695	94.302 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.695	282.906	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.305	94.302 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.695	282.906	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	2.282	94.302 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.695	282.906	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	2.282	94.302 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.695	282.906	1.000
meanBIDR	Pillai's Trace	.244	13.366 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.244	40.098	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.756	13.366 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.244	40.098	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.323	13.366 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.244	40.098	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.323	13.366 ^b	3.000	124.000	<.001	.244	40.098	1.000
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.018	.372	6.000	250.000	.897	.009	2.229	.156
	Wilks' Lambda	.982	.369 ^b	6.000	248.000	.898	.009	2.216	.155
	Hotelling's Trace	.018	.367	6.000	246.000	.899	.009	2.202	.155
	Roy's Largest Root	.015	.619 ^c	3.000	125.000	.604	.015	1.858	.176
SO_group	Pillai's Trace	.016	.653 ^b	3.000	124.000	.583	.016	1.958	.184
	Wilks' Lambda	.984	.653 ^b	3.000	124.000	.583	.016	1.958	.184
	Hotelling's Trace	.016	.653 ^b	3.000	124.000	.583	.016	1.958	.184

	Roy's Largest Root	.016	.653 ^b	3.000	124.000	.583	.016	1.958	.184
CONDITION_Target_SO	Pillai's Trace	.501	8.419	9.000	378.000	<.001	.167	75.771	1.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.503	10.944	9.000	301.934	<.001	.205	77.718	1.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.980	13.359	9.000	368.000	<.001	.246	120.233	1.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.972	40.827 ^c	3.000	126.000	<.001	.493	122.482	1.000
Gender * SO_group	Pillai's Trace	.025	.538	6.000	250.000	.779	.013	3.226	.215
	Wilks' Lambda	.975	.537 ^b	6.000	248.000	.780	.013	3.220	.214
	Hotelling's Trace	.026	.536	6.000	246.000	.781	.013	3.213	.214
	Roy's Largest Root	.026	1.073 ^c	3.000	125.000	.363	.025	3.218	.285
Gender * CONDITION_Target_SO	Pillai's Trace	.136	1.498	12.000	378.000	.122	.045	17.978	.804
	Wilks' Lambda	.868	1.498	12.000	328.365	.123	.046	15.806	.735
	Hotelling's Trace	.146	1.494	12.000	368.000	.124	.046	17.928	.803
	Roy's Largest Root	.098	3.090 ^c	4.000	126.000	.018	.089	12.358	.799
SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO	Pillai's Trace	.067	.963	9.000	378.000	.470	.022	8.668	.481
	Wilks' Lambda	.934	.958	9.000	301.934	.475	.023	6.978	.385
	Hotelling's Trace	.070	.953	9.000	368.000	.479	.023	8.573	.476
	Roy's Largest Root	.049	2.071 ^c	3.000	126.000	.107	.047	6.213	.520
Gender * SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO	Pillai's Trace	.092	1.322	9.000	378.000	.223	.031	11.899	.645
	Wilks' Lambda	.911	1.316	9.000	301.934	.228	.031	9.574	.527
	Hotelling's Trace	.096	1.306	9.000	368.000	.232	.031	11.754	.638

Roy's Largest Root	.058	2.439 ^c	3.000	126.000	.068	.055	7.318	.596

a. Design: Intercept + meanBIDR + Gender + SO_group + CONDITION_Target_SO + Gender * SO_group + Gender * CONDITION_Target_SO + SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO + Gender * SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

d. Computed using alpha = .05

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects									
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^d
Corrected Model	Mean_Masc	35.694 ^a	19	1.879	6.335	<.001	.489	120.357	1.000
	Mean_Fem	37.302 ^b	19	1.963	7.911	<.001	.544	150.317	1.000
	Mean_neutral	12.661 ^c	19	.666	4.171	<.001	.386	79.254	1.000
Intercept	Mean_Masc	31.194	1	31.194	105.185	<.001	.455	105.185	1.000
	Mean_Fem	34.039	1	34.039	137.170	<.001	.521	137.170	1.000
	Mean_neutral	43.843	1	43.843	274.431	<.001	.685	274.431	1.000
meanBIDR	Mean_Masc	2.473	1	2.473	8.338	.005	.062	8.338	.817
	Mean_Fem	3.031	1	3.031	12.214	<.001	.088	12.214	.934
	Mean_neutral	6.154	1	6.154	38.521	<.001	.234	38.521	1.000
Gender	Mean_Masc	.040	2	.020	.068	.934	.001	.137	.060
	Mean_Fem	.361	2	.181	.727	.485	.011	1.455	.171
	Mean_neutral	.208	2	.104	.650	.524	.010	1.300	.157
SO_group	Mean_Masc	.102	1	.102	.345	.558	.003	.345	.090

CONDITION_Target_SO	Mean_Fem	.208	1	.208	.838	.362	.007	.838	.149
	Mean_neutral	.047	1	.047	.296	.588	.002	.296	.084
	Mean_Masc	16.047	3	5.349	18.037	<.001	.300	54.110	1.000
	Mean_Fem	17.696	3	5.899	23.769	<.001	.361	71.308	1.000
	Mean_neutral	.338	3	.113	.704	.551	.016	2.113	.196
Gender * SO_group	Mean_Masc	.947	2	.473	1.596	.207	.025	3.192	.333
	Mean_Fem	.016	2	.008	.032	.968	.001	.065	.055
	Mean_neutral	.152	2	.076	.474	.623	.007	.949	.126
Gender * CONDITION_Target_SO	Mean_Masc	1.768	4	.442	1.490	.209	.045	5.962	.451
	Mean_Fem	2.302	4	.576	2.319	.061	.069	9.278	.660
	Mean_neutral	1.276	4	.319	1.997	.099	.060	7.989	.586
SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO	Mean_Masc	.140	3	.047	.157	.925	.004	.472	.078
	Mean_Fem	1.466	3	.489	1.970	.122	.045	5.909	.498
	Mean_neutral	.660	3	.220	1.377	.253	.032	4.130	.359
Gender * SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO	Mean_Masc	1.783	3	.594	2.004	.117	.046	6.011	.505
	Mean_Fem	.585	3	.195	.786	.504	.018	2.357	.215
	Mean_neutral	.299	3	.100	.624	.601	.015	1.872	.177
Error	Mean_Masc	37.367	126	.297					
	Mean_Fem	31.268	126	.248					
	Mean_neutral	20.130	126	.160					
Total	Mean_Masc	1726.442	146						
	Mean_Fem	1738.198	146						
	Mean_neutral	1786.462	146						
Corrected Total	Mean_Masc	73.061	145						
	Mean_Fem	68.570	145						
	Mean_neutral	32.791	145						

- a. R Squared = .489 (Adjusted R Squared = .411)
- b. R Squared = .544 (Adjusted R Squared = .475)
- c. R Squared = .386 (Adjusted R Squared = .294)
- d. Computed using alpha = .05

Estimated Marginal Means

1. Gender

Dependent Variable	Gender	Estimates			
		Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
Mean_Masc	Male	3.392 ^a	.096	3.202	3.582
	Female	3.361 ^a	.056	3.250	3.471
	Non-binary / third gender	2.834 ^{a,b}	.248	2.344	3.325
Mean_Fem	Male	3.305 ^a	.088	3.131	3.479
	Female	3.424 ^a	.051	3.323	3.525
	Non-binary / third gender	3.709 ^{a,b}	.227	3.261	4.158
Mean_neutral	Male	3.418 ^a	.071	3.279	3.558

Female	3.492 ^a	.041	3.411	3.573
Non-binary / third gender	3.329 ^{a,b}	.182	2.969	3.689

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: meanBIDR = 4.2827.

b. Based on modified population marginal mean.

		Pairwise Comparisons					
			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^c	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^c	
Dependent Variable	(I) Gender	(J) Gender				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mean_Masc	Male	Female	.031	.111	1.000	-.239	.301
		Non-binary / third gender	.558 ^a	.265	.112	-.085	1.200
	Female	Male	-.031	.111	1.000	-.301	.239
		Non-binary / third gender	.527 ^a	.254	.121	-.090	1.144
	Non-binary / third gender	Male	-.558 ^b	.265	.112	-1.200	.085
		Female	-.527 ^b	.254	.121	-1.144	.090
Mean_Fem	Male	Female	-.119	.102	.731	-.366	.128
		Non-binary / third gender	-.404 ^a	.242	.293	-.992	.184
	Female	Male	.119	.102	.731	-.128	.366
		Non-binary / third gender	-.285 ^a	.233	.667	-.850	.279
	Non-binary / third gender	Male	.404 ^b	.242	.293	-.184	.992
		Female	.285 ^b	.233	.667	-.279	.850

Mean_neutral	Male	Female	-.074	.082	1.000	-.272	.124
		Non-binary / third gender	.089 ^a	.194	1.000	-.383	.561
	Female	Male	.074	.082	1.000	-.124	.272
		Non-binary / third gender	.163 ^a	.187	1.000	-.290	.616
	Non-binary / third gender	Male	-.089 ^b	.194	1.000	-.561	.383
		Female	-.163 ^b	.187	1.000	-.616	.290

Based on estimated marginal means

- a. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).
- b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).
- c. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Multivariate Tests								
	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^c
Pillai's trace	.070	1.512	6.000	250.000	.174	.035	9.074	.581
Wilks' lambda	.931	1.515 ^a	6.000	248.000	.174	.035	9.090	.582
Hotelling's trace	.074	1.517	6.000	246.000	.173	.036	9.104	.582
Roy's largest root	.064	2.673 ^b	3.000	125.000	.050	.060	8.019	.640

Each F tests the multivariate effect of Gender. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

- a. Exact statistic
- b. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.
- c. Computed using alpha = .05

Univariate Tests									
Dependent Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^a
Mean_Masc	Contrast	1.356	2	.678	2.287	.106	.035	4.573	.457
	Error	37.367	126	.297					
Mean_Fem	Contrast	.812	2	.406	1.636	.199	.025	3.271	.340
	Error	31.268	126	.248					
Mean_neutral	Contrast	.225	2	.113	.705	.496	.011	1.409	.167
	Error	20.130	126	.160					

The F tests the effect of Gender. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Computed using alpha = .05

2. SO_group

Estimates					
Dependent Variable	SO_group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mean_Masc	Heterosexual	3.293 ^{a,b}	.091	3.112	3.473
	Non-Heterosexual	3.289 ^{a,b}	.082	3.127	3.450
Mean_Fem	Heterosexual	3.480 ^{a,b}	.083	3.315	3.645

Mean_neutral	Non-Heterosexual	3.364 ^{a,b}	.075	3.216	3.512
	Heterosexual	3.446 ^{a,b}	.067	3.314	3.579
	Non-Heterosexual	3.425 ^{a,b}	.060	3.306	3.544

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: meanBIDR = 4.2827.

b. Based on modified population marginal mean.

Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) SO_group	(J) SO_group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^c	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^c	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mean_Masc	Heterosexual	Non-Heterosexual	.004 ^{a,b}	.122	.975	-.238	.245
	Non-Heterosexual	Heterosexual	-.004 ^{a,b}	.122	.975	-.245	.238
Mean_Fem	Heterosexual	Non-Heterosexual	.117 ^{a,b}	.112	.298	-.104	.338
	Non-Heterosexual	Heterosexual	-.117 ^{a,b}	.112	.298	-.338	.104
Mean_neutral	Heterosexual	Non-Heterosexual	.021 ^{a,b}	.090	.811	-.156	.199
	Non-Heterosexual	Heterosexual	-.021 ^{a,b}	.090	.811	-.199	.156

Based on estimated marginal means

a. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).

b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).

c. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Multivariate Tests

Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^b

Pillai's trace	.017	.736 ^a	3.000	124.000	.532	.017	2.208	.204
Wilks' lambda	.983	.736 ^a	3.000	124.000	.532	.017	2.208	.204
Hotelling's trace	.018	.736 ^a	3.000	124.000	.532	.017	2.208	.204
Roy's largest root	.018	.736 ^a	3.000	124.000	.532	.017	2.208	.204

Each F tests the multivariate effect of SO_group. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Exact statistic

b. Computed using alpha = .05

		Univariate Tests							
Dependent Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^a
Mean_Masc	Contrast	.000	1	.000	.001	.975	.000	.001	.050
	Error	37.367	126	.297					
Mean_Fem	Contrast	.271	1	.271	1.094	.298	.009	1.094	.180
	Error	31.268	126	.248					
Mean_neutral	Contrast	.009	1	.009	.057	.811	.000	.057	.057
	Error	20.130	126	.160					

The F tests the effect of SO_group. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Computed using alpha = .05

3. CONDITION_Target_SO

Estimates						
Dependent Variable	CONDITION Target SO	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Mean_Masc	Hetero_female	2.868 ^a	.143	2.586	3.150	
	Hetero_Male	3.996 ^{a,b}	.101	3.796	4.196	
	Homosexual_female	3.428 ^{a,b}	.110	3.211	3.646	
	homosexual_male	3.123 ^{a,b}	.107	2.912	3.334	
Mean_Fem	Hetero_female	3.804 ^a	.130	3.546	4.062	
	Hetero_Male	2.679 ^{a,b}	.092	2.496	2.862	
	Homosexual_female	3.425 ^{a,b}	.101	3.226	3.624	
	homosexual_male	3.544 ^{a,b}	.098	3.351	3.737	
Mean_neutral	Hetero_female	3.429 ^a	.105	3.222	3.636	
	Hetero_Male	3.367 ^{a,b}	.074	3.220	3.514	
	Homosexual_female	3.517 ^{a,b}	.081	3.357	3.677	
	homosexual_male	3.431 ^{a,b}	.078	3.276	3.586	

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: meanBIDR = 4.2827.

b. Based on modified population marginal mean.

Pairwise Comparisons									
Dependent Variable	(I) CONDITION Target SO	(J) CONDITION Target SO	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^d	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^d			
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Mean_Masc	Hetero_female	Hetero_Male	-1.129 ^{a,b}	.176	<.001	-1.601	-.656		

		Homosexual_female	-.561 ^{*,b}	.179	.013	-1.039	-.082
		homosexual_male	-.256 ^b	.180	.948	-.738	.227
	Hetero_Male	Hetero_female	1.129 ^{*,c}	.176	<.001	.656	1.601
		Homosexual_female	.568 ^{*,b,c}	.150	.001	.166	.969
	Homosexual_female	homosexual_male	.873 ^{*,b,c}	.146	<.001	.480	1.265
		Hetero_female	.561 ^{*,c}	.179	.013	.082	1.039
		Hetero_Male	-.568 ^{*,b,c}	.150	.001	-.969	-.166
	homosexual_male	homosexual_male	.305 ^{b,c}	.154	.296	-.107	.717
		Hetero_female	.256 ^c	.180	.948	-.227	.738
		Hetero_Male	-.873 ^{*,b,c}	.146	<.001	-1.265	-.480
		Homosexual_female	-.305 ^{b,c}	.154	.296	-.717	.107
Mean_Fem	Hetero_female	Hetero_Male	1.125 ^{*,b}	.161	<.001	.693	1.557
		Homosexual_female	.379 ^b	.163	.132	-.059	.816
		homosexual_male	.260 ^b	.165	.704	-.182	.701
	Hetero_Male	Hetero_female	-1.125 ^{*,c}	.161	<.001	-1.557	-.693
		Homosexual_female	-.746 ^{*,b,c}	.137	<.001	-1.114	-.379
		homosexual_male	-.866 ^{*,b,c}	.134	<.001	-1.224	-.507
	Homosexual_female	Hetero_female	-.379 ^c	.163	.132	-.816	.059
		Hetero_Male	.746 ^{*,b,c}	.137	<.001	.379	1.114
		homosexual_male	-.119 ^{b,c}	.141	1.000	-.496	.258
	homosexual_male	Hetero_female	-.260 ^c	.165	.704	-.701	.182
		Hetero_Male	.866 ^{*,b,c}	.134	<.001	.507	1.224
		Homosexual_female	.119 ^{b,c}	.141	1.000	-.258	.496
Mean_neutral	Hetero_female	Hetero_Male	.062 ^b	.129	1.000	-.285	.408
		Homosexual_female	-.088 ^b	.131	1.000	-.439	.263
		homosexual_male	-.002 ^b	.132	1.000	-.356	.352

	Hetero_Male	Hetero_female	-.062 ^c	.129	1.000	-.408	.285
		Homosexual_female	-.150 ^{b,c}	.110	1.000	-.444	.145
		homosexual_male	-.064 ^{b,c}	.107	1.000	-.352	.224
	Homosexual_female	Hetero_female	.088 ^c	.131	1.000	-.263	.439
		Hetero_Male	.150 ^{b,c}	.110	1.000	-.145	.444
		homosexual_male	.086 ^{b,c}	.113	1.000	-.217	.388
	homosexual_male	Hetero_female	.002 ^c	.132	1.000	-.352	.356
		Hetero_Male	.064 ^{b,c}	.107	1.000	-.224	.352
		Homosexual_female	-.086 ^{b,c}	.113	1.000	-.388	.217

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).

c. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).

d. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Multivariate Tests								
	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^b
Pillai's trace	.502	8.431	9.000	378.000	<.001	.167	75.875	1.000
Wilks' lambda	.504	10.905	9.000	301.934	<.001	.204	77.448	1.000
Hotelling's trace	.973	13.257	9.000	368.000	<.001	.245	119.314	1.000
Roy's largest root	.961	40.367 ^a	3.000	126.000	<.001	.490	121.102	1.000

Each F tests the multivariate effect of CONDITION_Target_SO. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

b. Computed using alpha = .05

		Univariate Tests							
Dependent Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^a
Mean_Masc	Contrast	16.388	3	5.463	18.420	<.001	.305	55.259	1.000
	Error	37.367	126	.297					
Mean_Fem	Contrast	16.753	3	5.584	22.503	<.001	.349	67.510	1.000
	Error	31.268	126	.248					
Mean_neutral	Contrast	.298	3	.099	.622	.602	.015	1.865	.177
	Error	20.130	126	.160					

The F tests the effect of CONDITION_Target_SO. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a. Computed using alpha = .05

4. Gender * SO_group

Dependent Variable	Gender	SO_group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mean_Masc	Male	Heterosexual	3.268 ^a	.133	3.005	3.531
		Non-Heterosexual	3.516 ^a	.139	3.240	3.791
	Female	Heterosexual	3.341 ^a	.075	3.192	3.490
		Non-Heterosexual	3.380 ^a	.082	3.217	3.543
	Non-binary / third gender	Heterosexual	3.199 ^{a,b}	.549	2.112	4.285
		Non-Heterosexual	2.652 ^{a,b}	.249	2.159	3.144

Mean_Fem	Male	Heterosexual	3.380 ^a	.122	3.139	3.621
		Non-Heterosexual	3.230 ^a	.127	2.978	3.482
	Female	Heterosexual	3.473 ^a	.069	3.337	3.610
		Non-Heterosexual	3.375 ^a	.075	3.226	3.524
	Non-binary / third gender	Heterosexual	3.910 ^{a,b}	.502	2.917	4.904
		Non-Heterosexual	3.609 ^{a,b}	.228	3.158	4.059
Mean_neutral	Male	Heterosexual	3.382 ^a	.098	3.189	3.575
		Non-Heterosexual	3.454 ^a	.102	3.252	3.656
	Female	Heterosexual	3.485 ^a	.055	3.376	3.595
		Non-Heterosexual	3.499 ^a	.061	3.379	3.619
	Non-binary / third gender	Heterosexual	3.549 ^{a,b}	.403	2.752	4.346
		Non-Heterosexual	3.219 ^{a,b}	.183	2.858	3.581

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: meanBIDR = 4.2827.

b. Based on modified population marginal mean.

5. Gender * CONDITION_Target_SO

Dependent Variable	Gender	CONDITION_Target_SO	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mean_Masc	Male	Hetero_female	2.976 ^a	.250	2.482	3.470
		Hetero_Male	3.934 ^a	.172	3.593	4.275
		Homosexual_female	3.619 ^a	.195	3.233	4.006
		homosexual male	3.037 ^a	.137	2.766	3.309
	Female	Hetero_female	2.854 ^a	.115	2.627	3.081
		Hetero_Male	4.059 ^a	.108	3.845	4.272
		Homosexual female	3.237 ^a	.106	3.028	3.447

Mean_Fem	Non-binary / third gender	homosexual_male	3.292 ^a	.121	3.052	3.533
		Hetero_female	2.773 ^a	.320	2.140	3.405
		Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
	Male	homosexual_male	2.957 ^{a,c}	.386	2.194	3.720
		Hetero_female	3.567 ^a	.228	3.115	4.018
		Hetero_Male	2.534 ^a	.158	2.222	2.846
		Homosexual_female	3.603 ^a	.179	3.250	3.956
	Female	homosexual_male	3.516 ^a	.126	3.268	3.764
		Hetero_female	4.096 ^a	.105	3.888	4.304
		Hetero_Male	2.823 ^a	.099	2.628	3.018
		Homosexual_female	3.248 ^a	.097	3.056	3.439
	Non-binary / third gender	homosexual_male	3.530 ^a	.111	3.310	3.749
		Hetero_female	3.749 ^a	.292	3.171	4.328
		Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
Mean_neutral	Male	homosexual_male	3.630 ^{a,c}	.353	2.932	4.328
		Hetero_female	3.390 ^a	.183	3.028	3.752
		Hetero_Male	3.211 ^a	.126	2.960	3.461
		Homosexual_female	3.661 ^a	.143	3.378	3.944
	Female	homosexual_male	3.411 ^a	.101	3.211	3.610
		Hetero_female	3.582 ^a	.084	3.415	3.748
		Hetero_Male	3.524 ^a	.079	3.367	3.680
		Homosexual_female	3.373 ^a	.078	3.219	3.527
	Non-binary / third gender	homosexual_male	3.490 ^a	.089	3.313	3.666
		Hetero_female	3.315 ^a	.235	2.851	3.780

	Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
	Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
	homosexual_male	3.357 ^{a,c}	.283	2.796	3.917

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: meanBIDR = 4.2827.

b. This level combination of factors is not observed, thus the corresponding population marginal mean is not estimable.

c. Based on modified population marginal mean.

6. SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO

Dependent Variable	SO_group	CONDITION_Target_SO	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mean_Masc	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.912 ^a	.218	2.481	3.342
		Hetero_Male	3.943 ^{a,b}	.122	3.701	4.184
		Homosexual_female	3.401 ^{a,b}	.175	3.054	3.748
		homosexual_male	3.105 ^{a,b}	.130	2.849	3.362
	Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.823 ^a	.179	2.468	3.178
		Hetero_Male	4.050 ^{a,b}	.161	3.731	4.369
		Homosexual_female	3.456 ^{a,b}	.133	3.193	3.719
		homosexual_male	3.135 ^a	.155	2.828	3.442
Mean_Fem	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.974 ^a	.199	3.581	4.368
		Hetero_Male	2.852 ^{a,b}	.112	2.631	3.073
		Homosexual_female	3.420 ^{a,b}	.160	3.103	3.738
		homosexual_male	3.428 ^{a,b}	.118	3.193	3.662
	Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.634 ^a	.164	3.309	3.958
		Hetero_Male	2.505 ^{a,b}	.147	2.214	2.797
		Homosexual_female	3.430 ^{a,b}	.122	3.189	3.671

Mean_neutral	Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.622 ^a	.142	3.341	3.903
		Hetero_female	3.502 ^a	.160	3.186	3.818
		Hetero_Male	3.462 ^{a,b}	.090	3.285	3.640
		Homosexual_female	3.440 ^{a,b}	.129	3.185	3.695
	Non-Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.354 ^{a,b}	.095	3.166	3.543
		Hetero_female	3.356 ^a	.132	3.096	3.617
		Hetero_Male	3.272 ^{a,b}	.118	3.038	3.506
		Homosexual_female	3.594 ^{a,b}	.098	3.401	3.787
		homosexual_male	3.483 ^a	.114	3.257	3.708

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: meanBIDR = 4.2827.

b. Based on modified population marginal mean.

7. Gender * SO_group * CONDITION_Target_SO

Dependent Variable	Gender	SO_group	CONDITION Target SO	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mean_Masc	Male	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.697 ^a	.316	2.072	3.322
			Hetero_Male	3.674 ^a	.208	3.262	4.086
			Homosexual_female	3.736 ^a	.318	3.107	4.366
			homosexual_male	2.964 ^a	.206	2.556	3.371
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.256 ^a	.392	2.480	4.031
			Hetero_Male	4.193 ^a	.273	3.654	4.733
			Homosexual_female	3.503 ^a	.223	3.062	3.943
			homosexual_male	3.111 ^a	.182	2.752	3.470
	Female	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.840 ^a	.165	2.513	3.167

			Hetero_Male	4.211 ^a	.128	3.957	4.465
			Homosexual_female	3.066 ^a	.152	2.765	3.366
			homosexual_male	3.247 ^a	.157	2.936	3.558
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.868 ^a	.158	2.555	3.180
			Hetero_Male	3.906 ^a	.173	3.564	4.248
			Homosexual_female	3.409 ^a	.146	3.119	3.699
			homosexual_male	3.338 ^a	.184	2.974	3.703
			Hetero_female	3.199 ^a	.549	2.112	4.285
		Non-binary / third gender	Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
			Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
			homosexual_male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	2.347 ^a	.318	1.718	2.975
			Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
			Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
			homosexual_male	2.957 ^a	.386	2.194	3.720
Mean_Fem	Male	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.817 ^a	.289	3.245	4.389
			Hetero_Male	2.707 ^a	.190	2.331	3.084
			Homosexual_female	3.674 ^a	.291	3.098	4.251
			homosexual_male	3.321 ^a	.188	2.949	3.694
		Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.316 ^a	.359	2.607	4.026
			Hetero_Male	2.361 ^a	.250	1.867	2.855
			Homosexual_female	3.531 ^a	.204	3.128	3.935
			homosexual_male	3.711 ^a	.166	3.382	4.039
	Female	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	4.195 ^a	.151	3.896	4.494
			Hetero_Male	2.997 ^a	.117	2.765	3.230
			Homosexual_female	3.166 ^a	.139	2.892	3.441

Mean_neutral	Non-binary / third gender	Non-Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.534 ^a	.144	3.249	3.819
			Hetero_female	3.996 ^a	.144	3.710	4.282
			Hetero_Male	2.650 ^a	.158	2.337	2.962
			Homosexual_female	3.329 ^a	.134	3.064	3.594
		Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.525 ^a	.168	3.192	3.859
			Hetero_female	3.910 ^a	.502	2.917	4.904
			Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
			Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Non-Heterosexual	homosexual_male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
			Hetero_female	3.588 ^a	.291	3.013	4.163
			Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
			Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.630 ^a	.353	2.932	4.328
			Hetero_female	3.313 ^a	.232	2.854	3.772
			Hetero_Male	3.263 ^a	.153	2.961	3.566
			Homosexual_female	3.666 ^a	.234	3.204	4.128
Mean_neutral	Male	Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.286 ^a	.151	2.987	3.585
			Hetero_female	3.467 ^a	.288	2.898	4.037
			Hetero_Male	3.158 ^a	.200	2.762	3.554
			Homosexual_female	3.656 ^a	.164	3.333	3.980
		Non-Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.535 ^a	.133	3.271	3.799
			Hetero_female	3.643 ^a	.121	3.403	3.883
			Hetero_Male	3.661 ^a	.094	3.475	3.848
			Homosexual_female	3.214 ^a	.111	2.994	3.435
		Heterosexual	homosexual_male	3.422 ^a	.115	3.194	3.651
			Hetero_female	3.520 ^a	.116	3.291	3.750
	Female	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.643 ^a	.121	3.403	3.883
			Hetero_Male	3.661 ^a	.094	3.475	3.848
			Homosexual_female	3.214 ^a	.111	2.994	3.435
			homosexual_male	3.422 ^a	.115	3.194	3.651

Non-binary / third gender	Non-Heterosexual	Hetero_Male	3.386 ^a	.127	3.135	3.637
		Homosexual_female	3.532 ^a	.108	3.319	3.745
		homosexual_male	3.557 ^a	.135	3.289	3.824
	Heterosexual	Hetero_female	3.549 ^a	.403	2.752	4.346
		Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
	Non-Heterosexual	homosexual_male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Hetero_female	3.082 ^a	.233	2.620	3.543
		Hetero_Male	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		Homosexual_female	. ^{a,b}	.	.	.
		homosexual_male	3.357 ^a	.283	2.796	3.917

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: meanBIDR = 4.2827.

b. This level combination of factors is not observed, thus the corresponding population marginal mean is not estimable.

Correlations

Notes

Output Created	16-AUG-2021 15:59:37
Comments	

Input	Data	/Volumes/ELLES HD/BCU /PHD's & DOCTORAL COLLEGE PAPERWORK/PHD STUDENTS/LAURA GEE/STUDY 1 - DATASET TO BE ANALYSED.sav
	Active Dataset	DataSet5
	Filter	<none>
	Weight	<none>
	Split File	<none>
	N of Rows in Working Data File	146146
Missing Value Handling	Definition of Missing	User-defined missing values are treated as missing.
	Cases Used	Statistics for each pair of variables are based on all the cases with valid data for that pair.
Syntax		CORRELATIONS /VARIABLES=Mean_Masc Mean_Fem Mean_neutral meanBIDR /PRINT=TWOTAIL NOSIG FULL /MISSING=PAIRWISE.

Resources	Processor Time	00:00:01.07
	Elapsed Time	00:00:01.00

		Correlations			
		Mean_Masc	Mean_Fem	Mean_neutral	meanBIDR
Mean_Masc	Pearson Correlation	1	-.316**	.424**	-.170**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	146146	146146	146146	146146
Mean_Fem	Pearson Correlation	-.316**	1	.618**	-.321**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	146146	146146	146146	146146
Mean_neutral	Pearson Correlation	.424**	.618**	1	-.518**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	146146	146146	146146	146146
meanBIDR	Pearson Correlation	-.170**	-.321**	-.518**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	146146	146146	146146	146146

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix G: Qualitative element: Images used in interviews.

Researcher images selected from google on the 1st December 2021 that represent:

Gay male stereotype



Lesbian female stereotype



Overall LGBTQ+ stereotypes



Participants Imagery:

Participants pseudonyms have not been added to remain anonymous; participants are numbered.

Participant 1

Overall



Lesbian female



Gay male

***Participant 2***

Overall



shutterstock.com · 1080483920

Shutterstock

Visit

Lesbian female

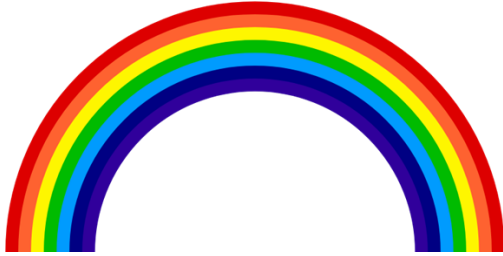


Gay male



Participant 3

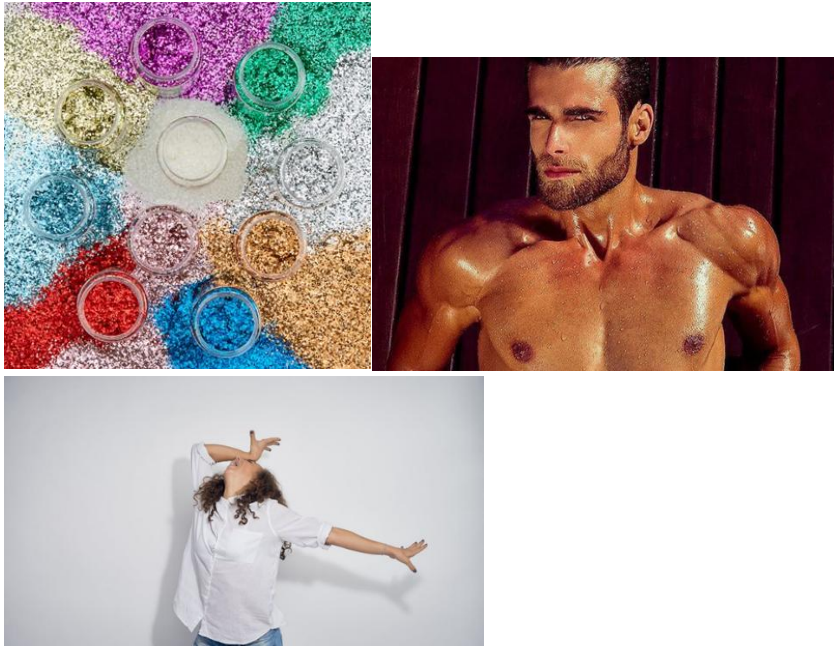
overall



Lesbian female



Gay male



Participant 4

Gay male



Lesbian female



Overall



Participant 5

Lesbian female



Gay male



Overall

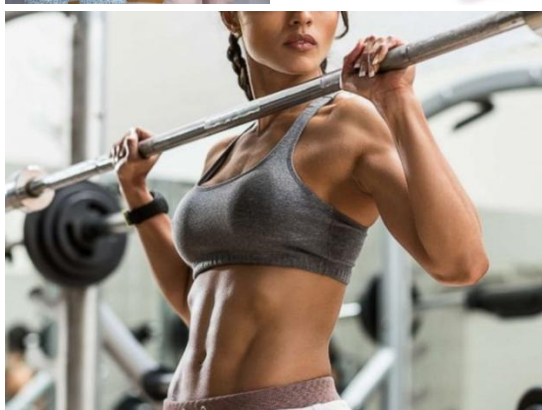


Participant 6

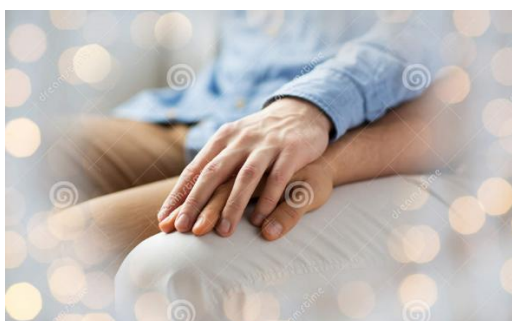
Gay male



Lesbian female



Overall



Participant 7

Gay male



Lesbian female



Overall



Acceptance.



VectorStock

VectorStock.com/2453282

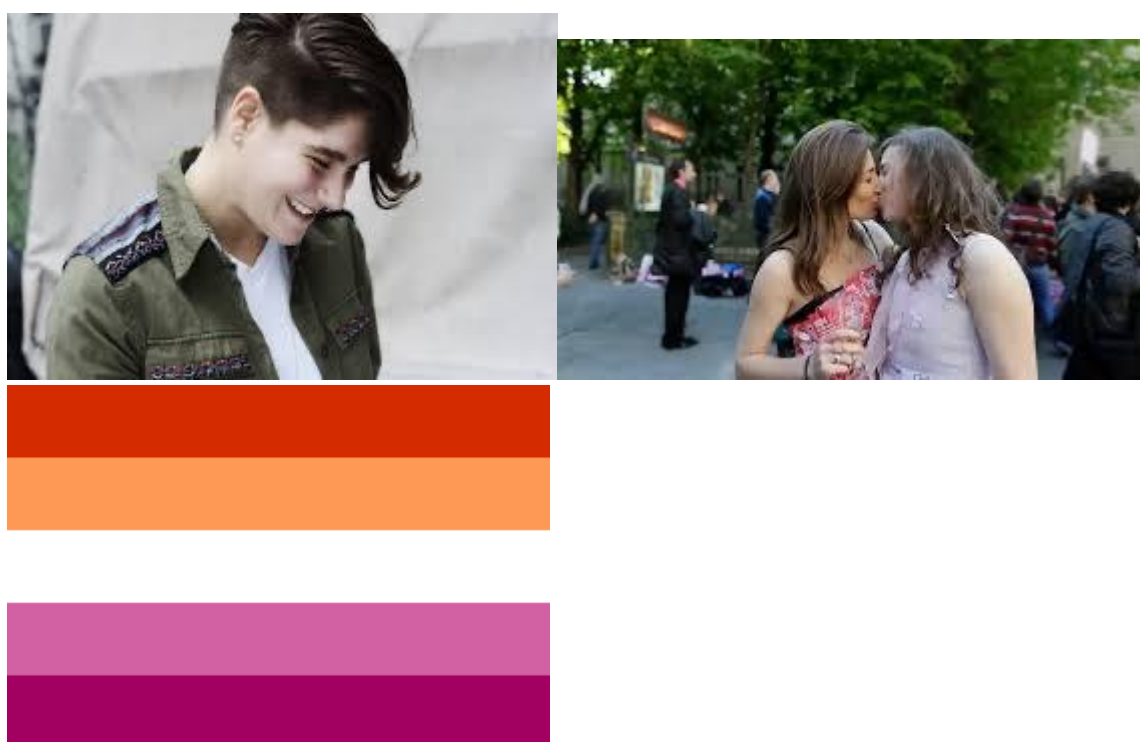


Participant 8

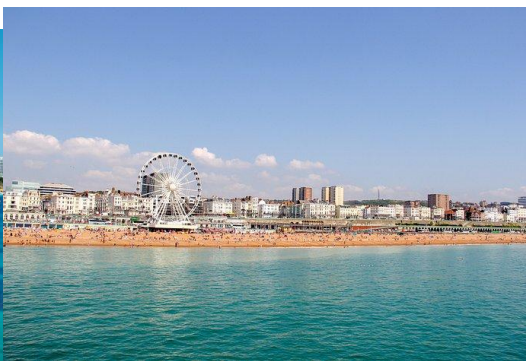
Gay male



Lesbian female



Overall



Participant 9

Gay male



Lesbian female



Overall



Participant 10

Lesbian female

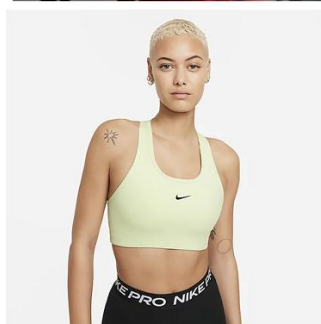




Gay male

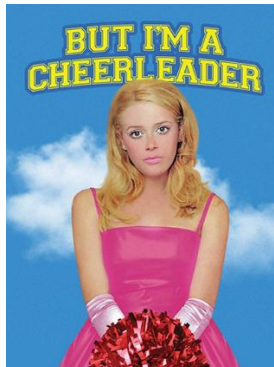


Overall



Participant 11

Lesbian female



Gay male



Overall



Participant 12

Gay male



Lesbian female



Overall



Participant 13

Gay male



Lesbian female



www.shutterstock.com · 1936262227

Overall

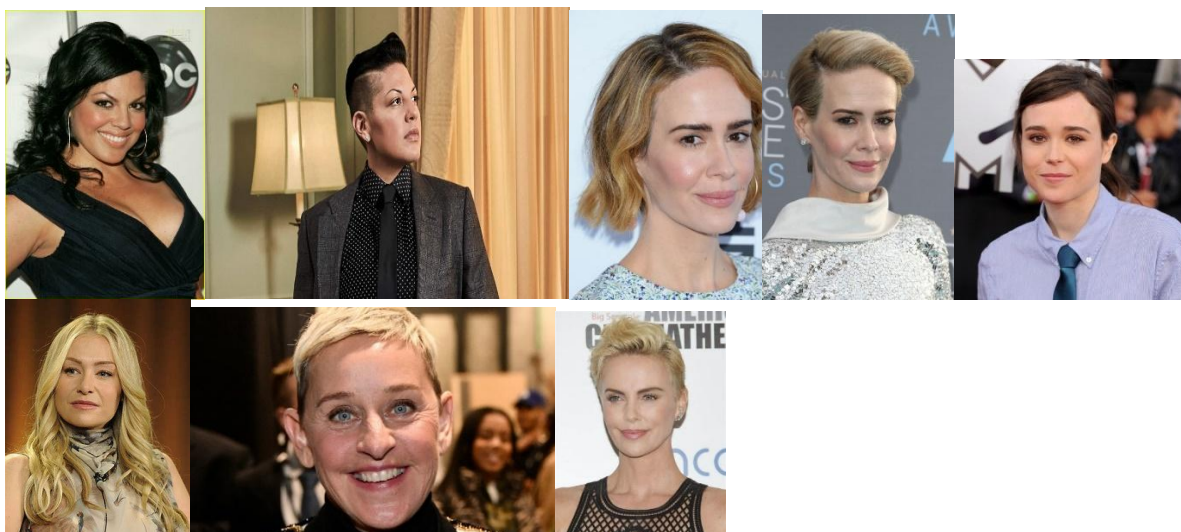


Participant 14 (Pilot)

Gay male



Lesbian Female



Overall



Appendix H: Qualitative Interview Questions

Questions for interview

Research title: Illuminating the prominence of gay stereotypes through photovoice.

Research question: How do people perceive gay stereotypes in the UK, and could acceptance levels have an impact?

Firstly, thank you for agreeing to take part.

My name is Laura Gee, and I am a second year PhD student at Birmingham City University. This project is the second study of my research.

You are being asked to take part in an **online** semi-structured interview about the application of gay stereotypes to homosexual individuals and if a shift in acceptance has affected this.

Just to remind you, the interview will be video, and audio recorded, however, only the audio will be used for analysis. I will begin the recording now if that's ok with you...

During this interview we will discuss images that we think relate to homosexual stereotyping.

Thank you for supplying the images/documents for discussion. I have also brought along similar images for us to discuss.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Are you ok? are you sitting somewhere where you feel comfortable speaking?

Let's start out by telling me a bit about yourself... age/ job/ etc.

1. Firstly, I would like to know about your views on gay stereotypes, what would you consider to be gay stereotypes?
2. How do you feel they are applied to gay people?
3. What are your perceptions on the ways gay stereotypes are applied at this current time?
4. If I ask you to think about a gay male, what do you think of? [can ask to elaborate on characteristics, physical features, emotionality, personality, likes and dislikes etc.]
5. How about lesbian women?
6. When have you seen these stereotypes applied in real-life?
7. Current research suggests that homosexuality is now more accepted than previously, what is your view on this?

Ok we will now look at the images you have supplied. I'll share the images of the gay male you supplied firstly for us to discuss.

(Images of gay man shared on screen)

8. Do you want to talk me through this image, such as why you chose it as a representation of a gay male?
9. Why do you think this image is considered to be a gay stereotype?

Thank you for that, I will now share the images of the lesbian woman you supplied. (Share on screen)

10. Do you want to talk me through this image, such as why you chose it as a representation of a lesbian female?
11. Why do you think this image is considered to be a gay stereotype?

I will now share the images you selected that represent homosexuality to you.

12. Could you explain to me why you chose these images to represent homosexuality?

13. Do you feel these images form part of the gay stereotype and identify a person's sexuality? [For example, if a pride flag was supplied discuss if that would identify a person's sexuality]

My Images are taken from popular culture (researcher/psychological research not my opinion)

Show gay male image:

14. What are your thoughts about these images?
 15. How do you think they represent someone being gay?
 16. Why do you think these have been labelled as representing gay stereotypes?

Show lesbian image:

17. What are your thoughts about these images?
 18. How do you think they represent someone being lesbian?
 19. Why do you think these have been labelled as representing gay stereotypes?

Ill now share the images that represent homosexuality.

20. What are your thoughts about these images?
 21. How do you think they represent homosexuality?
 22. Why do you think these have been labelled as representing stereotypical homosexuality?
 23. Do you feel there has been differences in our chosen images and why?

Added questions for non-heterosexual participants.

I just want to touch on your personal experiences of stereotyping now if you don't mind.

24. Have you ever felt the need to conform to the homosexual/LGBTQ+ stereotypes that we have discussed or any other homosexual stereotype?
 25. Is there a time where you feel you have been stereotyped as homosexual by another person? What way was this applied? How did that make you feel?
 26. What about resisting the LGBTQ+ stereotypes? for example to appear heterosexual or maybe protect yourself
 27. How has your identity changed over time as a result of these stereotypes?

Closing:

28. How can we bring forward acceptance of homosexuality in our society?

Well, I think that is everything covered...Is there anything else you would like to add, any final thoughts or questions you have?

Thank you for taking part in my study.

Appendix I: Qualitative Element Ethical Approval

Faculty of Business, Law & Social Sciences Research Office
Curzon Building, 4 Cardigan Street
Birmingham
B4 7BD
BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

14/Feb/2022

Mrs Laura Gee
Laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Dear Laura,

Re: Gee /#10004 /sub1 /Am /2022 /Feb /BLSS FAEC - study 2 of understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population

Thank you for your application for approval of amendments regarding the above study. I am happy to take Chair's Action and approve these amendments.

Provided that you are granted Permission of Access by relevant parties (meeting requirements as laid out by them), you may continue your activity.

This is also contingent on the following provisos as well:

- The additional questions relating to personal experiences of stereotyping for LGBTQ+ participants could be made clearer on the information sheet. Please include text on the information sheet (PIS) to make this clear. One suggestion is: "LGBTQ+ participants will also be asked about their personal experiences of stereotyping. If you would like to know more about the exact questions included, you can review the interview questions beforehand to ensure you are happy with what is being asked of you."
- The updated withdrawal date is specified as 30th June in most places, except for one place on the PIS where it is referred to as 31st June.

I can also confirm that any person participating in the project is covered under the University's insurance arrangements.

Please note that ethics approval only covers your activity as it has been detailed in your ethics application. If you wish to make any changes to the activity, then you must submit an Amendment application for approval of the proposed changes.

Examples of changes include (but are not limited to) adding a new study site, a new method of participant recruitment, adding a new method of data collection and/or change of Project Lead.

Please also note that the Committee should be notified of any serious adverse effects arising as a result of this activity.

If for any reason the Committee feels that the activity is no longer ethically sound, it reserves the right to withdraw its approval. In the unlikely event of issues arising which would lead to this, you will be consulted.

Keep a copy of this letter along with the corresponding application for your records as evidence of approval. If

you have any queries, please contact BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk;

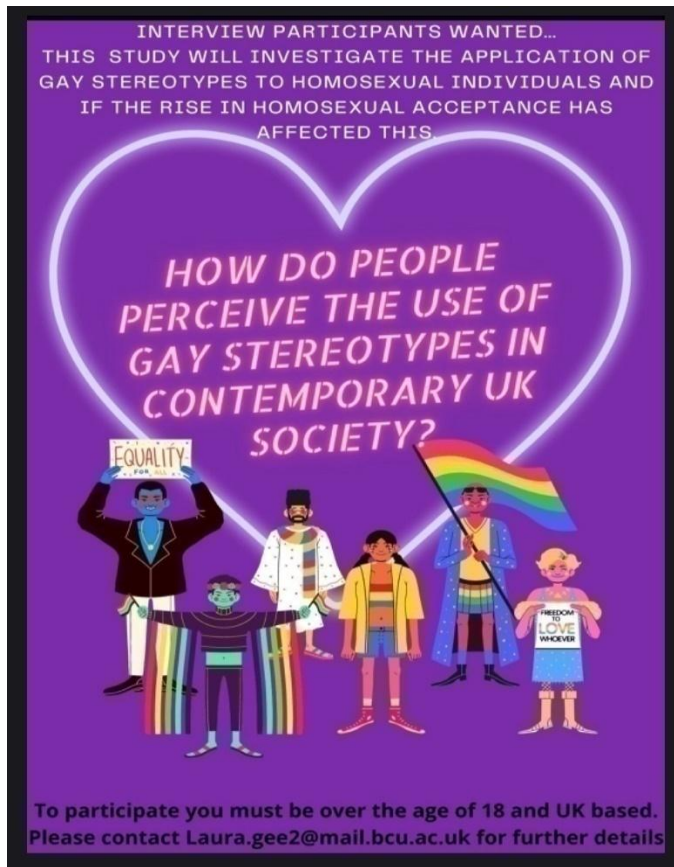
I wish you every success with your activity.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Emma Bridger

On behalf of the Business, Law, and Social Sciences Faculty Academic Ethics Committee

Appendix J: Qualitative Recruitment Poster and Emails



First email

Hello

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking part in my first study of **“Understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population: A mixed methods exploration,”** at the end of this study you left your contact details for me to contact you regarding further studies.

Study 2 and 3 will soon be open, these studies will look further into the application of gay stereotypes to homosexual individuals. Research suggests that acceptance of homosexuals has increased, this research aims to find out if this has affected the gay stereotype. These studies will be interviews that will take place online and will last approximately 30-45 minutes.

Would you still be interested in taking part? If so, please respond to this email and I will send out further details.

Thank you.

Laura Gee

Second email if agree.

Hello

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my study.

You will be asked to participate in an **online** semi-structured interview via teams, which will be video, and audio recorded (only the audio will be used for analysis). During the interview we will discuss images that we think relate to homosexual stereotyping.

Please could you collect images that represent homosexuality to you, you can bring along as many as you wish (there is no limit). They can be from the internet or pictures you have taken personally with images that represent:

1. Gay male stereotypes
2. Lesbian female stereotypes
3. Images that you automatically link to homosexuality, these could be logos, places... anything that springs to mind

I will also bring along images for us to discuss.

Once you have collated your images then please follow this link https://blss.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3UXpmm5iHYTWwC where you can complete the relevant consent forms and upload your images in a word document.

Thanks again and looking forward to talking with you.

Appendix K: Qualitative Information sheet, Consent form and Demographics

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population: A mixed methods exploration

STUDY BACKGROUND

My name is Laura Gee, and I am a second year PhD student at Birmingham City University. This project is the second and third study of my research and is supervised by Dr Deborah Earnshaw, Dr Elle Boag, and Dr Samuel Parker. You are being asked to take part in an **online** semi-structured interview about the application of gay stereotypes to homosexual individuals. This study aims to assess how people perceive the use of gay stereotypes in contemporary UK society through the use of imagery. This project has been approved by the Business, Law, and Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee, but if you have any queries then please contact me at Laura.gee2@bcu.ac.uk or the ethics committee on BLSSethics@bcu.ac.uk

WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO DO?

You will be asked to participate in an **online** semi-structured interview, the interview will be video, and audio recorded. During the interview we will discuss images that relate to homosexuality. Please could you collect images that, to you, represent homosexuality for the interview. You can upload as many as you wish (there is no limit), they can be from the internet or pictures you have taken personally including:

1. Images that represent a gay male
2. Images that represent a lesbian female
3. Images that you link to homosexuality or represent homosexuality in general

I will also bring along images for us to discuss – please do not worry if they match or are similar.

LGBTQ+ participants will also be asked about their personal experiences of stereotyping. If you would like to know more about the exact questions included, you can review the interview questions beforehand to ensure you are happy with what is being asked of you. Afterwards, you do not need to do anything.

HOW LONG WILL THE STUDY LAST?

On average, this study takes approximately 30-45 minutes, but it may go over this time.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS OF TAKING PART?

There are no specific risks to this study over and above those experienced in everyday encounters. However, if you feel affected by the topic being discussed, you can contact the organisations listed below:

- **Mind** (Mind offers information and advice to people with mental health problems and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf) – 0300 123 3393 <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>
- **Consortium** (Directory of services and groups for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) - consortium.lgbt/member-directory
- **Galop** (Supports LGBTQ+ people who have experienced hate crime, sexual violence, or domestic group) - 0800 999 5428 – galop.org.uk
- **Terrence Higgins Trust** (Provides support for LGBTQ+ people who are worried about their sexual health) – 0808 802 1221 - tht.org.uk
- **Birmingham LGBT** (Sexual health clinic in Birmingham tailored to LGBT) – 0212 643 0821 <https://blgbt.org/services/sexual-health/about-us/>

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

Although there are no direct benefits from taking part, it is hoped that discussing how and if the application of the homosexual stereotypes is still applicable will offer a greater understanding of homosexuality. This in turn can aid research into whether more acceptance of homosexuality has affected gay stereotypes.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW AND WITHHOLD INFORMATION

In line with the regulations outlined by the British Psychological Society you have the right to refuse to answer any question you feel uncomfortable with, and you can stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You are still entitled to the same benefits as an individual who completes the study. You can also have your data withdrawn/destroyed from the time you complete up until the 30th June 2022. After this time, your data will be analysed and written as a report. During the study, you also have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you without penalty. If you are using a BCU Office/Teams account, after the study is complete you will be sent a link to a recording of the study, which will be available for 20 days after which it will be automatically deleted from MS Teams. Only you and the researcher will have access to this. If you do not wish to withdraw, the researcher will download their copy of the recording, for this to be analysed and written up. Please see contact details below if you wish to withdraw.

RIGHT TO CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The study will not involve the collection of any personal information about you apart from your age, gender, and sexuality. Any personal information given will be unidentifiable to an external party – your name and any other identifiable information will be kept separately from the main study data, which will be stored confidentially, using a personalised anonymous code which you will be asked to create, and all identifiable names and locations will be changed. Data will be stored on OneDrive and will be deleted when analysis is complete. Only the research team will have access to the raw data. This work may be used at presentations and may be published but will be anonymised.

All data will be stored in accordance with the University's data protection policy. Data will be anonymised and may be shared between the primary researcher and the supervisor, but it

will not be possible to identify your data at any point. The data will be kept until the degree classification has been awarded, after which point it will be kept in line with the University's data protection policy. If you decide you would like to withdraw your data before 30th June 2022, you will be asked to provide the ID code created at the start of the interview and contact me by email to do so.

WHO IS ORGANISING THE RESEARCH?

If you have questions, then please contact the researcher via email at Laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Or contact the supervisors:

Deborah.Earnshaw@bcu.ac.uk

Elle.Boag@bcu.ac.uk

Samuel.Parker@bcu.ac.uk

WHAT IF I AM UNHAPPY, OR THERE IS A PROBLEM?

If you are unhappy at any point in the study, or if there is a problem, please contact the Business, Law & Social Sciences Faculty Ethics Committee directly: blssethics@bcu.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM

Study two and three of Understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population: A mixed methods exploration.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROJECT

This study is looking into the experiences of heterosexual and homosexual individuals and the application of gay stereotypes to homosexual individuals. The participant and researcher will supply images that reflect gay individuals, and these will be discussed to gain insight into if the rise in homosexual acceptance has affected gay stereotyping.

In order to participate in this study, we need to ensure that you understand the nature of the research, as outlined on the Participant Information page.

Please tick the boxes to indicate that you understand and agree to the following conditions.

☐

I confirm that I have read the information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these.

answered satisfactorily.

☐

I understand that in order to take part in this study, I should be *at least 18 years old*, and *UK based*.

☐

I understand that personal data about me will be collected for the purposes of the research study including age, gender, and sexuality and that these will be processed in accordance with the information sheet.

☐

I understand the images I supply through Qualtrics will be used for the interview but will not be stored after the interview or used for analysis.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason up until 30th June 2022, after which data will be fully anonymised.

☐

I understand that the video and audio from this interview will be recorded via MS Teams but only audio data will be used for analysis.

☐

I understand that an anonymised transcript of the audio of this recording will be used for analysis and stored on secure university servers for 10 years in line with the university research data retention requirements.

☐

I understand that my data will only be used by the investigators for research purposes and that there is a possibility this research will be presented at conferences or published in journal publications.

☐

I agree to take part in this study.

PLEASE CREATE A PERSONAL IDENTIFIER CODE:

This should be made up of the first three letters of your town/city of birth and the door number of your first house that you can recall (e.g., kid15).

Demographic information

1. How old are you (please write in numbers)?

2. I identify as...

☐

Female

☐

Male

☐ Non-Binary/third gender

☐ Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-Describe: _____

3. What is your sexual orientation? (Please tick one)

☐ Homosexual

☐ Heterosexual

☐ Bisexual

☐ Queer

☐ Pansexual

☐ Asexual

Prefer to self-describe: _____

Appendix L: Debrief

DEBRIEF SHEET

Understanding the paradigm shift of stereotyping and conformity of homosexuality in a UK population: A mixed methods exploration

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Thank you for completing my interview. This was an exploratory research study looking into the application of gender inverted stereotypes on homosexual individuals and querying if the increase in homosexual acceptance has affected the application.

There was no deception involved in this study. I hope you enjoyed participating and please let me know if you have any questions about the topics discussed.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

If you feel that you need to discuss anything that was brought up in the interview, then please seek help from relevant organisations listed below. If you wish to discuss this further, then please contact your local GP or visit <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search> to help you find services that are suitable and local for you.

- **Mind** (Mind offers information and advice to people with mental health problems and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf) – 0300 123 3393 <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>
- **Consortium** (Directory of services and groups for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) - consortium.lgbt/member-directory
- **Galop** (Supports LGBTQ+ people who have experienced hate crime, sexual violence, or domestic group) - 0800 999 5428 – galop.org.uk
- **Terrence Higgins Trust** (Provides support for LGBTQ+ people who are worried about their sexual health) – 0808 802 1221 - tht.org.uk
- **Birmingham LGBT** (Sexual health clinic in Birmingham tailored to LGBT) – 0212 643 0821 <https://blgbt.org/services/sexual-health/about-us/>

KEEPING IN TOUCH

If you wish to withdraw your data, then you can do so until 30th June 2022, via email (Laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk) using the unique code that you created on the consent form. This should be made up of the first three letters of your town/city of birth and the door number of your first house that you can recall (e.g., kid15).

If you do have further questions, then please email me on the below address, or contact the supervisors of the project.

Laura.gee2@mail.bcu.ac.uk

Supervisors:

Deborah.earnshaw@bcu.ac.uk

Elle.boag@bcu.ac.uk

Samuel.parker@bcu.ac.uk

If you have queries about this project or there is a problem, please contact the Business, Law & Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee directly: blssethics@bcu.ac.uk

Appendix M: Qualitative Participant Transcripts

Heterosexual Participant: Adam

Int Right then, so during the interview, we're going to discuss images that we think relate to homosexual stereotyping. Thank you for supplying the images for me. I've also got some similar images for us to discuss as well. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Adam Just so I am clear the pictures, but I was asked to send. What was that based around what I think a typical stereotypes of the LGBTQ community?

Int Yeah, it comes to mind when you think about LGBTQ community. Basically, your pictures are spot on to be fair, like, that's what you said. It was just what I expected anyway, so that's absolutely fine. So firstly, are you comfortable? You sitting somewhere where you can speak?

Adam Yeah, well, I'm, I mean, I'm in a shared office, but it's empty at the moment. Yeah. But if that's okay with you, but yeah,

Int Absolutely fine. Okay, then. So, we will make a start. So firstly, I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be gay stereotypes?

Adam So, and I'm thinking more so in the media at the moment, typically, it would be maybe an over exaggeration of what is masculine and what is feminine. So typically, what you see is, if you have like, a male gay community, maybe the kind of femininity associated with that is over exaggerated, and equally within a kind of gay woman community, the kind of masculinity there, it can be over exaggerated. I guess, for people, but does this include people that are like nonbinary or transgender?

Int if You want to include those yes as well.

Adam Well, yeah, I think with those groups of people, very similar kind of assumptions. But you know, if you're gay, you're you know, your very woman like, and it goes back to that very kind of binary got dichotomy of gender? I think. And that's, I think that's really reproduced on like, an everyday basis.

Int Yeah. Right. Perfect. And how do you feel there applied to gay people? So, do you think maybe people use them? Maybe in a nasty way? Or do you think people use them? without realising like, we just we automatically do it?

Adam Yeah, I think it's a mixture of both, I think, I think you've got the intentional, malicious, kind of homophobic, transphobic comments that people make, and they're doing it too deliberately be malicious. You've also got, and I think we're all guilty of this, including myself to some, you know, to some extent, you know, we might, because of our kind of preconceptions, and our, I guess, biases or stereotypes, we might naturally assume that if somebody identifies in a certain category, that they might like certain things, or they might dislike certain things. So, you might assume that if somebody is gay, but they might like, more maybe feminine qualities of life, than maybe others, those sorts of things. Yeah,

Int perfect. Do you think that we still actively kind of attribute these to gay individuals? So, in the sense that it's even though we're so accepting now? Do you think that we still apply so easily?

Adam Yeah, although, although you could argue the times have moved on in terms of progression, and rightfully so I think there are still a lot of kind of hidden biases, but maybe that we kind of, we kind of draw upon without maybe even realising it. So, like, the photos that I was asked to send in, you know, when, when I was thinking about, okay, what images come to mind when I think the gay community, you know, one of them was things like YMCA. So that's an example of those sorts of like, I guess, hidden biases that, you know, we have, but we're not always aware of, but we still reproduce daily.

Int Yeah, definitely. And so, then we you have mentioned it a little bit. So, if you thought about a gay male, and what kinds of things come to mind, obviously, you mentioned about them being

more effeminate, YMCA, things like that. Is there anything else that springs to mind is in like maybe physical features or emotionality or personality, maybe even job roles?

Adam Yes, so, in terms of stereotypes, I think you would more so associate that with more, I guess feminised jobs perhaps or things may be in a more kind of pastoral care. Social work kind of role. Maybe you would associate that more so than you would with maybe jobs of like a kind of manual or a kind of a labour-based nature, if you know what I mean. And then what's the second part to your question, sorry Laura.

Int like looking at their like physical features, or emotionality and personality.

Adam Thank you. So yeah, you would, you could also assume that maybe they're a bit more emotional or a bit more in tune with their emotions, than maybe kind of heterosexual male, but you got a look at why that could be, you know, the emotions run in everybody, it's just, you know, particularly in kind of hyper masculine environments. Yeah, there is still that stigma of like, not being able to express emotion and vulnerability. So, you know, as I said, the emotion is there in everybody, it's just, it could be seen as more articulated within with amongst gay men. And then in terms of physical characteristics there's nothing major that kind of springs to mind, because, like, I know, I know, gay people of all shapes and sizes, you know? So, I wouldn't say that there's any defining characteristics I can think of, but maybe you would associate them as being more kind of, I guess, groomed or maybe looking after themselves more, again, it goes back to that notion of more feminine kind of characteristics. Yeah,

Int and how about a lesbian woman then to the same things, thinking about characteristic physical attributes, job roles, if there's anything that comes to mind there,

Adam again, in terms of job roles, you might associate them being more as being part of like a labour based or a physical kind of role, or maybe a role with a level of, I guess, danger to it. So maybe police, prison officers, military personnel. In terms of emotions, did you ask as well? yeah, in terms of emotions, you could make this assume that the lesbian woman is maybe more, I guess, direct or more, or maybe less emotional than what a gay man would be, again, I'm trying to talk on the spectrum of like, general kind of society's kind of biases. And then, as well, in terms of physical attributes. You could maybe say lesbian women may be stockier built, perhaps, stereotypically. You know, they might have the kind of physicality in terms of the muscle tone that maybe a man has. Yeah, that's what I would say, in terms of stereotypes. Yeah,

Int that's perfect. Thank you. So, when have you see these seen these stereotypes applied in real life? So obviously, you said we do it by accident sometimes, have you seen it applied in real life?

Adam Yeah, I have. So, first of all, I think the media is a big one. You know, if you look at a lot of common TV shows and movies, a lot of them do have that kind of very binary lens with gender. So, you know if you even look at comedy programmes, you know things like *The Inbetweeners*. I don't know if you've watched that, but there's a lot of kind of references in insinuations to being gay, you know, and it's almost seen as like, a negative thing. Like, oh, if I call somebody gay then that's an insult. Yeah. And you see that you see that in everyday life as well. You know, I've overheard conversations where I've heard people say you don't like football, you gay? And it's like, if somebody said back to me, you know, my response would be well, I'm I don't identify as gay. But if I was gay, why is that a bad thing? Why would that? Why are you insinuating to be gay is to be is an insult? It's got a negative connotation to it. Yeah. And so yeah, so I think we see that reproducing the media quite a lot, particularly through discourses of comedy, but particularly in everyday living situations I think, yeah, I think the word gay is thrown around quite a lot very kind of, loosely, is very loose term.

Int So current research suggests that homosexuality is now more accepted the previously. I think this is quite obvious that we are on a much more acceptance level than we were, say back in the 60s. And so, what's your view on this? Do you feel like we are more accepting? And how accepting do you feel we are?

Adam I think, on the surface level in terms of like, policy, legality, I think, yeah, we are 100%, you know, we've progressed, and we've made that leap forward, you know, whereas as you said, in the 60s, it was illegal to be gay. Now, if you know, I could walk down the street holding hands with a man and, you know, legally, there's nothing you know, to say about that. However, if you dig a bit deeper beneath the surface, in terms of ideologically, I guess subconsciously as well, I think there are still a lot of biases. And yeah, a lot of biases that people have that maybe if I was to do that down the street legally fine but socially, would I still get odd looks from people would I still get people kind of like out the corner of their eye give me a little like, ooh that's unusual, kind of look. So, I think we still see a lot of that now today. So, I think we've progressed, but we still have a little bit further to go in terms of getting it widely accepted and kind of normalised. But it is positive to see particularly at early year curriculum level and within like the publication of like children's books, because I believe all of this needs to start with the youth and young people. You know, with publications of books, movies, TV shows, cartoons, we are seeing more of a representation of the LGBT community. Yeah. I think yeah, it's good. But we're still a little bit, have a way to go.

Int Yes. Yeah, definitely. So, I'm just going to share my screen now and get your images up. Yeah. So, I won't be able to see, you know, I'm actually working on the online version. You might see yourself for a second. Right, can you see my screen? Get your images up first, then. I'll zoom in a little bit. So, was the YMCA image the image that you selected for gay Men?

Adam Yes, yeah. Yes.

Int Okay, so we'll discuss that one first. And so, I just want you to talk me through this image, such as why you chose it as a representation of gay men?

Adam Because typically, because I'm aware, the whole kind of YMCA thing came out, I don't know when but wasn't it like the 70s 80s? Yeah, around that sort of time. So, you could then say that historically, and in the current day, the YMCA has kind of been a kind of figurehead almost for, for the gay community, particularly within like media discourse, and, and even things like within tourism, you know, if you go to certain like, holiday destinations, the entertainment would be like a YMCA themed night. So, I chose that because I can see I have seen it embedded within certain kinds of social cultural kind of events across the UK. And yeah, that's one of the main reasons but I think as well, you know, you would, when you think of like a kind of group of gay men, you might think of those kind of like, I guess feminised attributes that we arguably see within the YMCA, and things like that. So yeah, that's pretty much why I've picked it.

Int So, what parts of the images in like, would you say like the clothing they're wearing? Or the way they're standing? Like, what kind of things would make you think they're gay? Or this is the gay stereotype?

Adam That's a really good question. Actually. When I really think about it, I think the association of maybe because I'm looking at it now and we've got a builder, we've got a police officer, we've got a cowboy. So actually, I want to retract what I said a minute ago about them being feminised actually is the opposite. They're actually more kind of I guess, masculine masculinized roles that's even a word. And then the person on the right in the black kind of leather is that I don't know if that's meant to be like, I don't know what job that's meant to be. But it's it isn't

Int meant to be Oh, no, I was going to say policeman, but you got the policeman on the left of it. Yeah. Yeah.

Adam But isn't YMCA the notion of like the villagers or the people in the village that, kind of come together and so I've never actually seen YMCA itself in terms of like, because isn't it a movie or was it just sound just the song?

Int Yeah. It stands for young men's Christian Association. But I think there were a lot of connotations around men who were in this group were gay. I think that's how it kind of linked there, I think.

Adam Yeah, well, I would associate it as being like a kind of gay stereotype, because simply because of movies I've seen, kind of preceded that. And it's, it's been very much around, okay, you see people dressed as like villagers, you know, by going into like a gay bar. You know, I've seen that in films like police academy, Benidorm, all across the spectrum, you know, and it's always that case that they're going into a gay bar. There's a scene in, in that programme Benidorm. I don't know if you've watched it, but I've seen it, where one of the one of the elderly ladies thought that her son was gay, and she kind of got up on the stage did the YMCA song. So, things like that made me think you know, okay, that's in association with the gay community.

Int Yeah, that makes sense. Definitely. So, we'll just scroll back up a little bit. Was it this image on the left that you chose for the lesbian women?

Adam Yes.

Int Lovely. So again, do you want to talk me through this image and why you chose it as a representation of lesbian females?

Adam So yeah, all not just lesbian females, but also gay men, transgendered people, etc, etc. I chose it as an element of pride, because pride obviously encompasses all of those, all of those kind of communities and groups of people. But you know, what I saw in that picture, there were two women who, presumably identified as lesbian women, or maybe they didn't, but either way, they were standing in solidarity, to further a cause as like a almost like a form of activism to further the cause and the social acceptance of the community. So yeah, I mean, because whenever I think of the of gayness, now, I do think of things like pride movements, and rainbow and all the kind of fusion of colours. So yeah, that's pretty much why I chose it to be honest.

Int Yeah. And does that we'll move on to your picture, your pride flag. Now, obviously, there because you spoke a little bit about the rainbow and things. What made you choose that image them for your image for homosexuality?

Adam Yeah, broadly, it seems to be the kind of like, poster picture, if you like, of representing the community because am I correct in thinking that the colours on the flag represents each kind of strand of the LGBT community? Yeah. So, you know, like, it covers basically all bases. And, you know, pride is celebrated across Europe, across Britain, across America. I'm not sure if it's celebrated in other parts of the world, but it's pretty much a global movement. So yeah, but that picture kind of neatly summarises, the whole LGBTQ community collectively,

Int great. I just pop my images up for us to have a little discussion about. So, talking about the image on the left, that says the bear. So basically, these images, what I did is I went into Google on the first of December, and I wrote in gay male stereotype, and these were the first three images that came upon that day. So, I've done that for the gay images, the lesbian images, and the bit like visions of homosexuality, images, and just mainly so it's not my bias. Obviously, these aren't what I've picked, they are just kind of what came up on Google that day. And obviously, if you google it now, they'll be totally different because Google changes every day. So yeah, so basically, look at the first image then the bear, what kinds of things kind of spring to mind for this image, you know, like, what are your thoughts about it? And how do you think that there may be represent someone being gay?

Adam Okay, so the first thing I would say is, in terms of the societal stereotypes, it does kind of suggest sexual deviancy. Yeah, so it does suggest a sexual behaviour that kind of goes against the normative man and woman in a bed from marriage kind of like nuclear structure. So yeah, it's suggesting sexual deviancy but in doing that also implies but homosexuality in itself is deviant, which, of course, is not something I agree with. Of course, it isn't but thinking across the level, but that's an assumption that I think many people would make. And also, as well going into a bit more about the deviancy element, you know, it suggests that maybe there would be practices where he would be a submissive character, perhaps, which of course, again, traditionally within a male and a female sexual relationship, you know, the man is seen as the

dominant figure the woman as a subordinate and that picture kind of goes against that sort of traditional value, I guess. Yeah. Yeah, that's what I've been. Yeah.

Int Right. And so why do you think this image has been labelled as representing the gay stereotype why do you think Google kind of threw it up as the gay stereotype?

Adam Well, the other thing I've noticed, as well as it looks very similar to what we saw in the previous picture of the YMCA, kind of outline. And I think as well, going back to what I said earlier about how the assumption that all gay men are going to be a lot more effeminate and more maybe submissive than a heterosexual male, this picture, you could argue, suggests that, you know, that person is going to be a submissive character in like a kind of BDSM bondage sort of like encounter. And therefore, he's going to be, that is going to assume that role because he is gay. So yeah, but but that's generally what I think that picture suggests.

Int No worries. And moving on to the image on the right, the man with the blue hair. What are your thoughts about this image? Why do you think it represents someone who's gay?

Adam Okay, so this is very similar to what I've mentioned before, that you could argue, represents some kind of resistance. Because, you know, you know, for years and years and years, you know, there's been lots of activism and resistance within the LGBTQ community, rightfully so, of course, to kind of resist the status quo in terms of those normative values of what a relationship and what sex should be. And then within that, you've got, you've got other elements of kind of say, well, what is essentially deviant, but I didn't count it as deviancy to make just to make that clear. Things like the blue hair, you know, is it taboo these days or was taboo traditionally to kind of dye your hair a colour that isn't like, either blonde, brown, black or natural red. So, you could argue there, but you know, for blue signifies a level of resistance, but it's also associated with being gay. Equally going back to the notion of, kind of gendered the kind of binary dichotomy of in gender. You know, women traditionally, women wear makeup, men don't wear makeup. So, the fact that this man is wearing obviously nail polish, lipstick, eyeliner, eyeshadow, and, you know, again, you know, it's kind of emblem of resistance, but I think it is associated with the LGBTQ community. So of course, traditionally, it goes, I guess, against society's, not what society sees as normal or, right, you know,

Int would you say obviously, that the, the makeup is kind of the part, then that's made google throw it up as the gay stereotype?

Adam Yeah, definitely. And also, you know, the kind of stereotype that gay men are going to be far more feminine than heterosexual men, kind of ties into the idea of obviously, makeup is a very effeminate, woman, you know, is a woman's thing. So, if you're a gay man, then of course, you're going to like and want to do all the things, that a straight woman does i.e. wear makeup, dye your hair. You know, and do what, what you could argue is like an effeminate pose, you know. So, it all goes back to that kind of binary lens of gender. And, you know, people trying to fit the gay community into that kind of, into that kind of fixed category, if that makes sense.

Int And the third image we've got here, I found super interesting, actually. So, I'm assuming it was used for a stereotype kind of poster. So, what are your thoughts about this? Because obviously, this suggests, you know, that stereotype around all gay men are feminine, when actually, Gareth Thomas is far from feminine. So, what kinds of things sprang to mind with this image?

Adam Well, first of all, it challenges all of the stereotypes that I've just, I've just mentioned, you know, the fact that you're, who you're sexually attracted to, in many cases doesn't have to have anything to do with your, how you present yourself and your kind of social cultural interests. So, what we see here is an out and proud gay man that likes having sex with other men, but still enjoys and lives the life of stereotypically of a heterosexual man, because he is still taking up that masculine dominant that, that role where he's got to practice and perform his masculinity. So yeah, I think that is very much a, again, resistance of off those sorts of stereotypes, and which I think is obviously really good. Yeah, yeah, that's what I think about it.

Int Yeah. And so how do you think it does represent someone being gay? Do you think maybe like you said about it, going against the typical stereotype? Could there be possibilities that there are new stereotypes coming through? If that makes sense?

Adam Yeah, I mean, I think as well, okay, traditionally, you would be able, but okay, traditionally, and even nowadays, because, because like homosexuality, etc, has been kind of seen or over exaggerated to be attributed to a particular kind of way of living or gendered function. It was a lot more over, ok, so if you're in a pub, for example, two men walked in, stereotypically you might be able to look at them and go, yeah, they're definitely gay because they, they exhibit feminine traits they may be sat, but again, I'm going off stereotype, They may be sat there with a gin and tonic rather than a pint of bitter, you know, So traditionally, I think it was a lot more overt. Nowadays, of course, and rightfully so there is a lot more kind of embedded, it's a lot more covert. So, you might, you might not be able to tell if somebody's gay, because they might talk at you, in a very deep voice, if they're a man or if a woman they might like, you know, painting their nails and going out with their hair or done up and all these sorts of things, but they may be lesbian. So sorry, some rambling was to go back to your question. I think, yeah, I think nowadays, it's certainly a lot more challenging to kind of tell if somebody is gay. But I see that as a good thing. You know, gay people shouldn't have to perform or enact their sexuality, just to kind of prove that they are this or prove that they are fat, you know, they should be able to live their lives exactly how they want to. Definitely, that goes back to what I said earlier, like, you know, who you're sexually attracted to, should have no kind of hindrance on or impact on the way you live your life. You can do both. And I think society is beginning to realise that a bit more now.

Int Yeah, definitely. So, I'll just scroll down. So similarly, now with the gay female stereotype. So again, these are what Google threw up at me. So, looking at the first image of Lea DeLaria, what springs to mind to you for this image. So why do you think this represents lesbian women?

Adam Okay, so the first thing I'll notice is short hair. Typically, lesbian women are associated as having short hair, because again, it goes back to that binary lens. Men traditionally have short hair, women traditionally have long, kind of like, and also wear, like long hair that you know, flows down. So, you have this stereotype that, you know, all lesbian women have, you know, short hair, because you could argue maybe they want to have or appear to have the physical characteristics of what is seen to be a man. Whereas, you know, I know lesbian women with short hair with long hair with, you know, do my nails up who don't so, you know, you can see that it's not so fixed as maybe the stereotypes would suggest and yes, of a short hair. The other one as well is for tattoos again, and this goes into more of a social construction element. But tattoos are typically seen as an embodiment of masculinity because it's, you know, it's almost like a, an aggressive thing to you know, puncture your skin to have like a tattoo. Again, associated with being a man. Just like wearing a shirt with the sleeves rolled up again, fashion. You know, traditionally men wear shirts, women wear dresses, or skirts or blouses or whatever. So, again, that photo kind of represents kind of going against, like traditional kind of assumptions of what it is to be a man in terms of look, fashion, body images. As well, I think all of those things combined to create this stereotype of, of lesbian women as being masculine, or butch is another word people use.

Int And she's even got that tattooed on her.

Adam Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Int Yeah. So, you think obviously, this is kind of the perfect picture of a lesbian stereotype you would agree?

Adam Of a stereotype? Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Perfect.

Int I'll scroll down to the second image, then blue hair again. So, what are your thoughts on this image? And why do you think this would represent lesbian women?

Adam Again, very similar to what I've mentioned before, but let's zoom in a little bit on the colours, you know, that the whole essence of a rainbow of a kind of different colours kind of coming together? Yeah. You know, that is a kind of symbol of the LGBTQ community. So, you could look, you could look at that particular image as well and say, well, I'm not sure if that's someone who identifies as a man or a woman, but I know that they're part of the LGBT community because of the kind of array of colours. And that's yeah, I don't know if that actually answers your question, or not,

Int Definitely and obviously, you can't see a lot of her face anyway. But is there anything else with her features like her hair or anything like that, that would kind of suggest?

Adam I'm being really picky now. But I've noticed on the left hand, there's like a ring that looks traditionally like a male kind of wedding rings. This isn't a wedding ring, but just like what I've got on there. So, you could look at that and think, oh, you know, maybe they're a bit butch or a bit kind of masculine because they're wearing what's traditionally seen as a male piece of jewellery, but kind of simple, plain kind of ring. Yeah.

Int That's really interesting. Yeah,

Adam I'll just zoom in on that.

Int Yeah, that's great. and the final image for lesbian women? Is the two girls here. So, what do you think about this image? What kind of springs to mind when you, what are your thoughts when looking at this image?

Adam Yeah, okay. So, I think sexualisation is a key thing to kind of discuss here because I think a lot of lesbian women who identify who like having sex with other women, but don't kind of take on the kind of like, the kind of deemed masculine traits of maybe what we saw in the first picture of this cluster. I think women who do but who look feminine but like having sex with women are overly sexualized and a kind of almost pretty much exploited as being these kinds of sexual objects but in terms of the male gaze and are kind of objectified and I looked at you know, that's sexy that's enticing, so I think stereotypically, you might look at that picture and take some kind of sexualized connotation to it. Particularly the woman on the right, who you could argue exhibits more feminine in terms of clothes, hair, etc. qualities for maybe what we saw in picture one or maybe even the woman sat next to her, you know, you could argue is a mixture of both. Yes. Try to think was anything else that springs to mind in terms of stereotypes?

Int So would you say that obviously, these two women don't kind of hit the stereotype, particularly, you wouldn't look at them in the street and think, oh, they must be gay.

Adam No, not not stereotypically because yes sorry. So stereotypically if you see two women who exhibit physical feminine characteristics like hair makeup, etc you would stereotypically look at them and think oh they're just go you know girl friends you know on a day or a night out you know, they're just the best of friends but that particular picture looks a lot more of an intimate scene you know, their eyes are closed, their noses are touching is very, is you could argue is very romantic, romantic. Yeah. So, yeah, to look at that, stereotypically you would think okay, but they clearly like into each other, but you would almost subconsciously take a step back to think well Hang on, are they actually lesbian? Because one doesn't look like a lesbian? Are they really? Yeah. And so, I think these generally if it's stereotypes people might have, they might question it.

Int Yeah, no, that makes sense. And on to the images that represent homosexuality, the first image that came up was RuPaul. so, what do you what are your thoughts about this image? So how do you think this would represent homosexuality?

Adam Funnily enough, I was actually talking about Ru is that RuPaul's drag race? I was actually talking about that with my girlfriend last night. And she absolutely loved it. And she was telling me about it. So, I asked her, I said, what is it actually about? So, I wasn't sure. Sorry. I'm way back to your question. I'm rambling in terms of stereotypes. It goes back to what I said earlier about the over exaggeration of, of femininity across gay men, doesn't it? But I need to be careful

here, because I'm not sure whether that individual would identify as transgender or whether they would be identified as, is it transvestite. If they,

Int yeah, they're a drag queen

Adam drag queen, sorry.

Int So, they identify as a man but dress in drag. For their show that that is one of the biggest shows in probably the LGBT community, I think.

Adam Yeah. But yeah, okay. In that context, then it does go back to the over exaggeration, because, you know, last night again, I was shown a lot of pictures of the drag queens and I thought, they were wearing a lot more makeup and a lot more. Kind of, I guess, feminine things like big jewellery, much more than what I would see within that average kind of woman or person identifies as a woman. So, I think the over exaggeration of femininity is definitely why that is, I'm not entirely sure. Maybe it's to kind of like, make sure everybody knows that, you know, that's, that's how they identify when they kind of in that kind of role character, if you like. And yeah, I think it's definitely a kind of post a fun, if you like, of the LGBT community, because, you know, particularly with the hair, you can tell it's a wig, you can tell that, you know, there's it's more than likely to be a biological man, but who currently identifies as a woman in terms of that in terms of that kind of character role, if you like, yeah. And obviously, that, but that area's been like, hugely commodified as well. Yeah, yeah.

Int I'll scroll down to the next image. so that's little NAS, I think it was at like, like a Music Awards, you know, like a Grammys or something like that. And they were performing. And so, what are your thoughts about this image? And how does it represent someone being gay, apart from the obvious that they're kissing, obviously,

Adam Okay, so, first of all, they look like they're in some kind of theatre or some kind of performative role. Stereotypically, you would associate gay men as being into the arts for like drama, the kind of theatres and all these sorts of things. So that's the first thing that strikes out and then obviously, as you said, the obvious, you know, two men are physically kissing, you know, that's obviously a certainly a sign. And then, let me see what else are they, is my eyesight but, are they wearing like makeup on their eyes?

Int Yeah.

Adam Yeah. Again, that's, that's a big one, you know, goes into that that lens of you know, women wear makeup men don't. And the assumption that gay men obviously are more feminine than heterosexual men. So, they're going to exhibit feminine traits, like wearing makeup, and also the fact as well, but all three of them are pretty much shirtless. You know, and it goes into that kind of sexualization that I mentioned before where we almost, like, stereotypically, you would, you would almost see gay men as like sexually deviant. When, you know, obviously, I'm completely against that narrative. I'm just talking stereotypically. You would see them as sexually deviant. And therefore, to be deviant in that context might be to not wear clothes in public or not to kind of cover ones like modesty. Which obviously from that lens, those three men are not doing. So yeah, I think the combination of the makeup sexualization and the kind of binary lens is what the theatre is what would suggest that those three Men are gay. Yeah,

Int Great. And the third image is the pride flag. And I knew 100% obviously, this one will come up. Very similar to obviously, what you presented with the pride flag as well. So, is there any more you'd like to add about the pride flag? Obviously, I know it's very similar to yours but is there anything from this image that stands out to you that kind of represents homosexuality or the gay stereotype?

Adam Well, it's one thing I'd say is it's certainly representing, like, the gay community as like a minority because from that one picture, we can see one lone man standing alone wearing the kind of post of a figurehead of the LGBT community in a kind of backscene of a seemingly heterosexual kind of like normal, use that term like this in the normal world. And so, it definitely represents them as the minority rather than the majority and in doing so, kind of reemphasises,

that I guess social exclusion that kind of like associated like deviancy, like transgressing against the norm normal. Yeah, that's pretty much what pick from it and of course, what was mentioned earlier. Yeah.

Int Really interesting. Do you feel like there's been any differences between the images? So, obviously, with your images and the images that have been presented here? Or do you think they're quite similar?

Adam Yeah, I think whilst physically different. They all go back to the same themes for same themes of genders of binary dichotomy, the same themes of performing sexuality, sexualization, deep associated deviancy of, of the LGBTQ community, particularly like sexual. Yeah, sexual deviancy. And, of course, you know, similar to the first point I made about, we assume that if you're a gay man, you're going to exhibit feminine traits. And if you're a gay woman, you're going to exhibit masculine traits. And all of it, although you could argue is kind of resisting, you could argue it kind of reproduces that narrative of falling into that kind of like, two-way lens rather than looking at sexuality and gender as a spectrum. Yeah. Yeah, that's what I would say,

Int I'll stop sharing the screen now. Bring you back. Perfect. So, just a closing question. Now really how do you think we could bring forward acceptance of homosexuality in our society? Like, obviously, you said, that we've moved it forward, we have moved forward. But there's more to go. Obviously, you mentioned education, and things like that. Could you expand on that a little bit more for me, and how you think we could really bring this acceptance forward?

Adam Yeah, absolutely. I mean, like, obviously, traditionally, you know, what was kind of represented as a family. And as a kind of like a healthy normal relationship, it was always a man and a woman, particularly within Western discourse, having two children, who also go on to marry people of the opposite sex. And also as well, you know, within these narratives, it would always be the man for the male breadwinner, the father, you know, doing the job coming home fixing maybe the car at the weekend taking on the kind of very mechanical roles, whereas the mother was always seen as a kind of passive, nurturing, supportive kind of figure, who would, you know, look after the children when they're ill, and we do all these things. So, if you take that, obviously, that that kind of represents what is seen as normal, however, it needs to be far more embedded. So there needs to be more books written, more movies made, more kind of talk, just discussions around, you know, oh, so these two people, they might be two women, they might be two men, they might be two, like nonbinary people and here they have, they have children or whatever, and they go about their lives just as normally and just as normal as everybody else. You know, I think in doing that education from a young age, it will get the message out to young people whilst they're in the stage of development where it's completely normal and it's okay if you see two men walking down the street holding hands, and if they if they both got a child is perfectly normal, as well as it's normal to have a man and a woman. It's normal to have that and it's not something that should be seen as like othered. And maybe I should have mentioned that earlier, but the notion of othering we know we see it in a lot of discourses, you know, we see it in post-colonial we see it in, obviously, like queer theory and things like that. Yeah. But yeah, we need to kind of smash that kind of others barrier fact that

Int The us and them kind of thing.

Adam Us and them exactly. Yeah.

Int And do you feel like maybe the younger generations then could lead the way for everybody else? Really?

Adam Yeah, I think so. I think they easily can. But the stage we are all that we need to take the ladder up to basically enable them to take the rungs of the ladder later on, if that makes sense. Yes. So, to start from an early age, but not just an early age, it needs to be for the whole process, you know, things like *EastEnders*, *Coronation Street*. You know, things like that need to have more of these more people from that community embedded.

Int Yeah. And do you feel like maybe the stereotypes could possibly be generational to a degree like we're talking about how younger people are coming through and, you know, they're kind of changing the ways these things are happening. Do you think maybe, as the generations move on, maybe then we'd get more acceptance there? Maybe?

Adam Yeah. 100% 100%. I mean, if I, if I think of my parents, my grandparents' generation, my parents' generation, homosexuality, from what I've gathered, wasn't, it was a thing. Of course, it was. And it's always been a thing from history. It's not just emerged. It's just been severely criminalised and demonised in the past, but it wasn't as acceptable then. But if you go back to my grandparents' generation, we're talking the 1940s. Like, you know, it was extremely taboo. And I've actually had conversations like this with my grandparents. And whilst they're accepting of it, they knew many people at the time that weren't. So yeah, I think it certainly is a generational thing that eventually, the old generations because people are products of their time, you know, my dad, you know, my dad, for example, he, he's very much a product of the 80s and the 90s. And he is you always stuck in that kind of like way of thinking. And the same for older people. So, it will move on, and I think it will get better. But we have to ensure that for the next generation of people coming into the world, that they're it kind of hit off with it from the outset. That's just not the norm. It's just a norm. It's just precisely Yeah.

Int Great. So, I think we've covered everything there. And is there anything else that you'd like to add any final thoughts or any questions?

Adam No, I don't think so. No, that's wonderful.

Int And thank you so much, Adam. That was really, really good. I'm just going to stop the recording now.

Heterosexual Participant: Carol

Int Pop up at the top saying it's recording. So, I'll wait for that to pop up before I carry on. There we go. So that's recording now. Lovely. So then, during this interview, we're going to be discussing images. So, thank you very much for sending over your images. And there's actually a few images that I've selected as well from Google. So, we'll kind of go over both of those. Before we begin, if you've got any questions, or is there anything you need clarified,

Carol No

Int lovely, are you sitting somewhere comfortably? Do you feel comfortable where you sat talking and

Carol Yes

Int Lovely, and so I'll jump straight in. So firstly, I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be a gay stereotype? If you thought of someone homosexual what kind of pings to mind?

Carol they have a more feminine nature, or effeminate? They tend to be highly groomed, I would say, very well looked after themselves. Yeah, moisturise, and haircut and dyes.

Int Yeah, yeah. I get what you're saying. And how do you think these are applied at the current time? So, do you think that they're still widely used? Do you think we do it automatically? or do you feel like it is less used now, and people don't seem to stereotype gay people as much?

Carol I think it's, it's widely used, but as time has evolved, it's become normal.

Int Yeah, yeah. Do what you mean like more acceptance?

Carol Accepting. Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

Int Okay, so you did mention a little bit just about a gay male. So, if I ask you to think about a gay male, what do you think of? so also thinking about, obviously, you mentioned grooming, and that they're a bit more effeminate, but also thinking about, like, maybe their emotionality or their personality, or maybe even job roles? Is there anything that comes to mind?

Carol I think they are more sensitive and more keen to show emotion. They're not afraid of showing emotion. Yeah, whereas some British men are usually seen as stiff upper lip. Get on with it, you know?

Int Yeah. Yeah. how about type of job roles and things. Do you think there's a difference in job roles? Maybe for gay men instead of heterosexual men?

Carol I don't think so. No, I think over time, the roles can apply to gay or straight men. Yeah. I mean, bank managers, you know, you can be any sexuality. Yeah,

Int Yes, that's great. And how about lesbian women? So, if you were going to think about a lesbian woman, is there any certain images that pop to mind? Or again, personality, physical features, job roles, anything like that?

Carol If, no, not really, I feel some lesbian women do look a bit masculine and some do look feminine. What we do assume as feminine. As for job roles no, I think they're all the same. Police, the fire, they accept their sexuality into that role.

Int Yeah. So, when you're saying about like, lesbians being more masculine, so if you saw like a masculinised lady, would you automatically think they could be lesbian? Would that kind of make you trigger to think about that, in a sense?

Carol Yes and no. It would need other things as well, like their personality, their emotions. Yeah. Their perception of life?

Int Oh right. Okay. You want to elaborate on that a little bit? Like what need to be?

Carol I wouldn't say that all lesbian women hate men. But you know, there is a certain kind of, like, stigma around that. They all hate men, but don't I don't feel that's right.

Int There all stereotypes that you hear, aren't they? So, there's loads of different ones that people say and like I said, majority of the time, they aren't the case. But yeah, they're kind of they've stuck, haven't they? These are things that if you're gay, you've got to be like this. If you lesbian, you got to be like this. Like, they've all kind of stuck into place. Definitely. So current research suggests that homosexuality is now more accepted than previously. In a lot of the research, it's stating that 90% of LGBTQ individuals feel more accepted now than they did before, which is obviously amazing. So, what is your view on this? Do you feel like we have taken steps that we are more accepting, and how do you think it's getting accepted now, homosexuality?

Carol I think I would say about 90% of the population accept homosexuality, and it's their choice. But I do, I do feel there's some stigma still within, especially with the older generation, those born in the 1930s. I do feel that there is a stigma still but generally, for my year of birth, in the 60s, it's more, a lot more accepted.

Int Do you feel like it'll get more accepted as well, maybe as like you're saying, like your generations better than people born in the 30s. So, do you think it'll gradually just get better?

Carol As we evolve like my grandchildren and that will be more accepting, yeah. As they grow up? Yeah.

Int Yeah, I can see that difference as well, like with my daughter, like, she's a lot more open than some of my friends, and that's only like a, you know, 20-year gap. Yeah, so definitely get what you're saying. So, yeah, I think that it could hopefully, get better as we go. So, I'll get your images now. So, I'm just going to share my screen. Hopefully, it'll all work and go to plan. You might see yourself, so bear with me. Lovely, can you see your images?

Carol Yes. Yeah.

Int I can't see, you now, so just shout up if you need, you know, need my attention kind of thing. Right then. So, let's have a look at these images. So, we're looking at your first image that you've put for gay female, which we know as Ellen DeGeneres. Do you want to talk me through this image such as why you chose it as a representation of a gay female? So, what parts of this image instantly made you think? Yep, this is definitely a depiction of how a gay female would look.

Carol I think because she's in the media and she, she has very strong opinions on her sexuality, and she does have a lot of followers. So that social media, you know, they keep in touch with what

she's doing and who she interviews and her views and everything. I think she's quite a prominent figure.

Int Quite a big face for the LGBT community.

Carol Yeah, yeah.

Int Is there anything like visually about her that kind of hinted the stereotype to you? So obviously, what she looks like or anything?

Carol I think for me, it was her clothing. It's more of a suit. Rather than a dress or a skirt or anything. But facially and her hair? No. I wouldn't have said unless she'd said specifically that she was I wouldn't automatically think that she was a lesbian.

Int Ok so would you say? Because, you know, she's lesbian? And because of all the things she does in the media, that's what made you pick her really? Because, you know...

Carol Yes. Yeah.

Int You know, sexuality and stuff. That's great. Yeah, so why do you think this image is considered to be a gay stereotype? So actually, I think quite a few people would pick Ellen DeGeneres as a gay female. So, what parts of the image would you consider to be the gay stereotype, obviously makes it the suit, is there anything else in the image?

Carol Nothing automatically springs to mind unless the type of role job role she's in is interviewing.

Int Yeah.

Carol Which she might feel more safe in herself to interview people. That she might be able to meet likeminded people, rather than she'd be able to assess her audience first. Rather than if she went into a job as a bank manager. She might not feel she was accepted as much as she is with it, unless she's in the media.

Int She's made such a big name for herself as well

Carol Yeah,

Int she's very popular. Right, we'll scroll down to your next image. This is the image you've picked for gay male. I do recognise this image, but I don't know where from is it from like a show?

Carol It's Catherine Tate and she's portraying what I would have said a gay man, but the gay man is obviously in denial.

Int Oh Right. Okay. looking at this image, then similar questions and just talk me through why you chose this as your representation of your gay male.

Carol I feel it's typical of a, he understands that he's possibly he is gay but then he's frightened of sharing his sexuality with everyone. The way, the tone of his voice or her voice and the speech and what she uses. And the way they're dressed as well. Quite flamboyant clothing.

Int Okay? And how do they speak? Like this bit more feminine or?

Carol Yes, yes.

Int Okay. And what kind of clothes do they wear?

Carol This character has got like quite flamboyant scarves and carries some quite... How can you say? The bags that they carry are quite loud in colour. And yeah, you know, and it's carried over the arm, similar to how the Queen carries her bag. But rather than a ruck sack or anything like that.

Int Do you think maybe these are like quite old stereotypes?

Carol Yeah.

Int We were saying about the generational things.

Carol Yeah, yeah.

Int Yeah. Like, I think I would probably have similar stereotypical images in my mind as well. And yeah, we're obviously around our age groups, I think are similar stereotypes.

Carol Yeah. And that I mean, that show was in the 90s. So, I think she picked out the whole the most prominent stereotypes of the gay male for that, that period.

Int Very similar to Little Britain as well.

Carol Yes. Exactly the same time, wasn't it

Int And obviously, they had the only gay in the village.

Carol Yeah.

Int And his character was very flamboyant. And obviously, skimpy clothes and you know, yeah, all that. So yeah, yeah. I definitely agree. That's what she was doing at the time. 100%?

Carol Yes.

Int Okay, we'll scroll down. To your, so this is your image that represent homosexuality to you. So again, could you explain to me why you selected this image?

Carol I think because the rainbows used for LGBTQ It's the main symbol. And I think if it was the NHS, it will just have NHS but gay, it's incorporating all the colours and showing that everyone's diverse and different in their own way.

Int Do you feel like this image forms part of the gay stereotype? So, say if you saw someone with a gay pride flag or anything like that, would that make you kind of identify someone's sexuality? Or?

Carol No, not especially? No. No, you just kind of if someone I mean, they might use a rainbow for another sort of cause. Yeah, but I think he predominately its used to differentiate the different types of people that we're all, we're all the same, but we're different, you know, diverse?

Int Yeah. So, I'll get my images up now. So, the images that I've selected, were taken from Google, on the first of December, so all I did was put in homosexual male stereotype and selected the first three images, and then did the same for lesbian and then the same for images that represent homosexuality. So, they're not obviously my opinion or anything. They're not my researcher's bias. They are just literally what's been taken off google.

Carol Right, yeah.

Int We'll have a little chat about these. So, we'll look at the gay male images. So, if we look at the one here on the left that says the bear, what are your thoughts about these images? Are you surprised to see an image like that for a gay male or?

Carol No, no, I think it's going back to that generation. Possibly in the 50s and 60s, it would be accepted that that, they would they like, they wear the hats and the chains and everything.

Int Okay, so do you think maybe the stereotype has shifted then, that maybe this is an older one, like You're saying like the 60s, but now it might be slightly different? Maybe?

Carol Yes. Oh Yeah, very much so. Some depend on the person though. They might feel comfortable wearing that type of outfit. Generally, on the whole I do feel like they've moved on from that.

Int Yeah, okay, cool. So why do you think this image has been labelled as representing a homosexual male? Like, what do you think about this image? And why is it obviously come up with the first image straightaway?

Carol Probably because when homosexuality was first in, well introduced, then that that's what sprung to people's minds. And it depends on who put the who put the picture on the internet as well. What age they were when they put it on?

Int Yeah, yeah. And on to the second image then so the person with the blue hair?

Carol Yeah.

Int Again, what are your thoughts about this image? And how do you think it represents homosexuality?

Carol I think that's more of a, a recent, I would say, a recent from the 2000s onwards that the use of elaborate makeup and hair colours, and that was becoming more and more widely accepted.

Int Yeah. Maybe being a bit more flamboyant.

Carol Yes, yes. Yeah.

Int And how do you think it represents someone being gay? So what? What parts of this image make you think? Oh, yes, that person must be gay.

Carol The makeup. But then, on the other hand, men just might like wearing makeup doesn't mean their gay.

Int Yes, and why do you think this has been labelled as representing the gay stereotypes of again? Why did Google obviously throw it out straight away that this is how a gay male should look?

Carol That's probably how people have been conditioned to think.

Int Yeah, Great, And the third image that came up, which I thought was really quite cool, its. Gareth Thomas.

Carol Yeah,

Int he is a rugby player.

Carol Yeah.

Int So, I'm assuming this was in some form of stereotype poster. And this was the third image that came up. So basically, stating that all gay men are feminine. Right? And then obviously, showing Gareth Thomas that he isn't, he's obviously totally opposite. A bit like what you were saying just about, obviously, we've been conditioned into this belief that gay men should be feminine.

Carol Yes, that's right.

Int Yeah. So, thinking about this image? And what are your thoughts about this image?

Carol I think he's, I think that's his perception, because it took a long time for him to come out. I think he played rugby for a long time before he actually admitted that he was homosexual. And I think he, his behaviour was based on fear, really. And he was, course he was in an occupation that was considered masculine, like rugby players and that. So, he probably felt if I do come out, how is everybody else going to react and am I going to be shunned, am I going to be dropped from the team or

Int Like present masculine appearance to a degree.

Carol Yeah. to kind of protect himself. Yes, exactly.

Int So how do you think this image would represent someone being gay? so if someone use this image, what kind of thoughts spring to mind with that?

Carol Again, that's conditioned and small mindedness.

Int Yeah. And not all gay men you don't have to be feminine like

Carol No exactly yeah

Int Great. And why do you think this has been labelled as representing gay stereotypes?

Carol Again, it's the image everyone is portrayed from the early, early years.

Int Do you feel like then maybe we are kind of conditioned to these stereotypes from an early age then like as in this is what a gay man is like, this is what a lesbian woman is like.

Carol Yeah. Yes. Part is part of the labelling theory as well isn't it, you are labelled, yeah.

Int I mean, obviously, with stereotypes like, you know, we can't help it, obviously as well, our brains take these shortcuts so that we can quickly put people into groups and, you know, protect ourselves and things like that, we can't help it. But obviously, a lot of well some of stereotypes can be quite harmful. Really?

Carol Yes, they can

Int And obviously, like we've just been saying, like, all gay men aren't feminine.

Carol No that's right

Int Yeah, there is a lot of variation in the stereotype. I'll move down to the gay female stereotype images that I found the first image that came up, she's from orange is the new black. I think she's quite a famous LGBTQ star anyway. She was also play's a lesbian character in in Orange is the new black. And so, thinking about this image, what are your thoughts about this image? Would it make you instantly think she's definitely gay? Yeah, what kind of things to spring to mind when you see this image when thinking about gay females?

Carol I think, I think from a society perception, then yes, you would automatically think that she might be a lesbian. My opinion would be perhaps she might be transgender.

Int Okay

Carol She might not actually be a lesbian just feel it feel like she might be more masculine. She might be changing. But I've never seen orange is the new black so don't know, but there is a lot of

things with TV media that you do get a lot of straight actors playing homosexual roles as well. And that's the other, the other thing to consider is that people, society might think ooh they might be secretly gay or lesbian because they're playing a role.

Int Yeah, that's a good point. Actually, you don't think about people, acting as these roles.

Carol Yeah,

Int They're not actually being that role, in real life, to a degree. So how do you think this represents someone being a lesbian? So, what parts of the image would make you think? They were a lesbian.

Carol The hairstyle and the clothes and the tattoo? Yeah, the fact says Butch.

Int So definitely, like the, the image of like, how they're dressed and their hair and things like that. So more like the sense that they're kind of masculinizing their appearance.

Carol Yes

Int Cool. So, moving down to the second image of the girl with blue hair, it seems like blue hair is a thing.

Carol Yeah

Int So, the second image, what are your thoughts about this image? So, what springs to mind when thinking about a lesbian female and this image,

Carol I don't automatically think that she's lesbian. I think she might be doing a job, like advertising clothing, or a brand of sweets or something. They've dyed her hair to match the colour of the sweets. it wouldn't automatically make me think that the girl is lesbian.

Int Right, so even like with the pride emblems in there, you know, on a t shirt and stuff that would trigger anything, for you to think that?

Carol No,

Int Oh, that's great.

Carol Like, they just like flamboyant colours, you know?

Int Yeah, so you don't feel like, obviously, that this resembles a lesbian woman, like you wouldn't look at it and think she was gay, straight away kind of thing.

Carol No, no,

Int That's really interesting. So, moving down to the third image, this was obviously a third image that popped up on Google that day. So, what are your thoughts about this image? Would you again, think that there a lesbian couple? Is there anything that jumps out from the image that stereotypically, you know, will make you think they were lesbian?

Carol No, nothing at all. If I'm honest, I'd be thinking it was. The woman on the left, my left, is a relative who she hasn't seen for a long time, or that she might be ill and have had some bad news.

Int Oh right, okay. Interesting, so there's nothing that kind of stands out to you that makes you think that they're a lesbian couple.

Carol No, no.

Int Right.

Carol It's interesting that it's picked it up as a gay stereotype, but I'm sure if I showed my sister and that they'd say the same as me.

Int That's, that's really good. Yeah. So, moving on to the images that represent homosexuality. So, the first one is RuPaul. So, it was the first image that came up, obviously he is the creator of RuPaul's drag race, and quite a huge star in the LGBTQ community. And is probably one of the first drag queens I think that, kind of got out there. So, looking at the image of RuPaul in drag, what are your thoughts about this image? Is there anything that makes you think about the gay stereotype at all?

Carol Again, No. It might be their job role, or the fact that they are, they have a relative who is homosexual or lesbian, and they might be promoting the cause type thing. They might just like

dressing up in dresses. Yeah, you know, it pays, well, to be fair, it pays the bills. I'm sure it pays a lot of his bills

Int How do you think this image would represent homosexuality? So, thinking about them as a whole? And obviously, like you selected the pride flag, how do you feel like this image would represent homosexuality?

Carol Because it's, it's the opposite. Again, it's a male in women's, what you would assume as clothing and hairstyles.

Int And maybe like you said about Ellen, as well, that he's such a prominent figure

Carol Yeah as well. Yeah, In LGBTQ. Yeah.

Int And scroll down a little bit. So, this was a second image that came up, this image was taken from I think it was a similar show to like, the Brits, like the NTA's like, those kinds of things. He was performing on stage, and he's quite a big name now in the LGBT community. Obviously, he was dancing with men and kissing men on stage. I think it caused quite a controversy at the time; I think that was maybe his plan. So, what are your thoughts about this image? You know, how do you think why do you think Google has shown me this one as representing homosexuality as a whole?

Carol It might have had the most views? Yeah, that I can think of I mean, no, I don't automatically think it, from if I were, if I was kind of like blinkered, then yes, I would say it's the clothing and his actions and that, because I'm kind of, I would presume to be broadminded I might be thinking that he was paid to do it or was just acting on stage.

Int Well, yeah, like you said before about characters and stuff. Yeah, that people do play roles, don't they?

Carol And yes, they do.

Int Definitely get what you're saying. So why do you think obviously, this has been labelled as representing homosexuality? Like, what parts of the image? Is there anything that jumps out that would obviously, apart from the kissing, because I think that's the most obvious.

Carol Yeah, the costumes more than anything.

Int Is it because they're more feminine? Or because the colours or

Carol I wouldn't say they're feminine, I would probably say they're more revealing, there's not a lot of them.

Int So, would you say that's more of a feminine attribute? Wearing less?

Carol Yes, yeah. Yeah. Now you put it like that, yeah.

Int And then this was the third image. So again, the pride flag, similar to what you selected, obviously he's wearing it round his back walking down the street. I'm not sure where, not sure if it is a pride event. So, what are your thoughts about this image? So, you know, how does it represent homosexuality?

Carol It's only the colours, like the rainbow colours, I wouldn't automatically think that he was an advocate for homosexuality or lesbianism? He might be on, coming back from a stag to do and they've just decided to put a flag round him. Yeah. Could be a few reasons why.

Int Yeah. So, you wouldn't automatically look at him and think, oh, he must be gay because he is wearing that flag?

Carol No, no.

Int So why do you think this image was selected then, Like, why would Google kind of throw this up as representing homosexuality?

Carol It is probably focused on the rainbow colours, rather than anything else? Yeah. So, like, that's all I can think of

Int Ok, that'll be all the images. So just before we kind of come away from the images, do you feel like there's been any differences in our images? So, do you feel like they're quite similar in what has been discussed? Or do you feel like there is some differences?

Carol I think your images are more with current times.

Int Okay

Carol Whereas mine, I've used Like, History, like more historic times. Yeah. Yours are more current.

Int Do you feel like the messages are still quite similar? Obviously, we've spoke about, on my images, like the effeminate, like with little NAS, obviously there's feminine there. In the gay male we spoke about like the feminine attributes again there. And so, do you think maybe even though they are years apart, our images, that that stereotype maybe is still pulled through? In a sense?

Carol Yes. It's still they're very, the thread still running through. Yeah. The feminism and their makeup and the wigs and everything and the clothes, yeah. It's still there. But just, it's portrayed differently now.

Int Yeah, I'll stop sharing my screen. There we go, I can see you again. So just closing up, some questions now. Really? So how do you think we can bring forward acceptance of homosexuality in our society so obviously we spoke about the fact that it's already very quite accepted now. But do you think there's more we could do to make that acceptance even higher?

Carol I think it's more about education and learning and actually experiential learning. Being in their, being in their shoes. Yeah. You know, put yourself in their shoes. Yeah, I could do a lot of that. Yeah.

Int Yeah. And maybe even like, I suppose like you said about education about like, from a younger age, maybe?

Carol Yeah. My youngest granddaughter is nine and she's aware of the differences and that. So, I'm thinking, Nine, maybe even younger?

Int Yeah, I remember my daughter coming out from school and saying, oh, we've learned about LGBT in PSHE today and now she's in high school they talk about it a lot.

Carol Yeah. They do.

Int Like you said its education, isn't it? the more you know, on something,

Carol Yes. Yeah. The more you learn about it. Yeah. I mean, we never did anything on that when I was at school, there's nothing like that, then.

Int No and that's why you've got people like Gareth Thomas.

Carol Yeah.

Int Because we didn't, didn't speak about it, I suppose.

Carol I think if more, I mean, there is a lot of gay footballers as well and I think if they were encouraged to speak out, it might, because they are role models, especially football is a role as well.

Int Yeah and obviously, it could encourage people that it's okay.

Carol Yeah.

Int Like you're saying, yeah, these big role models. If they had the courage, then it probably gives other people.

Carol Yes. Yeah.

Int More acceptance in a degree as well, then, especially if you've got a lot of footballers out gay. Do you think that, obviously, we mentioned before at the start about how younger people aren't stereotyping maybe as much as older generations and things. So as like time goes through? And obviously, the younger generations are coming through? Do you think there could be a possibility that the stereotype could disappear one day, or do you think they'll always be that stereotype?

Carol I think there's always going to be that, that 10, One or 10%? That will not agree with it, shall we say. But I think certainly as my grandkids grow up, then it'll just be accepted more readily than it was. And I think because like in my generation, and back from that it was illegal. So, I think that was another point as well, if anything that was illegal was frowned upon. And when

they when they lowered the consensual age, and that and they made it not a crime, I think it got really, really more accepted.

Int Yeah and just want them strength, the strength I suppose. Yeah, we Forget about things like that about it. it was illegal at one point and obviously there was a lot around the AIDS crisis and things like that. There was a lot that gave bad view on homosexuality really. So, I think that is everything covered. Is there anything else you'd like to add or any final thoughts or anything?

Carol Yeah. I was just thinking of I watched It's a sin.

Int oh, I loved it.

Carol Yeah, it was lovely. And that was kind of like, how it was. They've got that to a tee. That's how it was in that day. And then there's the film Philadelphia with Tom Hanks.

Int Yeah, I've heard about it. I haven't watched it.

Carol That's very good. Yeah, he was basically ostracised because he was gay in his job. And they were they were trying to say they weren't discriminating against him. And he took, took the firm to court. It is good.

Int Was It based on a true story that?

Carol Yes.

Int Will have to watch that as well. Definitely. I think even like about like, these films, like the media, they bring these stereotypes in there as well. Like, you know, even though we're talking about it moving forward, if they're always in television

Carol Yeah.

Int It's quite hard for us to move away.

Carol Yes, it is but yeah,

Int Yeah. Well, that's everything. I will stop the recording now.

Heterosexual Participant: Grace

Int: Even though it will be recorded all this sounds like it's not recorded. Okay, I'm going to go ahead and echo then that would be a bit annoying. Right? So, do you feel comfortable? Do you feel in a safe space where you can speak and everything?

Grace: Yep.

Int: Perfect. And so, thank you for supplying those images for me as well. I've also brought along some similar images. so, the ones that I've brought along are not my bias, I just put into Google gay stereotypes, whether that was male or female, and pick the first three. So basically, it's not my kind of researcher bias on them. Have you got any questions before we begin at all?

Grace: Nope

Int: We shall make a start with them. So firstly, I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be gay stereotypes? What do you think they are?

Grace: I think when I was looking for those images. The first thing that I thought of as one of the key stereotypes was that sort of flamboyant, if we're thinking of males, flamboyant nature that I think people associate with gay males. So that was the first thing that if I was imagining a stereotypical view, that was the first thing that came up, and then this sort of idea that that links this idea of being camp, and that's one of the identifiable characteristics, apparently, of being gay as a male. And then when I was thinking of it, in the women's side, it was very much the opposite. So, the stereotype of being quite butch, and looking more masculine in your appearance. So that was sort of my first thing that I jumped to, when I thought of what sort of images to look for and what most people think of, well, what even as a kid when I was younger, and I would have thought of a gay man, or a gay woman, or female male, what I would have imagined that to look like that was all that I had ever come across. So, I think if I think back to when I was younger, so say 10 years ago, my sort of awareness of gay people was from one person I knew was gay, because they told me, and he was very flamboyant and camp in nature.

So that was my own exposure there. And then just general depictions in the sort of media. So those very stereotype, stereotypical sort of images of masculine for females and feminine for males, if you're thinking of them being a gay person. So that's sort of what I first jumped to, I guess, that yes, perfect, main things that I thought of it first.

Int: Great, thank you. So just kind of expanding on what you've just said, really. So, when we're thinking about gay males, obviously, you mentioned them being flamboyant, possibly more on the feminine side of things. And is there anything else that kind of springs to mind about the gay male that would you say would fit into the stereotypes so maybe any physical features or emotionality, personality? Anything? Like that

Grace: Yeah, I think it's this idea of being like the female best friend, is very, very typical. So, I guess that would include having that higher level of emotionality and having that very chatty personality, perhaps, just generally fitting in with what we typically think of as more female characteristics. So those ideas around empathy and having a higher level of empathy or able to talk about your emotions more. So, I guess in terms of males, in terms of gay stereotypes, it's more in the idea of being the female best friend, I think that's so common. And you see that a lot. So yeah, definitely around those types of things. The emotionality. Personality, I think it's a difficult one, I think for people who, personally from what I've seen, people who hadn't come out yet, they were very insular and sort of, I don't know, like, they were holding back a lot of their own personality, I guess that was what was happening for them. And that contradicted the stereotypical idea of this very extroverted personality. Like we were just saying the flamboyant personality, which I did see in people who had come out. So that was a, it's a difficult one as well, because it's tricky to know, how much is the stereotype? And how much is actually how that population, maybe what their main characteristics are, or their main personality traits are? I don't know if that answered the question at all for you

Int: Definitely. How about like physical attributes then? So obviously, you mentioned again, like a more feminine side of things. What like what kind of physical attributes is it maybe what they wear or what the hair would look like and things that

Grace: Yeah, so I think maybe not so much thinking like a decade ago, I think back then, it was longer hair, maybe looking a little bit more feminine. I think nowadays people associate gay males more so with this idea of drag, I think that was one of the images that I put in as well. So, this idea of like drag, RuPaul drag race. I think those types of more extreme looks are associated with gay males a lot more now than what they were before. And I think if it's thinking physically, it's this idea of looking slightly more feminine, they might be, I don't know, some might be slimmer, for example, they may wear non typical male clothes. And then that is that a preference because of their sexuality? Or is it a preference that separate to their sexuality? I'm not sure. But like I say, in a sort of longer hair was one of the things that I could notice from a decade ago and so on. But yeah, definitely these days, I think it's more around this idea of makeup drag and those types of things, drifting into blurring the lines between what is genders gender typical of our appearance as well. So, I think those are the key physical things that I couldn't identify stereotypically, people would imagine.

Int: Yeah, perfect. So then just similar question, really, but about lesbian women instead. So, what kind of things do you think kind of fall in there with the characteristics, emotionality, things like that.

Grace: So physical attributes, like I've mentioned, I think it's that sort of butcher idea of, and not referring to what I can see, like short hair, tattoos, I think those are the two of the images that I put in, sort of this idea of having a more masculine look so on the opposite side again, so shorter hair, typically, but I think with the women, lesbians, I think we've got this idea of the feminine and the masculine lesbian. So, I guess the feminine lesbian doesn't look as obviously lesbian in the stereotypical view. So those women might not have the shorter hair, they might not have the tattoos, they might not dress in a way that is more masculine. Whereas the sort of butch lesbian

that I think we see stereotypically wears masculine type clothes, they would stay away from dresses, maybe and skirts, that's how they're represented, they have that sort of more masculine look about them. So physically, I think those are the main things, it's interesting, there's that differentiation between the two of within a relationship we stereotypically see or imagine that there is the two different sides and personality traits, I think they are less obvious or less thought off to be less obvious than gay males. I think lesbian women aren't represented as, as obviously, obviously lesbian if that makes sense. But if anything, I guess it would be, again, having those more masculine traits of looking a little bit harder and maybe being a little bit harder in their communication with other people. But I do think it's a lot less. What's the word I'm looking for? Can't think that a lot less obvious. I'll go Yeah, that's obvious in terms of presentation, and what else like personality. So personality wise, again, I don't think it's as big of an obvious thing, as we see in gay males or imagining gay males where it's, it's not that there's a massive divide between the lesbian and non-lesbian woman, especially if we're thinking of the feminine lesbian, I think that's very much similar to a non-lesbian woman, I don't think there's too much difference that we see in those stereotypes that are represented in the media, for example. But if anything, I guess it's this idea of again being masculine. This idea that women on football teams who play football they are lesbians, or that they play more masculine sports, they are lesbians, I think that's a really prominent narrative that we see those types of hobbies, and they may if thinking of jobs, they may be represented more as this sort of, or they might work on a building site. Again, those male stereotypical jobs. That certain genders we wouldn't be we wouldn't imagine seeing in that role, traditionally, and going back to the gay males as well, the same thing there, I think, think about jobs. Traditionally, it was this idea of, they go for the female jobs, their hairdressers, their flight attendants, those types of feminine roles that require a little bit more emotionality, perhaps or having those social skills or a little bit softer

Int: Perfect. That was wonderful. So, current research does suggest that homosexuality is now more accepted than it was previously. I think in a lot of literature. You can see that, and I think in general life, you can see that it is more accepting now than it was and I just wondered what your view on this is, do you think we are as accepting as we think we are like,

Grace: I think we are definitely more accepting. So again, if we sort of go back to like a decade ago, as I was saying, one of the only people that I knew that was gay, there's two people, one of them was my cousin, and we always talk about it as he was obviously gay and that, in that way, I mean, he fitted with the stereotype, it was that camp stereotype. He didn't come out until his sort of late teens; I think it was sort of 16 to 18. But my family, for example, so not me personally, but older members of my family, they didn't understand it at the time, probably a little bit upset about it. Now, it's not so much a topic of conversation. So, I think we've definitely moved on in terms of it's not the be all and end all if somebody is gay. And it's not as frowned upon, but I think older generations, I see a lot more avoidant of it now. So rather than addressing it directly as something they are uncomfortable with, there'll be a lot more avoidant in some instances, rather than learning about it. So, in that way, I wonder if we have moved on or if maybe the people who hold those negative views of homosexuality are more sort of avoiding it now because it is becoming more normal for the rest of the population. And it's sort of fringe now to frown upon those things. I think before it was fringe to be homosexual and to support that, whereas now, it's more fringe to not do that. And that's a difficult one, I guess, because it's then are they accepting or avoiding, that's a very difficult thing to separate. And then the other example I was thinking of, so I had a very close friend who came out as gay to me first, when we were about 12, probably. And again, for me, I think I was on sites such as Tumblr, and Twitter and those sites that back then, it was very talked about within that community. I think homosexuality, for me growing up in those circles, it wasn't frowned upon, it was very normal. It just wasn't something that we saw outside of those circles. And I'm not personally homosexual. It was just that that was something I was aware of, I wasn't sort of in those circles, because I belong to that

group, it was just that it was just online, it was just, we talked about it. So, for me, that person coming out wasn't a shock. For one, again, they did fit that stereotypical idea of the gay male. So that wasn't a shock to me because of that. And it took him a very long time then to come out to the rest of sort of the friend group and the school and his parents. Because, again, there was that difficulty around coming out at the time. I think now, it's definitely, I'm only speaking from personal what I've seen or what I imagine, I imagine it's slightly easier to come out because of the things around acceptance, it's so heavily talked about, I think now, in general life around acceptance, whether that's homosexuality or trans transgender communities, anything around this sort of topic of gender, sexuality, I think there's a big movement now to trying to get the wider population to accept that more. And I would say that I run in very accepting circles. So, for me, my experience is probably more positively biased because of the people that I associated myself with. But I definitely think that just generally, I've seen a positive shift towards, if not acceptance, more understanding. First, I think the first step to acceptance is understanding. And this idea that because somebody's homosexual, it doesn't really affect who they are as a person. And I think that's probably something that people have had a difficult time coming to terms of because there are these stereotypes of these people being different. So, for example, we take the gay male instance, a male traditionally, and this is why this is why people of all generations, may struggle, may struggle with this, males traditionally are very masculine, very sort of hard, they're hard working, they don't have this emotional aspect. And then if we have the gay stereotype, which quite a lot of male gay males do fit, that challenges, not only gender norms, but also this idea of who we should and shouldn't be in relationships with and I think for older generations, that's difficult. So, I definitely think we're on our way to this idea of understanding first, my generation and lower, I think is doing quite well at getting to the acceptance stage.

Int: Do you think, as those generations move up, so obviously as the older generations are kind of
Grace: dying out

Int: Yeah, then we're coming through, do you think that would definitely help acceptance? Yeah, great. So, what I'm going to do now is I'm going to share the screen and pop up your images. So, bear with me a minute. I'm using the online version of teams, and it's a bit annoying.

Grace: Yeah, definitely my own niece and nephew who are primary school just sort of later primary school age, they are so aware of all these gender and sexuality terms like some of them I don't even know, and they don't talk about it in a judgmental way. I think I've only ever heard them say judgmental things if they've heard it from an adult. So, I don't think that we are programmed to have these sorts of negative stereotypical views, I think they are definitely socially taught to us and learned. So, I definitely think from sort of speaking with children that I know of or being in a sort of setting with where children are there, we don't see these insults anymore, as much as we used when I was a child for certain around sort of that so gay or using it as a slander term. I've heard it been used still but I think it's a lot less than what I personally experienced. So, I've got a lot of hope that as, as you were saying, just as the older generation sort of die out, and we move on towards the future, and the younger generations, they grow up, hopefully, it will just be a generational thing. And we will learn socially, to sort of accept and understand as we pass that down through the generations, yeah. And one of the things that I think is really, really important is the discourse in schools around this. So, when I was at school, sort of sexual health was talked about very briefly and very scientifically, I think now there's a lot more around identity formation and relationships that aren't just your typical sort of heterosexual relationship, traditional relationships. And I think that's super important for education purposes. And teaching children that there's not just one type of sexuality, there's not just one type of relationship. So yeah, I think that's super, super important. Moving forward to increase acceptance. That's okay,

Int: you might see yourself briefly. Can you see your images?

Grace: Yes, I can see it.

Int: Lovely. So, I'm going to start off with the gay stereotype.

Grace: Oh, I forgot a couple of things I thought of here actually.

Int: So, talking about so basically, what we're going to do is just going to go through each image and it just like you just to talk me through why you selected it, really. I can't actually see you now on the screen because I'm online version. So, if you need anything, just give me a shout or anything like that to let me know. Right, so looking at your first image, then the image of the glitter.

Grace: Yeah.

Int: What made you choose this as your representation of the gay male stereotype.

Grace: So, it's difficult to type and flamboyant and get something that came back as what I was thinking of. So, this idea of flamboyancy in terms of being colourful, extroverted, being noticeable. I think that was the idea that I was trying to portray with the glitter and also this idea of glitter being traditionally feminine, and with makeup and those types of things. So that image was trying to depict some sort of flamboyancy, or sort of image-based representation of the gay stereotype in males. So, I hope that summarises it clearly.

Int: Yeah, as soon as I saw the glitter, I knew exactly. I was like, Yeah, I know where she's going with this.

Grace: So, this next one, this one I forgot that I'd put in here. So, this is an idea that, really, I find very interesting, I think, whether it's males or females, I think gay people are sexualized, like hyper sexualized. In the media, in films, in pornography, for example, I know that that's a really big thing, especially with females, this idea of that being hyper sexualized if there's two women who are interacting in a sexual way. I think for males, it's a very image based, so for example, let me go back to that sort of instance of the friend that I had at school, I know that he really struggled as a gay male, because he felt that and he expressed this to me, he felt that there was a lot of pressure on image in the gay male community from himself and others around him and what he'd seen, and also representations of gay males that he'd seen whether that was on social media sites, maybe it was pornography, in the media, any of those types of things. It was this idea of being feminine, but at the same time being sort of this handsome man, and I just find it really interesting this idea of hyper sexualization of homosexual people and that's what I was trying to depict with this image. It was very difficult searching topless man.

Int: And I think like the whole groomed thing as well, like even

Grace: Yes

Int: obviously the body image is a massive thing within the gay male community, but also that groomed that you've got to look.

Grace: It's a very feminine thing, isn't it? This grooming aspect, I think it's funny now because it's trickling into the heterosexual population, where it's also becoming quite trendy to be well groomed. And, for example, my brother is heterosexual, but he is so focused on sort of his appearance, how his hair looks. I think traditionally, that was not the norm. If we go back a few decades, men were quite rugged and it wasn't so much about how they looked and being prim and proper, but now there's definitely more of a focus on that, and especially for the gay males, I think this idea of being well groomed, and then you bring in this idea of also wearing makeup. So that's another sort of add on to that, that you may see in some gay males, we may associate with gay males, more so than a heterosexual male, for example.

Int: That's really interesting. Then moving down to your third image, yes, this image.

Grace: So, this is again, sort of around the idea of the flamboyancy, the campness, but this idea of being quite dramatic. And I think, for example, in the media the gay male in any film, in any TV show is very in your face, very dramatic, very flamboyant. This general idea that it's so obvious that they are gay, and in the real world, obviously, that's not the case all the time. Some people do fit that stereotype, which is why I put it on here, but I just find it so interesting, because I wonder, and I don't personally know, I wonder what percentage of the population does fit that

stereotype versus the people who don't. And I don't know if this is overrepresented in the media, this idea of the sort of dramatic gay male. And I think this again, relates this idea of being the female best friend, females are traditionally thought of to be hyper emotional, dramatic, and they have that sort of emotional aspect a lot more in their characters in the media as well. So, for then, having the gay male who usually the female's best friend in the movie, or the TV show, they also fit this idea of being super dramatic, or over the top. That's what I was depicting with that image.

Int: Yeah, I think the media really pushed that, the gay male stereotype and actually, like you said, probably none of my gay male friends are like that

Grace: Yeah, if they are, it's not anywhere near to the extent that we see it sort of portrayed in the media. And then also, I have heterosexual friends, even my own partner can be quite dramatic at times. Yeah. So that again, and I think it's very quick for people to jump to oh, that's a little bit gay, isn't it? I've heard that from older generations, so many times when a male is a little bit dramatic, or a little bit too emotional. So, I definitely think we've got this idea of emotion being linked to being more feminine, maybe drifting into the sort of, are they gay idea.

Int: And that's what's caused so much trouble with obviously men not displaying these emotions, and then

Grace: yeah,

Int: leading into mental health, but that's another talk. That's part of the issue isn't it really, that men aren't allowed to be emotional, really. So, I'm just going to scroll back up to your lesbian stereotype images,

Grace: I found this one a lot more difficult. So, it's the fourth one and the one below. I found this a lot more difficult. So, as I was saying before, I think the gay male stereotype personally has a lot more to it, there's a lot more representation of it. I don't think we see gay women in the media as much for example, or traditionally, we didn't, I think that's coming through a lot more now, but it's still not the same representation. And maybe that's why I also had a hard time thinking of things to sort of that are related to lesbian women. And I also don't have that many people that I know that are lesbian women, so I have very little in my own life to go off on. So, the things that I chose here, were first of all, this idea of tattooing, I guess this doesn't really represent tattooing, because lots of people have tattoos. And it's not that it's a gay thing to get tattoos, but I think it's this idea of being the lesbian female in the media, like we're talking about, for example, would be really heavily tattooed, and that's how you would identify them, or they'd have very short hair, and that's how you identify them. This idea of being more masculine, I think it's about the type of tattoos as well. I think they're represented a lot of the time as having, like in this picture, this sort of all body tattoos or maybe traditionally like sleeve tattoos, although now heterosexual women, a lot of heterosexual women have sleeve tattoos. So, I think this idea of being heavily tattooed is something that is related to lesbian women. And maybe it's filtering out a little bit as we move on in time because a lot more heterosexual women, women are being more heavily tattooed as well. But again, I think it more so relates to this idea of having a more masculine look to yourself

Int: Because obviously back in the day, only men got tattooed really? Yeah, it wasn't a very feminine thing to do like even my Nan now, when I have a new tattoo, she's like, oh, God's sake Laura, another one, why? I'm like it's not your body, don't worry about it,

Grace: I think shows, it's like showing bare skin without tattoos on is quite feminine in traditional thinking. So, this idea of covering up your skin, with tattoos maybe is more masculine in nature. But yeah, I think again, another thing that as we move on, perhaps is filtering out ever so slightly. Yeah, that was one of the physical things I thought of. And then the traditional short haircut, but I think this is a, this is a bit of a tricky one, because I think you've got the feminine lesbian and the masculine lesbian if we think of a traditional way of thinking towards a homosexual couple. And, and also feeding into that, whenever I have known somebody to come out as lesbian, or I've seen maybe a celebrity come out as a lesbian, that that's something that is

usually also followed by some sort of appearance change. And I think traditionally, whether lesbian women were doing this because they also have the stereotype or because they wanted to. Either way, it was in a lot of instances followed by a very short haircut. Again, I don't know if that's because even maybe homosexual people themselves have these stereotypes ingrained within their minds because you don't come out as soon as you're born, for example, you don't maybe know that about yourself yet. And you have this time in your life when you're fed the stereotypes. So, I find it very interesting in that I do see, and I have seen, well, women have come out as this lesbian, they've then got a short haircut, or they've got a short haircut, people then say, Oh, that's interesting. And then they come out as lesbian. But again, I don't know if that is something that they wanted to do just independently of their sexuality, or if it is linked to their sexuality, I think that's a really interesting thing to maybe explore or distinguish between. But yeah again, I think, another image based physical based thing where if somebody, for example, when I was younger, if a girl came to school, and they cut all their hair off, a woman, would be questioned, as to say, oh, that's interesting. That's quite a masculine look that you've got going on there. But then again, I know lots of women who have short pixie cuts, and they look, you wouldn't, it also depends on their personality characteristics at the same time, because some women you wouldn't ask that question. But yeah, again, this idea of having a more masculine trait, I guess, and then short hair is traditionally thought of to be more masculine

Int: You saying about that sudden change in appearance, I've read some research only recently and they basically stated we're all subjected to the same stereotypes. Why would people who then come out gay, have any other idea? So, they kind of come out gay and think, well, I need to be like that, then because that's definitely me. Yeah. So, they're like, that's what I need to look like.

Grace: I find that so interesting. Yeah. So, I was trying to sort of express this idea of we're all like you say, exposed to the same things. And I wonder over time, as maybe stereotypes die out a little bit, what the gay woman and the gay man will look like when they come out? Will they be different? What they like physically what they choose to represent themselves like? Yeah, really, really interesting to think of

Int: How will it change?

Grace: Yeah, and what is the cause and effect? Is it that homosexual people want to look that way and that's why they do it, and then that has the knock on effect of the stereotype, or is it that we have the stereotype and then that leads to homosexual people adopting a certain look, it's a really tricky one, I think, to distinguish in each individual case, but you're definitely right, in that we're all exposed to the same things. We're obviously got those ingrained very deep within us.

Int: Just scrolling up to your homosexuality images.

Grace: Yeah.

Int: So obviously, we've got the rainbow. Why did you pick that one?

Grace: Yeah, I think that's really, really prominent in today's society. It's not something that I was probably seen till the last five years. I definitely didn't see it as a kid. Until oh actually, so the last five years in a really prominent way, I actually used to go to gay pride as a sort of 14 15 16-year-old, So 10 years ago ish. And I'd see it there, but it wasn't something that I think was really heavily presented in the media, for example, it wasn't everywhere, like we see today. So that's something that I think is now very, very heavily related to homosexuality or just general sort of gender equality, sexualities, and things like that of that nature. So, yeah, it's an interesting one, I think it's really important to have a symbol, because obviously, it's something that you use to get people's attention. It's something that you use to represent this movement in all different ways. So, whether you're in person at an event, whether you're reading an article or watching a TV show, that being there is so implicitly linked in your mind to rights and equality. So that's why I chose the rainbow, think it's quite normal, quite a common one to see

Int: It is worldwide as well. You could go anywhere, like if I went abroad and saw a cafe with a rainbow flag outside, I'm more likely to go in there, because I am allowed here, you know, I mean

Grace: Yeah, I think another thing actually, for thinking back to homosexual individuals, you'll see them quite a lot of them were the rainbow in their appearance, to signify maybe that they are homosexual, or that they are obviously, campaigning for homosexual rights. Maybe there's lots of different things that that could signify. But it's something that you see a lot more nowadays that people actually wear as well.

Int: My watch strap is a rainbow

Grace: it is lovely. Yeah, I think it's definitely a very prominent image in the sort of movement now.

Int: So then, moving over to image to the right of that the fight today for a better tomorrow.

Grace: Yeah. So, I think one thing that I think is super important, and that I'm really glad that I've seen a lot more of in the last decade or so is this sort of campaigning and fighting for rights, not that anyone should ever fight for their rights. But it's really important, obviously, I think there's a bigger movement. Now for this, even from heterosexual individuals getting behind this movement as well. It's not just the people who are involved in that as an issue who are campaigning for that. So, I associate homosexuality or just general gender equality, sexuality, equality, as this idea of being quite strong and resilient, Now I know that individually that is very, very difficult and it's something that individually people struggle with, but I think there's power in numbers. And I think people coming together is really, really important and really powerful as well, I think I've seen a lot more of that over the last decade. I remember, for example, going to gay pride in Birmingham 10 years ago and it was mainly homosexual people who went there. So as a heterosexual person going, and if I'm honest, as I went with my friend who was homosexual, the male I spoke about, but I was going mainly just to see what was going on, because it wasn't something I'd really been exposed to before and also because there was lots of food and music and I thought, Okay, let's go along and we can have a nice time. But what I actually saw there was, it was just really nice to see people coming together. And also, there was quite a lot of campaigning in this space, for example, with the image that I've selected with sort of placards and things like that. But I always associate this with being quite peaceful, and obviously quite driven, but quite a peaceful sort of protest in a way.

Int: It's like a celebration, isn't it? Like,

Grace: yeah,

Int: A day at prides just a big party and celebrating and like you said, everyone's so nice, like, never get any trouble. It's just really nice.

Grace: I had a lovely time I went a couple of years in a row from that. It's, it's really important, I think, and I think I'm really glad that I've seen more of it over the last few years, and also that it's had a bigger following in terms of campaigning and things like that. But also, like you say, these events that we put on the full of celebrating gender and sexuality. I think they're also quite open to non-homosexual individuals, heterosexual individuals. And I think that's really important in encouraging the movement in obviously being, these things are for people of a minority, but they don't, I don't see them to exclude people who aren't in that minority. Like it's something that we should all be getting behind. Yeah, that's what I was sort of thinking about with that image.

Int: Perfect. And then your final image there

Grace: RuPaul's drag race and just general drag just sort of this, this obviously doesn't apply to all homosexual people at all. But I think it's very, and this is one that I think is a lot more recent. This is a lot more recent in terms of a stereotype. I think it's from RuPaul's drag race, mainly being quite a popular show now. And we think, for example, gay bars, or going clubbing to a gay club, I think this is the thing that people think about a lot more, now. It's not just a club,

where gay people go, it's this idea of, it's a club where maybe you have a drag artist on who's, it's this idea of flamboyancy, again, and drama. I think this is one of the things that is actually a really recent stereotype or a really recent sort of what's the word, something that we relate to homosexuality? And so yeah, I think it depicts this idea of flamboyance and drama, which is probably why it's been, it's such a prominent stereotype now, because it fits with the old stereotypes that people had. So, it's just sort of like an add on, like, moving on from those stereotypes that we already held. like you said, RuPaul is so big now. Like, it's every that shows in every single country. So, I think in terms of the things we do to increase visibility, and inclusivity, we also need to be very careful that they're not playing into unhelpful things like this. And so, I think there's two sides of the coin with RuPaul drag race as a particular example, because it's great to see a lot more sort of acceptance around drag in particular, and also just sexuality and gender, blurring the lines of what we've traditionally had. But on the other hand, it can be a little bit problematic in terms of it definitely feeds into this idea of dramatic, sort of homosexuals, or all homosexuals loving drag and wearing makeup and being these really dramatic, emotional characters. So yeah, that's a really tricky one. I'm not sure if it's more helpful than not

Int: If it's if it's helpful or hindering.

Grace: Yes

Int: definitely. Right. So, I'm just going to switch over to my images now.

Grace: Yep.

Int: Okay, so like I said, I did just type gay male stereotypes. I did this on the first of December, last year, and I just selected the first three images for each. So really, I was going to ask you a few questions about these images that Google threw up at me really. So, looking at the first image, the one that says the bear, what are your thoughts about this image? And how do you think it represents the gay male stereotype?

Grace: Yeah, I glad you pulled this one up, actually, because it's since I want to show that I forgot. So again, this ties into the sexual hyper sexualizing idea that I brought up earlier. So obviously, the image that you can see there is in leather, some sort of bondage type looking outfit, very hyper sexualized in terms of representation of actual sort of what they're wearing there. And then this idea of, I don't know too much about it. So, I'm not going to talk like I'm educated, but this idea that every gay male is a particular type of gay male. So, I know that there is bears, an otter, things like that, which represent who you are as a gay male. So not only do we have gay males, but we also now have specific types of gay males. And I don't think this is something that I see, as a heterosexual person commenting on gay people. It's something that I imagine is from the gay community itself. Again, I don't know how helpful or hindering that is, I don't, I'm not a homosexual person. So, I don't know if people like this or not. I find it very interesting. And I imagine as well that these subgroups are related to the idea of sex and relationships. So, it ties in again, to this hyper sexualization of homosexual people. But yeah, I think that, again, especially the outfit that depicts what I was talking about earlier, and it might not be the sort of Slim, muscular, well-groomed model that I showed, it could be the opposite way where there, maybe, for example, the bears we're depicting in this image, but it's still this idea of being hyper sexualized, and just in general, as a gay person.

Int: Yeah. And then moving over to the image on the right, the person with the blue hair.

Grace: Yeah.

Int: What are your thoughts about this image and how do you think that I represent a gay male stereotype?

Grace: Yeah, so again, quite similar in terms of the makeup. And maybe that relates a little bit to this idea of, for example, drag race or just being well groomed, being more feminine. The blue hair I find really interesting because I see a lot of homosexual people who have very colourful hair. Now, I don't know, if I actually would have traditionally likened that are related that to

homosexuality, I don't know if it's about being more visible, I don't know if it represents particular, maybe it's to do with colours of the flag. I'm not sure what, sort of what's driven that as a something that homosexual people do, or as a stereotype, it wasn't something that I used to see, to be honest, but it's it's something that I've seen a lot more now. And I think, stereotypically, we think of seeing this a lot more in homosexual populations than heterosexual populations, this sort of garish hair colour or dramatic hair colour, again, tying into this idea of the dramatic stereotype, I guess, or the sort of very flamboyant stereotype.

Int: Great, so I'm just going to scroll down slightly there. So, I found this one quite interesting. I'm assuming it was from a stereotypes campaign of some sorts.

Grace: That's the rugby player who came out as gay not long ago, yeah.

Int: Gareth Thomas. let me zoom in a little for you. So yeah, it's Gareth Thomas. And it's basically obviously stating that all gay men are feminine, right, and obviously he isn't, he's very masculine. And so why do you think Google gave me this image? Why do you think it threw it up as a gay man stereotype?

Grace: I think, like I was saying, there's definitely a movement now towards this being something that's more accepting. And I think with that has come a lot of people coming out here in the media in these types of sports, for example. But it's still the minority as well. You don't see this, I think, anywhere, so I think there's a lot more homosexual people, particularly in sport than what we know of who have, like, come out themselves in the media. I think Google probably threw this up as something that is obviously quite a hot topic at the moment, this idea of challenging stereotypes, challenging gender typical views and applying those to sexualities. So, I assume that Google threw this up because it is quite hot topic in terms of challenging those things. And also, I think it's, it's important as well, that we have people like Gareth Thomas coming out and challenging those stereotypes. And yeah, I think the main reason Google probably threw this up is because it is quite, there's quite a push, I think, to challenge those stereotypes at the moment. And particularly people coming out wanting to challenge those stereotypes as well

Int: I saw yesterday that a footballer came out yesterday. But honestly, they made such a big thing about it. Like I saw it on each news, you know, like they show different news, like six, half past and whatever. And they showed it on there. Yeah, went out in the car and it was on the radio. And they made such a big thing about this man coming out gay, and he was a premier league footballer, and I actually said to my wife, I was like, why they making it such a big thing?

Grace: Yeah. why is it news?

Int: Yeah, like,

Grace: to me, it's not news anymore, it is like no one has come out before

Int: They kind of made it, you know, I mean, like this very masculine, top, top of the scale footballer. Oh, my life. Yeah.

Grace: And I don't understand it. I remember when Philip Schofield came out and that's, I thought, he like, if we think about stereotypes, he does and he doesn't fit it. It was that he's sort of in the middle. But anyway, not thinking stereotypes, away from that. I found it really odd that it was a thing that he had to announce like that. I know that it was mainly driven by the fact he had a wife and children, I guess. But I found it so interesting, the way that it was. Obviously, he did some sort of press release about it. He talked about it on this morning, but then the sort of media storm around it. I find it so interesting. I think for him, it was maybe something that was more heavily talked about because he was previously married and being in a heterosexual relationship, but I still found it so interesting that it was such a big announcement and also that he, I don't know, I don't know his motives, but that he made it a big announcement. I don't know if it was important for him to do that because it was important to him if it was important to his family. I don't know if that was the case. But I find it really interesting. And I think a lot of these cases it's the media making it a massive deal. More so than the person making a deal of their

own sexuality in that way, for example, this poster, I don't think Thomas is making a big deal out of his own sexuality. I think he's making a big deal about the stereotypes and challenging those and I think the media did the opposite where they focus on the person as if you can't believe that that particular person is gay, depending on, yeah, it just, I think it so depends on the discourse around that person as well because if somebody in the more feminine profession came out, I don't think it'd be is big news. But a sportsman, it seems to be a big thing, yeah, definitely.

Int: You couldn't get any more masculine than rugby. So just going to scroll down again. So, these are the gay female stereotype. Yep. So, the first image that came up was Lea DeLaria from *Orange Is the New Black*. And so why do you think this would be kind of shown as the lesbian stereotype?

Grace: I think it depicts the things what I picked up on earlier about the short hair and the tattoos and obviously in the tattoo here it says butch and this idea that there is a butch lesbian stereotype. And I think the feminine lesbian stereotype is not a big stereotype anyway, but it's definitely something that's more recent, I don't think there's a, I think it's always been traditionally this butch lesbian idea. And actually, you mentioned orange is the new black just reminded me of something that I think lesbian women are also associated more with crime than non-lesbian women, which is really interesting, because I think that's coming from the fact that males are associated more with crime than women. So, the lesbian female is traditionally thought of as quite masculine. Therefore, because masculine people may commit or may be more prone to getting involved with crime, therefore, the lesbian woman who is Butch is maybe more so likened to criminals, I just find that so interesting, really. I think and especially, I haven't watched orange is and new black for years. So, it's I can't really remember too much. But I know that if you watch a prison drama, a women's prison drama, a lot of the women in there are depicted as lesbians, or they engage in lesbian sexual activity, for example. So, I think that's another stereotype that we have, and I do think, from the gender stereotype of males being whether they're more likely to commit a crime, or they're sort of I don't know, they're overrepresented. I don't know what the case there, but it does link I think, to the gender stereotypes or the gender norms of crime.

Int: Yeah. Perfect. Thank you. So then just moving down to the next image. So blue hair again. Why do you think Google gave this as the lesbian stereotype what parts of the image?

Grace: I think it's the short hair again, but also the general sort of rainbow-ness, this rainbow-ness, transcribe that. The rainbow being used in this image, so on the top and on the lollipops, for example, the person smiling, I guess that's to represent that this is sort of a happy thing to represent it's something to be celebrated. But I think it's mainly the short hair here that's been depicted. And the colourfulness of the hair like I was saying before, I don't think that's male or female. In terms of homosexuality, I don't think it's lesbian or gay. I think it's just something that is maybe homosexual in terms of stereotype regardless of gender, but I'm not sure why or when that started. It's just something that I've definitely seen more over the last few years.

Int: Yeah, perfect. And then the final image for the lesbian stereotype was the two women together. So, what are your thoughts about this image?

Grace: I think this is interesting. I think we are definitely more comfortable with seeing lesbian women together in the media, then we are to see gay men together in the media still. And so, I think that I'm not surprised, I'm not very surprised that this came up as something where the two women are obviously looking quite intimately with one another. They are quite close; they look quite loving towards one another. So, I'm not surprised. This was one of the first images that came up. I think that that's more, more seen, more, what's the word, more heavily represented in the media for lesbians than gay males. And I also think it's quite interesting because this image does depict, to some extent, the butch and feminine stereotype. So, the woman on the left has slightly shorter hair, she would arguably be the more butch type of lesbian and then the woman on the right, is what you would see as a normal heterosexual woman. I think not the most obvious

stereotypically what you would say as a lesbian woman. So, she's the more feminine type of lesbian but yeah, I think most images would depict this, of sort of having both sides of the coin there.

Int: I think as well with like you are saying about, it's okay for women in the media, I think because girls are like that with each other anyway, like, when you think like,

Grace: Yes

Int: even if you're heterosexual, like, you go to the toilet together, you hold hands, you hug, like, I hug and kiss my girl mates.

Grace: Yeah, I kiss my girlfriends at parties and like, it's, and as I said, I am heterosexual, I've never had the interest in having a relationship. But I definitely think women are more comfortable with their sexuality. For one, they would definitely entertain the idea much more explore that idea a lot more readily than males would. I definitely think you're right; I think as women, we are already more comfortable with the idea.

Int: Like its ok to do this kind of things like especially in the media, like images like this, like, I don't think you'd see many images of two men like this

Grace: no, and if we're thinking of who's watching these things, so say, for example, a TV show, and we see two women together, the female population watching that, as you said, they're already exposed to that in terms of they're probably more comfortable with viewing something like that, because it's something that in everyday lives, we as women are just closer to each other, typically, but then we have men and I think if we think about this, versus like sort of gay males versus lesbian females. Even men would be more comfortable with watching the lesbian females because they're hyper sexualized as well. So, it's not that sort of, oh my god, I can't believe they're kissing. Not that all men think that that's a turn on to see two women kissing, but it's more accepted within the male circle to see two women kissing. So, if that's represented in the media, that's fine for both parties. So, the females are watching that and being more accepting. Males are watching that and be more accepting both for different reasons. I definitely think this is more heavily accepted than when we see gay men. But I find it interesting that I think gay men are still represented more in TV shows and movies, even though that's the case. Yeah, I don't know why that is still the case when actually I think lesbian couples are more readily accepted in the media.

Int: Yeah, like, easily accepted by both parties. So just scrolling down slightly, then. So, the homosexual stereotype, obviously RuPaul came up first. And so, what are your thoughts about RuPaul? obviously, we spoke about RuPaul quite a lot. So, I don't know if you just wanted to add anything else to it, and maybe why he would come up as the homosexual stereotype.

Grace: I think I've addressed most of my thoughts on it. But I think Google probably threw this up because he is sort of an icon. I don't know if you're not in a massively positive way. Like we were saying, there's two sides to this, but he's an icon in terms of gender and sexuality. And I think he, him and his show has brought a lot of conversation around gender and sexuality. So yeah, I think he's very, very current. And I'm not surprised that Google put him first. So yeah, I think that's probably why, he's very, very popular at the moment, quite an icon in that field. But yeah, I think I've expressed most of my thoughts about him

Int: I think I'd be more surprised if RuPaul hadn't come up, I'd be like there is something wrong with Google. So, scrolling down to the second image, so the next image that came up was little NAS X. And I'm assuming this is from a show that they did maybe an award show or something. I'm not quite sure. But yeah, this was a second image that came up. So, what are your thoughts about this? And why do you think it represents the homosexual stereotype?

Grace: I think again, probably the fact that that's quite a, for some people, that's quite a shocking thing to see. And when you scroll down, I felt shocked a bit not because it was gay man, because he was really snogging that person.

Int: Yeah.

Grace: So, I think just generally, we're a bit shocked by public displays of affection anyway. And then on top of that, this is obviously quite a statement, I would say, little NAS X being, sort of, a homosexual man, and knowing that a lot of that audience probably would be a bit uncomfortable with that because of the stereotypes or sort of stereotypical prejudiced views. So, I think it's maybe because it was some sort of statement. Doing this in the first place. I think in terms of the physical attributes, we can see them, and they've got their tops off, which I think is quite typical of males in the media anyway, but definitely, like I was saying with sort of representations of gay males being hyper sexualized. And then I think you look at the man on the left there, he's looking quite emotional and sort of leaning on little NAS X. I think that's quite a feminine, feminine way of interacting with each other. So, I think, yeah, it's probably why google threw this up, mainly because he's quite popular and well known now and it's quite a statement to make and do this, still, even now, in a show like this. So, I think those are the main observations I've got.

Int: Yeah, great, perfect. And then the final image, is someone walking down the street with a pride flag. So, what are your thoughts about this one? How do you think it represents homosexuality?

Grace: like we've said, I think the flag is a very iconic symbol now for homosexuality. I think it's trying to find its place in the world, I find this image quite interesting, because the rest of it is quite grey and dull, and then there's this person with the flag. And I think the flag is interesting, because it's quite in your face, it's quite obvious. It's not something that goes on in the background, you see it, and you see it very clearly. I think that's needed, as we've spoken about for this movement. But also, it may be this is just me type of hypotheticalising, is that even a word, but it could perhaps be tying into those stereotypes of being quite flamboyant and dramatic in one way. So, I think that's interesting as well, because the world is typically quite dull and grey, whereas the pride flag is very much the opposite. Yeah, and I think, obviously, in this image, you can see they very much stand stands out. And like we mentioned, it stands out everywhere now and you notice it very, very quickly. As a heterosexual person, maybe I don't notice it as much as a homosexual person, like you were saying, if you walk past the cafe, and they had a pride flag, outside you might be more likely to go in as a homosexual. I think it's definitely just super visible. Yeah, in comparison to the rest of the world anyway.

Int: So, I am, that's yeah, that's all those images. So let me just stop sharing the screen. You'll see yourself briefly again. We're back to normal now. Yeah. Perfect. So just a few closing questions then now really? Do you feel that there were any real differences between our images? Or do you feel like they were quite similar? And maybe why do you think they were?

Grace: I think they were quite similar, and I think that's because even though I don't think I hold prejudiced views, I can definitely very quickly notice a stereotype and obviously, Google, throwing up their stereotypical images, is going to relate to what I think because that's what I was brought up with to know as a stereotype. And I think it's what a lot of people of, particularly our generation, sort of 20 and over, I'd say, even just that sort of generation would have been exposed to those stereotypes, they're still quite prominent. So, I think things like, even though things like the pride flag and RuPaul are very, very current, and new. Obviously, they still link to the stereotypes we held before. So, I think it's not surprising that we had quite similar images there. And I think anything that you did, that was different to mine is just something that I forgot that actually I did have as a stereotypical view in my head. Yeah, I think overall, they were quite similar.

Int: Yeah, and I think that, like we mentioned before, I think media plays such a large part in that, doesn't it?

Grace: Definitely. Yeah.

Int: The more we spoke about it just I was thinking like, media, is such an impact on the gay stereotype.

Grace: Yeah, definitely because I only, like I said, I only know, a handful of gay people. And that can't make, and not all of those people fit the stereotype. So, I've got direct contradictions there to the stereotype, yet I'm still aware of the stereotype. And that's because of the media, giving that to me and sort of expressing that to me through all of my childhood and even now. So yeah, it's interesting, because even when you know of people who perhaps don't fit the stereotype, you still are aware of that, and it's still quite prominent because of the things that you're exposed to like the media.

Int: Yeah, definitely. So just my final question, now, it's around acceptance. So how do you think that we could maybe bring forward acceptance like before, obviously, we said, we felt like, you know, we are accepting, but there are still gaps, and there's still maybe a way to go. So, what kind of things do you think would help?

Grace: So, I, I had quite a pessimistic view on this before. I used to think, oh, it will just be something that we're going to have to wait to die out. And I think that's quite sad. But now, I think I mentioned it briefly before. I think the key thing in all in all populations, all ages, is education. Anyway, I still think it will be a case of waiting for a lot of this to die out, and in that way, I think it's really important that we are educating children. children, children's minds are so blank, they do not have a prejudice view preset for them. They only have what we give to them what we teach them and what we expose them to. So, I think, ultimately what is needed is education that is accepting and inclusive. And I think that will start, probably, first of all with schools, and also then involving parents within that education. Because there's no point in, there is little point, not no point, there's little point in schools delivering this education if the child is going to go home and hear from their parents very prejudiced and discriminatory views. So, I think it's about educating parents of children now and in the future, as well as children themselves. So that this becomes something that they are exposed to in all of their main environments, but in more of an exploratory way. There's not like a right or wrong, there's just we sort of have these different types of sexualities, or these different types of genders, for example. And that's how it is. And so, I think that's the main thing that I think will be necessary, I don't have a lot of hope for the older generations who hold very stereotypical, prejudiced views. I think that's a tricky one because when you have gone 60 years, for example, with a stereotypical prejudice view, trying to change that, and it's the same as something so mundane like a health behaviour like smoking, if someone smokes for sixty years, and you tell them now that it's bad for their health, and they've been told 30 years ago, it wasn't that bad and everybody did this. It's something that they'll, they'll say, to go and stick it, they won't listen to that, because it's something that they truly believe in, and they've done forever. Now, why should I change? That's a bit of a shame. I'm not saying that older people can't change their views. I've seen it happen. But I think it's a lot more difficult and our efforts would definitely be wasted, focusing on the older generations. Rather than trying to teach the younger generations, we have a tricky spot in the middle. So, I'm 24. I have not so much my age, I think, but slightly older. People like 40's, so I think slightly older. I think that's a tricky one, because I think you have a mix, that a bigger mix there between accepting and non-accepting individuals. I think, below that you have a lot more acceptance. But in that generation, it's difficult because those people will be around for a long time still. And they're going to have a very direct impact upon the experience of homosexual individuals. But it's a very tricky one, because they are of a mid-range sort of age genre. And trying to tackle that is going to be tricky. And I think the only way we can do that is to continue to represent people in the media in a more non stereotypical fashion. I don't think that stereotypes and representing stereotypes is particularly helpful. Obviously, some people do fit them, and we can't help that we also need to represent people who are not of the stereotype. And it's really useful having people come out who don't fit that stereotype, for example, making sure that when people cast movies and TV shows, they're not just casting for a stereotype. The character might be gay, but that's not them. They are not gay, like yeah, it's tricky, I think, to distinguish the person from

their sexuality. And some people like to have that as what they are, that might be something they identify as, as their self, that is what they are as a person. But some people don't want to just be Oh, that's Laura and she's lesbian. Like that's, It's not your identity.

Int: One of my really good friends does it all the time. Yeah. This is my best mate, Laura. She's gay.

Grace: Yeah, and it's this idea of like, when you're describing people, oh, she's the gay one. Like, as if that's all that you are. And I think what we need to move away from is that sort of you are gay and nothing else type mentality, like, you are Laura, and you're really funny and you're really easy to talk to you like those types of things. Like, what someone would talk about me, like they would say, my characteristics, they won't say, oh, that's Holly, and she's straight. Like, that's not what's going to happen. Yeah. I think it's important that whilst those stereotypes will, some people will fit them, and they will be prevalent in some way. We're not just focusing on those, we're representing people as more than what their sexuality is, it's obviously a very big thing, because we need to make sure we're challenging stereotypes and prejudice views, but it's not what people should be as a person and not anything more.

Int: I think we, because we're obviously accepting and as we have children or influence children, hopefully that will, obviously my daughter, she's very open, very open minded about everything. I mean, she's got lesbian parents. She lives with us full time, you know, I mean, yeah, she's like, her mom is doing a PhD in gender and sexuality.

Grace: that's the thing it sort of that being exposed to those things. And, for example, with my family, there's not a lot of gay individuals, there's a few, my niece and nephew who are 11, and eight, and they don't have a massive amount of exposure to gay people directly. But when we talk about it, we don't make it a big deal. I think that's also a big thing. And that it's not something that is frowned upon. And I think it's really harmful if we continue to have jokes such as aww, is that you're, if it's like, my nephew, is that your boyfriend? Aww do you love him? Because then it's quite, that that child feels very embarrassed already as if it's a bad thing. Whereas now I like the discourse where, for example, I see parents of young children being like, oh, is that your, do you have a boyfriend or a girlfriend? Like, it's just normal to ask that question? It's not, do you have a girlfriend? Do you have a boyfriend? If you're male or female? One or the other? It's, you can have either I think making it super normalised is what's really important with children

Int: so much easier for the child if they are gay. Yeah, and because these are all along, if you've been asked if your boyfriend or girlfriend, and eventually you go a girlfriend,

Grace: yeah, it's not a big deal. And, again, this, it's, even if you don't say to a child, being gay is bad, the way you act towards a gay person or about, talk about gay people, the child will pick up on those things, the way that you talk about those people, the way that you act towards those people, and they will automatically have a negative or positive association with being gay. So, whether they are or not, it's going to be important, because if they are gay, then they can come out and hopefully have a really positive experience of that. If they aren't gay, at least they'll go into the world and not having a prejudice view from you as parents, and if they have a friend who comes out to them that will be normal and like it, it's a sort of domino effect of acceptance then. So yeah, I think it's a generational thing that we need to view this problem as, I think different things are needed to tackle each generation. I have a lot of hope for the younger generation and the way that we sort of talk to them about homosexuality from the very start and making those conversations, doing those conversations very early on as well. And I think it is really really important.

Int: Yeah, definitely. Well, I think that's everything then, yeah, is there anything else you want to add any final thoughts or any questions at all that you've got this?

Grace: This is great, Thanks, Laura.

Int: I will just stop the recording now then.

Grace: I nearly pressed leave then I was like that would be rude wouldn't it

Heterosexual Participant: Sally

Int I know it starts earlier than that, but I just get too scared.

Sally I always felt like it was delayed.

Int Yeah. Oh, and wait for that bar because I get too frightened in case. It misses it. And have you got any questions before we begin at all?

Sally No.

Int And you're sitting somewhere where you feel comfortable? You feel okay. And you can talk?

Sally Yeah, bedroom doors shut. We're all good.

Int You know the rules. And so firstly, then, I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be gay stereotypes?

Sally I find this really hard. Because what? I don't know how to put it. I don't believe it. But like, everybody has a pitch to me. Like there is a gay stereotype. And I'll just tell you what is kind of like the social norm. You know what I mean? Like, you tend to find that there are if it's a male, they're often more feminine. There probably wear like, their dress sense is different. Yeah, I feel like you can generally look at someone and tell that they are gay. Yeah, vice versa, when it's a female, they probably dress different to what you're used to.

Int So, you feel like it's quite obvious, and you kind of automatically, you apply the stereotype, so you automatically know that they're gay.

Sally Not necessarily all the time. But I'd say like, 80% of the time. Yeah.

Int Yeah. Cool. And how do you feel they like these stereotypes are applied to gay people? Do you think that sometimes obviously, they're doing in a nasty way, like prejudice side of things? Or do you think people just do it automatically? Like, like we were just talking about, you don't realise you just kind of, do it?

Sally Yeah, I think a lot of the time, it's just natural. Obviously, there's, you know, a few nasty people in the world that unfortunately, do apply it in a not a very nice way. But most of the time, I think it's natural, and I don't think that'll ever change you no matter how more socially accepted it becomes. I think there'll always be a stereotype

Int Its ingrained, isn't it? I suppose. Yeah, into us. And so going on a bit more about what you were saying about gay males dressing differently and stuff. So, if I asked you to think about a gay male, what kind of things would spring to mind for you? So, thinking about the way they look? Their characteristics, their personality? Like, is there anything that would stand out to you that fit the gay stereotype for a man? Um,

Sally Sometimes, I mean, if you want to be like, super stereotype, and it makes me think of, like, if I went to pride, for example, you often find sometimes they're dressed a bit feminine. Yeah. In bright colours really out there, things like, things that sort of it makes you want to look at them. You know what I mean?

Int Like flamboyant.

Sally Yeah, that's the word.

Int Yeah. what do you think? Do you think maybe their characteristics are more feminine as well, so they're more emotional, and be like, do you think every part of them is more feminine?

Sally Um, stereotypically you'd think so?

Int Yeah. And about job roles and stuff. Do you think that'd be similar as well?

Sally I've never thought about that. Like as a personal point of view, I'd say no, because I've come across people in all sorts of job roles. I've never, I've never thought of that before. I've never considered a job role being more masculine

Int Usually, like from my dissertation stuff. It was kind of like the feminine roles were like nurses, hairdressers, and all those kinds of things, which gay men might be into.

Sally Yeah, I mean, I did like you think of like, jobs being more masculine, feminine, but I've never thought of jobs being more are you more likely to get gay men work in that sector as opposed to straight men like personally, I've never thought of that before. There is definitely male and

female jobs, but I've never done it as in Yeah, the only one that springs to mind as you tend to say that hairdressers are often gay men

Int Yeah, yeah. And how about a lesbian woman then? So, what kind of things would you think of there like, how would they dress? How would they look?

Sally Stereotypically, you tend to think like more butch. Often, it's opposite, isn't it? Often you find that they're more masculine.

Int And what kind of things do you think like wear like what kind of clothing

Sally If you're going to go with like, more masculine perhaps like men's clothes. I think sometimes they're not as out there in comparison to gay men, like they're often more restricted.

Int So, like men's jeans and a shirt or something. Yeah, something. And like, what would you say about the hair and make up

Sally It tends to be short it doesn't it with, with like lesbians if you've been like super stereotypical, you tend to think like short, don't you?

Int Yeah, definitely. And obviously current research does suggest that homosexuality is now more accepted than previously, we've had made really big steps. And what's your view on this? Do you think we are accepting of homosexuality? Or do you think there's a way to go?

Sally I think we are more accepting, but I still think there's a long way to go. It's like I said, at the start, I don't think you'll ever get rid of stereotypes. And you'll always look at someone and go or there gay or they're a lesbian. I just, I don't even in like 50 years, I still don't think, there will always be a barrier. And I don't know why. I don't know what it is. I just never. I think maybe because it's been so long that they weren't accepted. I don't know.

Int Yeah, I think it's, it's a hard one, I think because obviously we are at a better place where we were. Yeah, like acceptance wise, but I think that's not the case everywhere. In the UK, yeah. But not everywhere.

Sally I don't know it It's because we have things like pride and stuff where we celebrate it. You're still suggesting that it's something different outside of the norm. Even though it's not, and we all know it's not. But I think and I'm not saying we shouldn't celebrate it, because we absolutely should. But do you know what I mean? Like, yes, still putting something out there and saying that it's different.

Int Yeah. No that makes sense. That's really interesting. Definitely. So, I'm going to share the screen now. And I will pop your images

Sally This was so hard. It was so hard. And I'm so glad that you said you have pictures as well, because I thought I'm going to send you these she's going to think what the hell.

Int Alright. Can you see them yet?

Sally Yeah.

Int Now, I can't see you now. So, at any point you want to stop or anything like that? Just let me know. Yeah. And I'll be able to sort that. So, looking at the first one, lovely Adam Lambert. So, do you want to talk me through this image? So why would you choose this as a representation of gay men?

Sally If I'm being totally honest, the first thing I did was Google gay men stereotype. And not a lot comes up again with the others as well. I think a went for that. Because if you think back to what I said, when you said what is a male stereotype, I said, like feminine clothes. He wears make up, I mean, yeah.

Int So, do you think his clothing is more flamboyant? Like you were saying?

Sally Yeah, he is wearing a gold jacket, it is definitely out there.

Int He always looks so glam. Yeah, I've been watching him on that starstruck, and he looks fabulous. Every single week. How have you got time to look that fabulous?

Sally That's celebrities for you

Int Yeah, we ain't got that kind of time. So why so obviously, you said it's clothing you'd say is the gay stereotype? Is there anything else from the image that hits the gay stereotype for you?

Sally You can see that he looks after himself. And I find sometimes that's what you tend to get with gay men as well. They're more likely to have their eyebrows done. Have a tan. You know, all that stuff, real good hair.

Int Yeah. So more groomed in a sense.

Sally Yeah, yeah, that's the word.

Int Okay, so scroll down to your next image. This is your lesbian, Is this real lesbian women image?

Sally Yeah.

Int So, if you can just talk me through that one then. So, what made you choose this image for your portrayal of lesbian women?

Sally I went for that one because that links in with what I said about describing lesbian women like short hair, like the clothes not very out there, you know, like grey jacket, you could say, maybe it's a bit masculine. But yeah, the short hair probably like screams to me, because that's like your general lesbian stereotype, isn't it?

Int Yeah, like the shaved kind of, yeah, style. And then yeah, no, it's fine, don't worry. And then scrolling down to your bottom image. And so obviously, that's like the pride kind of things. And so, what, talk through this image what made you choose this one for your representation of homosexuality?

Sally Well, that's they have the flag don't know like your pride and that. And I think that links back to what us about how we celebrate Pride, like, you don't have a flag, for like, straight people you don't celebrate straight people I think that is what massively, you know, screams homosexuality and yeah,

Int Yeah. Did you feel like if you saw someone displaying the pride flag like say if they add lanyard with it on or

Sally You'd think they belonged to LGBT automatic, even if, even if you didn't like, I could walk around and wear one because you know my friends are and yes, it's me saying that I agree with it. I don't have anything against it but yeah, I think people would assume that I belong to LGBT.

Int Yeah, yeah, that you were part of the community. Yeah, that's interesting. So, I'm just going to flick over to my images. So, the images that I've selected are not my personal choice. So basically, what I did, like what you did, on the first of December, I put in gay male stereotype. And I picked the first three images that came up on Google. And the same for the lesbian stereotype? And then the same for the homosexuality one. So, they're not my personal selection? Basically, they're not my bias. So, I'm just having a look at that first image, the bear. So, this was the first image that came up when I put in gay male stereotype. Obviously, they change as well. So, every day they'd be totally different, basically. Yeah. So, what are your thoughts on this image? So why do you think Google suggested that this image of the bear is a gay male stereotype?

Sally Think maybe the leathers but that one surprised me, you know, because the kind of thing that springs to mind when I see that picture is like magic Mike, that generally is straight men. So that wouldn't surprise me. But I think I'd say like the leathers is maybe why that's come up under gay males.

Int Yeah. So, do you think like what? So obviously, the leather? What part? What makes you think that links to gay males the leather part of things?

Sally I don't know. Maybe like what I was saying about the clothes tend to be more flamboyant and out there.

Int Yeah, because I mean, I have seen people at Pride wearing these kinds of outfits. I think it is, I think,

Sally Yeah, to be, that one stumped me to be fair. I don't think I'd have expected that one to come up.

Int Yeah, a lot of people have said that to me. I was quite surprised when I saw it. Because it's not what instantly springs to mind for a gay male but it must be quite a prominent stereotype for Google to. Yeah, give it me. So

Sally Is the bear a person? Do you know or?

Int The bear is a stereotype. So, I looked into it more when I found the image myself. And a bear is someone who's not skinny. So, someone who's a bit chubby or hairy. Opposite to the stereotype really? cuddly, you know, that kind of like a bit chubbier? Kind of Yeah. Yeah. So, what from what I can gather it to another version of the stereotype like, which moves away from the usual slender, feminine style, I think, yeah. But I have seen men dress like this at Pride. There's quite a crew of them called, there's leather men as well, which fit into this group as well. We were all leather and harnesses, and things like that. So, there is groups under these labels as well, from what I can gather. Yeah. Moving over to the image on the right, so looking at this image, would you say that that is more of what you would think of? What do you think?

Sally Yeah, I'd say that one's more your stereotype because the makeup, the blue hair, it's quite out there. Yeah, the eyebrows are plucked, you know, groomed, everything we've talked about. I think it's pretty much that picture.

Int So more around the femininity.

Sally Yeah. Yeah.

Int And do you think like, body shape because into it then because obviously we have mentioned that just now. Do you think that maybe being skinnier is also part of the gay stereotype or not? Could that be classed as a feminine attribute maybe being skinny?

Sally See I find that hard. And I don't know if that's just because I've got a lot of friends that are LGBT and they're all shapes and sizes.

Int That's good, though. That's really, we want

Sally Yeah, I don't know if I agree with it. The shape thing. I feel like I feel like if you ask somebody else, they might say that the Slim is a thing. Yeah. But then when you think of like, drag race. They're all different shapes and sizes on there that I wouldn't say their particularly straight and that is like the stereotype, isn't it? The Drag Race programme?

Int Definitely. Yeah. So, what if you to look at this image? What parts would you pull out and say. They're definitely the gay stereotype.

Sally Hair, eyebrows, makeup. I mean, from what you can see of the clothes I imagine that it looks like maybe he's got dungarees without a t shirt on. Yeah. Which I think a bit like flesh, a lot of like flesh showing. Maybe is a bit of a stereotype because that's the kind of thing that you see at pride and stuff, isn't it? They don't always wear a lot of clothes.

Int Yeah. Do you think that's a feminine attribute as well? Because I know obviously, when I know when I was younger, you'd want to wear the short skirt and the short is cropped up. Yeah. Yeah, maybe that fits into there as well. Yeah. The lack of clothing.

Sally Yeah. But yeah, I think I agree with that.

Int And thought about it for it just popped in my head. I just thought, oh, maybe that's the thing, because I remember being like that myself, like wanting to look half naked. Yeah. Basically, scrolling down to this third image. I found this one's really interesting. Because obviously, it goes against the whole rule of gay men being feminine, really, because obviously, Gareth Thomas, the Welsh football, I mean rugby player. Yeah, is far from feminine. And he identifies as gay. So, what are your thoughts about this image? What springs to mind when you look at this image?

Sally Do you know what's made me think? I don't know if it describes the image. But more like what you said, is, I wonder if we have that stereotype, because gay men that are feminine, are more likely to come out, because they're different. And their noticeably different. And I wonder how old he was when he came out to the world as gay because he's masculine. And it's not noticeably different. So, do we have that stereotype? Because people who are different are more likely to come out because they're different. Does that make sense? Yeah,

Int Definitely. So, like, and because of him, being in such a masculine industry, I suppose. You'd have wouldn't be masculine he is a rugby player. Yeah. So how could he then be gay? Yeah.

Because it's very masculine. And I think maybe if people like him, and you know, football players and things like that, if they made the steps to be openly gay, like, what an impact that would have,

Sally Maybe then you would be more likely to come over the stereotypes that makes me want to change what I said earlier about, we're never going to get over stereotypes.

Int We need more people to be more comfortable, don't we? I think and yeah. Hopefully, if acceptance gets better, then that would give people the opportunity to say that we're gay and be okay kind of thing. But I know he had a lot of backlash when he and I don't think you came out that long ago, either.

Sally So, he's an older man then isn't he, He's not come out at an early age has he?

Int It says 36 on there. So that's quite late. If you only just come out really? Yeah. But also, horrible to think that he's held that in all that time,

Sally Yeah, probably held in purely because of his job. Like you said, he has to be, he has to be masculine.

Int Yeah, definitely. So, scrolling down to the gay female stereotype. So again, that's all I put in Google. So, the first image there of Lea DeLaria from Orange is the New Black. She plays the character Butch. So why do you think Google popped this image as the lesbian stereotype? Do you think it fits perfectly?

Sally Short hair, shirt, which you picture as masculine. The name Butch the first thing one, the first thing that I said to you about female stereotypes was Butch wasn't it? Yeah. So, I think that's like your classic stereotype. Yeah.

Int And even has it tattooed on her arm? Yeah. Do you think there's anything around body shape? With lesbian women? Um, do you feel it's the same? Like you said about

Sally Opposite, isn't it? Like if you're going to say that, that men are more masculine. I mean, gay men are more feminine and more likely to be skinny and petite. Then you're going to think that women are more masculine, more likely to be a little bit bigger. She's not like dead skinny from what I can see the picture

Int Yeah. And do you think so, Obviously, the main parts that you pulled out there, obviously the hair, the shirt. Would you say tattoos are part of it as well or?

Sally I don't know. I don't think I would.

Int No, no, no, that's cool. So, moving down to this next image, and this was the second image that came up. So, what are your thoughts about this image?

Sally I feel like that one probably came up partly because of the rainbow. It's pride, isn't it? But you've got the short hair on that one haven't you and bright hair, you tend to find that lesbian women experiment with their hair a lot.

Int Yeah, yeah. And what part so apart from obviously the pride, is it the Would you say that's the main parts? Obviously, the bright hair and short kind of funky hair and the pride emblems are the main things that would kind of stand out for you.

Sally That's what springs to mind in that picture. Yeah.

Int Yeah. Do you feel like maybe that they are more masculine in how they look as well?

Sally Yeah, I suppose short hair, you tend to say is masculine, don't you? Like a girly girl is going to have long hair perhaps curly? You know I mean,

Int Yeah, that makes sense. So, moving down to the next image. And these are, I'm assuming a couple. So, what kind of things spring to mind there? So why do you think Google kind of gave me this one as the gay stereotype?

Sally So, I don't think that one screams stereotype. I think that you know, you can only tell because of the way they're looking at each other, affectionately. Yeah.

Int So, you don't think any of it is in? Do you feel like it's totally different to obviously the short hair, the masculine clothes and all those kinds of things?

Sally I'm contradicting myself because the blonde woman's got short hair.

Int But more of a feminine short hair, though, isn't it?

Sally Yeah. Yeah.

Int I get what you're saying? Yeah. Like, it's not the short back and sides, is it? Yeah. It is like a kind of like a bob, I suppose. messy Bob Maybe Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, there's nothing there. Really, that would scream lesbian stereotype to you or?

Sally I don't think so. It's just the fact you don't think you'd only say it because they're together, you can see that they're together.

Int Okay. So, when I put in homosexual stereotype, we spoke about RuPaul earlier. RuPaul was the first image that came up, unsurprisingly. So why do you think this image would kind of hit that homosexual stereotype?

Sally The hair, the makeup, the clothes? It's drag, isn't it? Which is, it's a massive stereotype. But it's what you get a lot of it like pride and that? Yeah, very glam.

Int Yeah, very. Do you think that It's part of the stereotype in the sense that, oh, you're a gay man, you must do drag. Do you think that kind of feeds into it as well or not?

Sally I think that is a stereotype. I wouldn't say it's necessarily one held by everyone. But it's definitely a prominent one.

Int Yeah. I think with drag being such a big thing now. And obviously RuPaul. I mean, he's got drag in every country like a programme hasn't he, He's literally taken over the world. Which obviously helps, again, with acceptance, it's more visual of the LGBT community, but it can feed into the fact that you know what I mean? Like, we were just saying that all gay men must do drag. Yeah. So

Sally That's more of like, you know, you said earlier how, you know, a stereotype sometimes a bit like nasty. I think that's maybe something that's used in a cruel way by people who aren't accepted of it as well.

Int Okay. In what sense? What do you mean like that? They're just assumed that they do that. Yeah.

Sally Because obviously, I think drags something that's probably less socially accepted than being homosexual. Does that make sense? And that's a very old-fashioned view that I'm expressing here as well, I think.

Int But it's still there, isn't it?

Sally Yeah.

Int Yeah. People still say so. Yeah, I get what you're saying. The movie down to the next image. Little NAS, I think this must have been at some kind of award ceremony. So, this was the next image that came up. So, talk me through this image. What are your thoughts about it? And how do you think it represents homosexuality?

Sally This one surprised me again. I don't really know what to say about this one. I think the last, I suppose you've got the lack of clothes. I do see they're very, their body's very masculine, which is not something that's necessarily associated to gay men. That's why that one stumped me.

Int Well, obviously, like you said, the lack of clothing.

Sally Yeah, is little NAS X Gay?

Int Yeah.

Sally Oh, I didn't know

Int Yeah, yeah. He came out about a year ago, I think it was a massive thing like, because obviously he's a rapper and a and like,

Sally He's not someone that I particularly follow. That's probably why like, I don't know, but yeah.

Int In the queer community like he's pushing boundaries left, right and centre because he's, he doesn't fit.

Sally Yeah, he doesn't fit the stereotype.

Int No and doing stuff like this kissing another man on stage. That's quite a big, that's a big thing to do

Sally That is a statement.

- Int** Yeah, like he's saying I want and all his music videos he includes men. Yeah, be dancing with men. It wouldn't be dancing with a woman like you would normally get in a R&B hip hop Video. Yeah, he used
- Sally** That's what we, well, not what we need but it's supposed to make it more accepted. Especially for young people as well isn't it.
- Int** Yeah. And if we see it more, surely that will help. Yeah, seem normal. You know, I mean and not segregated kind of thing. Yeah.
- Sally** I think if you wanted to, like really nitpick the picture, I think you could say things like, have they got eyeliner on? He got gold. Yeah, yeah, that's giveaways. But I wouldn't say it's obvious. Besides the fact they're kissing.
- Int** Yeah, obviously. Yeah. Do you think maybe that, like, the flamboyant side of things come in there as well. Like, obviously, it's with the
- Sally** With the gold clothing? Yeah, I think not having a lot of clothes is out there, isn't it? It's flamboyant, a statement.
- Int** Yeah. Yeah, definitely. So just moving down to the next one. So obviously, it bought the pride flag. I'm not sure of the where they are or the situation. But what kind of springs to mind for you there when looking at this image and thinking about homosexuality?
- Sally** You've got the pride flag. It's quite interesting. It almost seems like he's really in colour. And everything else is not black and white. But it's almost black and white.
- Int** like dull?
- Sally** Yeah, I think that sort of if you want to read into it, he is standing out. He's different compared to everybody else.
- Int** Yeah. So would you assume if you saw that person, oh, well, there must be gay then. Because
- Sally** You would, wouldn't you? And it might not necessarily, could we try that again? It might not necessarily mean that good luck transcribing that little bit.
- Int** Don't worry. Yeah. I think obviously, the pride flag, like we said, is quite a big thing, isn't it? And people do automatically assume that you're going to be part of the community if you are wearing that. So, I do get what you're saying there that, and he seems to be standing out more than everybody. Yeah, that's quite interesting. So, I think that is that's all though. So, I'll stop sharing the screen. You will briefly see yourself for a minute. Yeah, we're back to normal now. Yeah. So just closing up really. And this has been a nice quick one. Thank you very much, Sophie. And so how do you think we could bring forward acceptance of homosexuality in our society? And what do you think we need to do to make us more accepting?
- Sally** I think if you had people outside of stereotypes, like we discussed with the rugby player, and then you wouldn't have the stereotypes in a way would you because they're just normal people. Yeah. And it's like I say, like, do people come out more because they know that they stand out compared to those like the rugby player they're just normal they're masculine.
- Int** Yeah, maybe. And I think if like you said like, if more footballers and stuff did come out, that'd be such a good thing for younger like men and you know what I mean? Like I think it just make them feel more confident to come out
- Sally** Celebrities as well. Isn't it like celebrities have such a massive impact on the media and what people think, what they do You get a couple come out. But I think again, if you had more, but I suppose they're just as scared of backlash is what normal people are. you know like, remember when Tom Daley came out, the diver? the amount backlash he got, also I wouldn't necessarily, necessarily say Tom Daley Was a stereotype?
- Int** No, I was shocked. Yeah, yeah, everyone was shocked. Philip Schofield?
- Sally** Yeah.
- Int** When he come out, I nearly fell off my chair.
- Sally** Yeah and he had family kids, Wife
- Int** It just shows, doesn't it

Sally I think cases like that, that aren't necessarily stereotyped that to help with like, reducing it.

Int Yes do you think like, thinking about like, education side of things? Do you think if we educate around homosexuality more, do you think that would help improve acceptance as well?

Sally Yeah. I don't remember much in school about being taught about homosexuality, and I'm, I'm 22. So, wasn't really, I was still having them kind of lessons, you know, 10 years less than 10 years ago. And I don't even when you're having, like, Sex Ed, I don't ever remember having anything about homosexuality. It's always straight people heterosexual, isn't it?

Int Yeah. 100% We never learned anything. Whereas Grace will tell me, she, certain things like and I think, oh, that's an improvement. Like, they were talking about, like people who identify as non-binary and stuff the other day. So okay, like that's, and they gave them all badges. And she had one that said she they, yeah, like, you could choose what badge you want it. And I just thought that's a really nice little touch, you know, to kind of identify people's pronouns and stuff. So, feel like they are making the right steps. But it's how deep we've got to go, isn't it really? Yeah, do you think maybe talking about that, and obviously school? Do you think like younger generations, it might get better?

Sally I think it is getting better already with younger generations. But I suppose that's where change starts, isn't it? I think as people get older; some people will just never change their mind. So, it will change with generations, as opposed to, you know what I'm trying to say?

Int Because generations are a lot more open than us. I think, yeah, my generation is probably even more closed off than your generation, a 10-year difference. Yeah, I mean, so. Yeah, I do think that they're leading the way. Really, aren't they? The younger generations?

Sally Yeah, you got to start from somewhere. So, start at the beginning, as cliché as that sounds, kids in school, the younger generation,

Int And I suppose having that there all the time, and that it's normal, then hopefully, that would mean, you know, that's just how it is basically. And then everybody else, I suppose. Yeah, no, that's cool. And I think that's everything covered then really. And is there anything else that you'd like to add? Any final thoughts or questions or anything?

Sally I don't think so. It's like I said, at the start of the interview, I feel like I've spoken generally, I think everybody else's opinions are as well as is. Yeah. And just because it's stereo, just because I'm saying that like that is the stereotype, I know, myself that it's not like that and I think that's the same with other people as well. Even they know the stereotype, I think a lot of people know that it's just it's just a stereotype. It doesn't mean that everyone is that way.

Int Yeah. No, I think that totally. I think that stereotype so strong, and engrained that we all know it, but we also have lots of friends. That don't look like that. Yeah, so it's hard isn't it to think about well, actually, yeah, that is a stereotype, but a lot of my mates don't, gay friends don't look like that. Yeah, yeah, it's it is a tricky one. But when you think about our uni friends like they all look so different.

Sally Yeah, everyone.

Int Yeah, it's crazy. Really, like none of us really fitted.

Sally You didn't all look the same. You didn't fit in one description Did you, you would all be described completely different

Int Yeah, I think the stereotypes really strong, and we will assume that that was what people look like, but actually in the real world. Maybe that's not the case.

Sally Yeah.

Int But I will just stop the recording there then. And make sure it saves.

Heterosexual Participant: Tracy

Int So just bear with me for that little bar, there we go. And it means every time I transcribe, I get a little blurb of me saying all that, like, just waiting for the bar to go up, so then I have to type that

all the time. And so, have you got any questions before we begin, you okay where you sat and things like that?

Tracy Yeah, yeah, everything is fine. Thank you.

Int Perfect. So firstly, then, I'd just like to know a little bit about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be a gay stereotype?

Tracy So most of the things I have encountered, especially since you told me to look for pictures of what I think a female lesbian woman is, or a gay man is, so one of the things I came across is that, for example, even though you look at a woman, and you can actually tell that she's a woman biologically, she would adopt or her demeanour would be masculine. So, you would expect her to wear masculine clothing or have shorter haircut, and things like that. So, it's, in a way, it's kind of like you look at her and yeah, I can tell that a woman is actually a lesbian. Yeah. And it's vice versa. It's the same for, for men. So, for example, biologically, you could look at them and tell that actually, well, you are a man I can tell you are, but then the way you conduct yourself, the way you talk, and things like that, it would be in a way expected that it's towards the more feminine side. Yeah. Yeah.

Int Kinda like expand off that a little bit, then what kind of things would you expect to see? So, say, for example, with a gay man, if you saw a gay man, you can kind of point them out? What kind of things would you expect them to dress like, or maybe their hair or anything like that?

Tracy So I think, one of the well talking about the stereotype I would, you know, generally speaking, you know, I would not necessarily me, but I think people normally expect them to say the tone of voice to be like high pitched, and to have this feminine style, you know, in the way they dressing, like, maybe like in colourful clothing, or maybe even showing like a bit of cleavage things, things like that. Yeah.

Int Yeah, that makes sense. How about like, maybe their like emotionality or their personality? Do you think that would have been a different element as well?

Tracy Well, it's in a way, it's hard for me to tell because I haven't actually encountered this stereotype to be honest. So, this is what I think it would look like. And even if I came across, you know, gay man or lesbian woman, probably most of the time, I wouldn't be able to tell. However, actually, I think I know it's a bit weird, because I think that my neighbours, I think they are in same sex couple, and they do have a baby, and I've lived in this property for about a year. I can see that they do live together, and they look after the baby and stuff, but they look just normal to me, like, like normal people, honestly, you wouldn't be able to be able to tell that they are like lesbian couple, unless, you know, you would have talked to them or live next to them and things like that. So, I'm not quite sure.

Int That's good. Um, so then going back to what you were saying about like, a lesbian woman, what kind of things do you think then would kind of make you think that they were gay then? So, like, their dress sense and things kind of what you were talking about with a gay man?

Tracy Yeah. So of course, so with the stereotype, I think if you were to tell that, yeah, just by looking at someone, yes, you are a lesbian woman. I would expect her to have the demeanour of a man, like a typically, you know, masculine way of behaving. I would expect her to maybe dress in a bit of a masculine way and not let her like biological female features to show and maybe short hair, but that's not you know, that's not you know,

Int Yeah. No, that's great. And so just kind of moving on really there to acceptance really because obviously now, I'd say in the UK, we are quite accepting and obviously it's far better than it used to be way back years ago. And obviously current research does support the homosexuality is more accepted. And what are your views on this? Do you feel like we are accepting now or?

Tracy Oh, I can tell from my, for my views and people actually in my, but I have asked friends and things like that, but like also I can tell you that there are like cultural differences. So, for example, I lived in the UK for many years now. And I, I, as I said, I've never encountered the stereotypical type of gay or lesbian woman it's just the look to me even I found out maybe later

on that day, they are lesbian who have like, different sexualities, wow I couldn't even tell you know, but I think in the UK, people are quite accepting, acceptant, they do have the acceptance, although maybe it would be, I don't know how to explain it, but maybe in the social context, they say, oh, yeah, we do accept people this and that is fine, but that doesn't necessarily mean that this reflects their personal beliefs in a way that that's what I think. So, you might be dropping a comment or say something that's going to show them well maybe you're not quite supportive, not that accepting. But as I thought, for the way, I think, yeah, it's just, honestly, I don't even think much of it. Because given the fact that I can't even tell, you know, that sexuality to me, they just like, people living their own life doing their own things, just like everyone else. I mean, and to some extent, I think that this is the way they want to be treated and viewed. So they don't want them to, you know, to give them special attention, or treat them differently, just treat them as you would with you know with a friend or family member, you know, but then, in terms of cultural differences, because as I said, I'm not, I'm not a UK resident, and I haven't actually, I wasn't born and raised in this culture, I could tell that in my own culture, people usually have this stereotypical traditional family. So, you know, being homosexual is in a way, its deviant behaviour, you shouldn't be that you should abide by the stereotypical heterosexual norms. I've heard people and people actually from the older generation saying that they shouldn't have families. And then because they make this, this the choice of being a same sex relationship, it means that they shouldn't have kids. Yeah, I was like,

Int Yeah, you hear it a lot in the older generations. I mean, I'd love to think that the younger generations are making it better. And hopefully, that would be the case. I mean, what do you think on that? Do you think maybe that younger generations, it will get better?

Tracy I think so too, honestly, because they do have a lot more awareness. I think people nowadays and the younger generation, they're, they're able to actually be more self-compassionate, and actually empathise with other people, and more accepting as well. And they do have access to more information. So that I think that's quite a big, big difference between younger and older and older generations.

Int So hopefully, it might get better.

Tracy Yeah,

Int Yeah. Right. What I'm going to do, I'm just going to pop your images up so I'm just going to share the screen. Before I do that, I'm just going to go and close my window because it's very noisy outside.

Tracy No worries. Sure.

Int There we go, because knowing my luck sirens will be going off and all sorts. Right. I'll just share the screen. You might see yourself briefly for a minute.

Tracy No worries

Int There we go. Can you see your images?

Tracy Yeah, yeah.

Int Lovely. And I can't see you on the screen now. So, if at any point you need to stop or you want, you know, to take the picture down or whatever, just let me know. Okay.

Tracy Yep.

Int So I'm just going to scroll down to the gay male images first if that's okay.

Tracy Yeah.

Int So with each image, then what I'd basically like you to do is just kind of talk me through it really. So, we'll go through each image. I've also got some images for us to talk about as well, that aren't my bias. They're just selected from Google at random. So, we've got a few other images as well to talk about. So just looking at your first image for a gay male with a red background.

Tracy Yeah.

Int And could you just talk me through what made you select this image and what part of the image kind of says the gay homosexual stereotype to you?

- Tracy** So I think the first thing that came to my mind when I selected this picture, it was the posing for the picture. I found it's quite feminine. It was also the makeup and the hairstyle. So, these are some of the features that made me think well, maybe well no this kind of looks like the stereotypical gay man. So, but mostly the colour, the clothing, the posing, and the makeup. Yep,
- Int** Yeah. Yeah, definitely. That's great. Thank you. So, Moving down to your next image. What made you choose this image then?
- Tracy** It's just that it's Freddie Mercury. Obviously, it's just yeah. Just him seeing him that he was, he was a gay man. So that's the only reason I selected that picture.
- Int** I mean, yeah. Do you feel anything about like what he wears? Or his body shape or anything? Kind of?
- Tracy** I think. Yeah, it's I think it's also the fact that he did accessorise. So, I would expect women to actually wear a bracelet and stuff. And obviously, he's he looks very well groomed. So, the moustache, the skin, the complexion is very nice and clean. And the hair that is as well, it's very, he's very well groomed. Yeah.
- Int** So obviously, like it's, there's more feminine attributes that really kind of pull it through that women kind of look after their bodies and things like that. Yeah,
- Tracy** Yeah, exactly.
- Int** Great. And then scrolling down to your next image, I'll just zoom out a little bit, so you can see it. Yeah, what made you select that one?
- Tracy** With this one is the way they're dressed. So, I would expect a woman to wear this type of swimsuits, especially the part where you have to cover the chest because you know, women have breasts and all that and they normally cover it. So, to see that in a male when maybe the stereotypical, the typical male wouldn't actually wear that. That's what that's what made me select this picture. And also, the way they posing as well, I would expect a group of women to actually do that. So that's the reason I chose it.
- Int** Even like their way. Like they call it a smise. I don't know, like with the eyes, that kind of sexy. Yeah. And again, they're very groomed, like, the guy in the middle his jaw line is unbelievable. Yeah. So just think that yeah, that's the ones with gay men. So, I'll just scroll back up to the top. So, we'll do the lesbian women images now. So, if you just want to talk me through your first image of the lady there, what made you select that? What parts kind of hit the lesbian stereotype for you?
- Tracy** So it's also the way she's dressed. Again, it's as you wouldn't, you can't actually see the chest. So, it's up to the neck, the t shirt, and the way she's posing also, the if you see the watch, and the tattoo is, again, it's something I would expect to see a man wearing or things like that. Also, the haircut and her facial expression. So, she's not smiling. She's not trying to give you that gaze attractive, sexy gaze. So, she's very quite serious and standing tall. So, these are the things that made me think ooh maybe she she's more masculine. Well, like a lesbian woman. Yeah.
- Int** And I think as well even like, like you said, her demeanour is very masculine, isn't it? Like the way she's holding herself is quite like,
- Tracy** Exactly,
- Int** Yeah, definitely. So just moving down to the next image the two women together. What made you select this one?
- Tracy** So I think with this one, it was the one on the right, so my right the woman with the blue shirt. Yeah, it's, again, the way she is accessorising. She's dressing, the watch as well the fact that her, her shirt is buttoned up. So just like a man would wear it's also the haircut and yeah, that's what made me and also the way she is holding the other woman in a very affectionate, it just made me think that they are lesbian couple honestly, the way they look at each other as well he's quite attractive quite affectionate. So yeah, they do think they are lesbian couple is

Int Quite a cute photo actually. Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Do you think there's anything in and obviously the one looking more masculine than the other? Yeah, anything in that within lesbian relationships?

Tracy Yeah. I also I also thought about that, because is this the belief that all lesbian women, they somehow have masculine demeanour and masculine way of dressing and looking and presenting themselves, but then it just made me think at the end of the day, they also attracted to other women, so probably they're looking for the opposite. So maybe a lesbian that looks, you know, like, the stereotypical feminine type, if that makes sense. So, in a way, I would say that if they are indeed Lesbian couple, I would say that the woman in the blue shirt has more masculine traits, whereas the woman in the red shirt she has, like typical feminine traits, even with the earrings and the colour of the shirt, and even the haircut is more feminine. So that's what made me think that yeah, yeah.

Int Cool. And then scrolling down to your final lesbian image. What made you select this one?

Tracy Oh to be honest, I'm not quite sure. I mean, I think this one is just that she has he him on the t shirt. And it's also the, probably the hair colour.

Int Yeah.

Tracy Yeah. And it just also made me think because also saw the rainbow flag should just move just made me think that she's a supporter, maybe lesbian woman because she's at the parade. Yeah, so that's what made me think that maybe she's a lesbian woman.

Int Yeah. What about when you're saying about the hair colour? What about the hair colour? Would you say?

Tracy No, yeah, because it's bright, and it's colourful, and also the, but I think the most the main thing would be the he/him on the shirt, and the fact that she's at the parade. And also, because there was so much awareness, and it's also the rainbow flag. It's, you know, a symbol of homosexuality. So that's what made me think. Yeah.

Int So I'll just move down to your final image at the bottom for your homosexuality. Yeah, this is cute. What made you select this one then?

Tracy It was the rainbow to be honest. Yeah, definitely.

Int So is it all about, Obviously, it's lots of pride flags, and then heart in in the pride colours as well. So, is that the main reason? Really?

Tracy Yes. Yes.

Int Yeah. Would you say that the pride flag is quite a big part of the LGBTQ community?

Tracy Yeah, I would say that. Definitely. Because when it when it pops out, I mean, to be honest, I'm no longer thinking, oh, we look a rainbow. I'm actually thinking, that's gay the flag. Yeah. Yeah.

Int Even if you go somewhere and say, if there was a bar with outside, you'd probably think that, Oh, that's a gay bar. And then even to that kind of thing as well.

Tracy I can't really tell because I don't actually I'm not really into the pop culture. I've never been to a disco or bar. I don't really go to bars and things like that. So, I can't tell for sure. Sorry. All right. Yeah, just be boring. So

Int I'm boring as well, I'm getting too old. So, I'm just going to move over to my images now. So, like I said, these images selected on the first of December. So literally, what I did is I put in gay male stereotype and selected the first three images, then I did the same for lesbian stereotype and homosexual stereotype, mainly because I didn't want to put my own bias into the photo selections. And so basically, what we're going to do with these ones, is I just want your thoughts about them, to be honest. So looking at the first image, the bear on the left hand side, my left hand side, and why do you think Google would have kind of framed this as the gay male stereotype?

Tracy Honestly, I'm not quite sure, but it's that's definitely the type of like clothes I wouldn't I wouldn't wear that I wouldn't see that in, in, you know, in like people you see, normally on a

daily basis, so I'm not quite sure why that came up. I mean, it's quite, it kind of looks perverted, to be honest. And I don't know I wouldn't imagine someone, you know, wearing that, regardless of their sexuality, to be honest. So is it okay if I just say I'm not sure.

Int Yeah, course definitely, of course, yeah. Moving over to the other side, then and the person with the blue hair and why do you think this would be kind of portrayed as the gay male stereotype?

Tracy Well, then, I guess for the same reason I mentioned earlier, it's just the makeup we're so used to seeing women wearing makeup and we just think of it as such a feminine trait. So that's, that's the thing for me, I will just say the makeup.

Int Anything else on there at all, or literally just the makeup?

Tracy It's probably the hair colour as well. But other than that, it would just be the makeup because if you were if I were to see this picture without the makeup and that bright hair colour, I will probably think well, you can look like a normal typical man to me.

Int Yeah, yeah, definitely. Yeah, it makes sense. So then scrolling down to the final image for the gay man stereotype. And I thought this one was quite interesting. It came up. And I'm assuming it's a stereotypes poster that's been out and saying that all gay men are feminine. Right? But actually, Gareth Thomas is far from feminine. And he identifies as gay. And so, what are your thoughts about this image? Why do you think? Maybe? Well,

Tracy I probably I would assume that he's a, like American football player, and probably he, he announced it, or maybe he came out to the public. So probably that's why people know that he's actually gay. Because if, as I said, just to say with my neighbours, if I were to look at him, you just look like a normal person to me. I wouldn't even think that you have a certain sexuality. So, I think they just tried to make a point that not all gay men are feminine. So that's to say it's quite sarcastic when they say all gay men are feminine. Well, obviously, it's not the case. You will most of the time actually, you can't, you can't really tell sexuality. So, they just look, you probably, you will be able to tell you know, their biological sex, but not their sexuality. So yeah, yeah. Interesting.

Int So moving down then to the gay female stereotypes. Yeah. This is an image that came up there is Lea DeLaria she's in *Orange is the New Black*. Yeah. So why do you think Google said this was the lesbian stereotype? What parts of the image would you say?

Tracy Yeah, it's the same as we discussed previously. It's just because she does present, she does have the masculine demeanour, that's the typical masculine traits, I would say, the masculine shirt, the tattoos and for, the haircut. You could tell, as I said she biologically, she's a woman. But then the way the demeanour and the way she presents herself, it would, it would be the masculine way. Yeah. Yeah. So

Int And then moving down to the next image. So, the next image that came up was the girl with the blue hair. And so why do you think this was selected as a lesbian stereotype?

Tracy It is just this burst of colour, and the rainbow as well. So probably that's the reason why I selected it since there's been representing a lesbian woman. So probably looking at the picture. I would think the same. Maybe she's a support or maybe she's a lesbian herself, due to the colourful image and also the rainbow the T shirts. Yeah.

Int Yeah. Right. Do you think bold colours are part of it as well, then there's kind of like that, flamboyancy and being bold and bright and kind of out there?

Tracy Well probably, probably, although one, to be honest, in my daily life, as I said probably, I'm not sure, maybe if for some reason, I haven't actually encountered the stereotypical type of I don't know, gay woman, or, or gay man or lesbian woman. So, when I, when I see maybe if it's something like very obvious, such as the rainbow t shirt, but even then I think, oh, maybe she is, but maybe she's just a supporter. So, I can't really, I can't really tell for sure. So, I'm not sure

Int I get this quite a lot. And I think, like you said, you keep saying like, a lot of the time, you can't actually tell, and the majority of the gay community maybe actually don't follow these stereotypes. But yeah, that stereotype is so strong. Like we all know what those stereotypes are.

And obviously, that gay men should be feminine, lesbian women should be masculine. Yeah. So do wonder where it becomes so ingrained in us if that makes sense. Like, could it be media maybe?

Tracy Probably, also in, in real life, because people would just assume most of the time that you can tell that someone is homosexual, or that they come up to you and if you can't tell, they'll tell you. I mean, come on. I mean, things like that don't come up in normal usual day to day conversation. People don't just come up to say, you know, I'm gay. People don't do that. This is like, this is private information. It has to do with your own sexuality. I don't just go up to people and say, you know, I'm gay, or you know, I'm lesbian. This doesn't happen. It doesn't happen in real life.

Int Yeah, definitely. So, it's been it's been pushed somewhere, isn't it? It can be another research project for me, trying to find where? So, moving down to the final image for the lesbian selection. So why do you think Google will have selected this image?

Tracy Well, these women obviously they don't have the typical stereotype, you know, for lesbian women. So just as the image that I selected, maybe it would, if one would have the more masculine traits, but they will look at both of these women, they dress like normal people, they look like normal women. And if I were to look at this picture, you could just as well be like, I don't know if they're mother and daughter maybe or things like that. So, I can tell just by looking at it more, maybe this for sure these women are lesbians, but probably the fact that it's such close proximity, and this, this is quite an affectionate gesture. Maybe this would make me think that they are in a partnership or something together as a couple. Yeah.

Int And do you think maybe because then because they look quite feminine? That would then make you kind of reassess it like, well, actually, they might not be.

Tracy Yeah, yeah, I would think so they abide more to the stereotypical, you know, feminine traits, if that makes sense.

Int Yeah, definitely.

Tracy So if they were just to sit next to each other and not be in this affectionate, you know, posture, yes pose then I wouldn't be able to tell while these women are lesbian, in a partnership or together as a couple. Yeah. Right.

Int So I'll just move down to the images for the homosexual stereotype. So, the first image that Google gave me was RuPaul from RuPaul's drag race, I wasn't surprised to see RuPaul if I'm honest. And so why do you think Google gave me RuPaul? Obviously, in drag, why do you think that would represent the homosexual stereotype?

Tracy So this is a well-known person, isn't it? Yeah,

Int He's a drag artist yeah He's got loads of drag shows

Tracy Because I don't know him. Well, I just don't know him, yeah. And to be honest, if I, I'm not even sure because she's, I mean, he looks like a woman to me. I mean, all I wouldn't be able to tell that. But maybe he's drag or not a woman. But probably again, just as the example we had previously, because he's such a well-known person. And the people know that. He's drag he's doing he's a drag queen, then probably that's why, you know, well, I know that you do drag so that's, that's all I have to say, this picture. But to be honest. I mean, his makeup is on point and the hair

Int Yeah, absolutely beautiful. Yeah. It would take me hours to look like that.

Tracy Exactly. I know. Yeah.

Int So then moving down to the second image that came up. And so, this is a rapper, his name is Little NAS x. And this was in one of his shows and it went very viral, I think, from what I could gather when the image came up on Google. So apart from the obvious that they are kissing, what do you think the reasonings for like the homosexual stereotype here is that there's anything else in there as well?

Tracy Yeah, well, it's the fact that he is very well groomed. So, the first thing I saw that they didn't have, any chest hair, looks, the skin looks very well looked after and it's very smooth and even glittery if I'm not mistaken. So that's what made me think that this group of men they are gay men, obviously they are kissing, and it's also the way they dress. So, the gold and the sparkle and all that. Yeah, that's what made me think. Yeah,

Int Yeah, is there anything in their poses. Again, like similar to the kind of reminded me of the swimsuit image and that you put up the, you know, the very gold and the glitter and all that kind of stuff. Do you think there's anything with the posing in that one? Or

Tracy Well it what, in my opinion, there's nothing wrong with the pose apart from the fact that they're kissing, but if they were to look at the camera, I mean, I've seen it we know what, man, the way they are posing like just holding each other. So, I don't think there's anything, sorry that was my coffee. I'm so sorry.

Int That's okay. You alright?

Tracy Yeah. So not necessarily anything with the pose, but that just me honestly, that's just my, my opinion, apart from the fact that they're kissing. Yeah.

Int Wonderful. So just scrolling down to the final image then. And the image that came up was the pride flag, which again, I wasn't surprised. And what are your thoughts on this image? How do you think this represents the homosexual stereotype?

Tracy It's yeah, it's the same, the flag became a symbol, a symbol of sexuality. So, you when you see it, as I said, you automatically think of the homosexual community of the gay lesbian community so it's just like an instant click for some reason. Yeah.

Int Do you think if you saw someone walking down the street, in the flag like that, or even if they had like, a rainbow lanyard or you know, bracelet and things like that. Do you think those will kind of identify them as homosexual as well?

Tracy I would say definitely say not necessarily homosexual, but a supporter. So, yeah, that's what I would say. So, you either supporter, you actually, you show the acceptance and the empathy we talked about. Or maybe you're a homosexual yourself. So, one of the two to be honest. Yeah.

Int So I think that's, yeah, that's it with the images. So, I'll just come back to the screen and stop sharing there is yourself again.

Tracy Yeah.

Int Is it back to you back to normal now?

Tracy Yeah, yeah.

Int Lovely. So really, now, I've just got a few more questions now just trying to close it off. So, kind of thinking about the images. Yeah. Do you think that we had similar images? Do you think that it kind of enforces that those are the the stereotypes if that makes sense?

Tracy I think we did. Especially with the, with the flag. So, I think we both had that, and especially the way gay man that are portrayed that as being very feminine, and the vice versa with women being very masculine. So, I think to some extent, we did have similar images. Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Int I think so as well. And why do you think that? Is it just because, like we said, the stereotype is quite strong.

Tracy Yeah. Yeah. I'm not sure why things are the way they are because obviously, they don't reflect a reality. But it's just, I think, when you don't have firsthand experience when you haven't actually met homosexual people, because it's not that easy to tell, you kind of create these images in your head to be able to actually make a distinction. But as with most of the time, they just don't, don't reflect reality. So, in real life, it's actually most of the time is something that's taken maybe from movies or from media, or the way we actually consume this information, that the things that we are exposed to, but this doesn't reflect real life. I mean, as I said, it's just, it works completely differently

Int I feel like on the tv they usually like if it was a gay male character. They usually are very flamboyant, very out there. Kind of like the gay best friend, you know, like, they go shopping together and, and all that. And I think that's what enforces it, then, in a way like, you see that I think, well, that then that's what all gay men must be.

Tracy Yeah, exactly. But I think they're doing homosexual people a disservice. Because it's after all the TV and the media is, most of the time, is entertainment. Yes. It's great to spread the word. It's good to know they do spread the word raise awareness, but it's entertainment. At the end of the day, and it, it should be consumed at such, in my opinion. But then I think what they're trying to do, oh, we're trying to be inclusive. Look, we've selected I don't know, a gay man or lesbian woman, and we need in the media, you need to be able to make this distinction between the homosexual and the heterosexual. And I think this is the reason in movies and in media, they attribute these stereotypical features. That's the way I say it because otherwise, if they were to be just about sexuality, even in movies, they would behave normally. And then you as the audience, you wouldn't be able to tell. Yeah.

Int They have to kind of put this on to show that they're homosexual or heterosexual. Yeah. In the films. Yeah, that makes sense. And so, my final question is just around acceptance. Really? Obviously, we mentioned it briefly before the photos. And so, thinking about acceptance, and we kind of mentioned, yeah, we are accepting but actually, maybe there's still a way for us to go. How do you think we could bring that forward? So how do you think we could kind of achieve better acceptance of homosexuality?

Tracy Well, to be honest, just as I said previously, it's just try not to abide by these stereotypes, after all a person's sexuality something private, it's not, it's not something it would come up in a you know, in a conversation unless you're maybe friends are really close. And to be honest, even if you assume or you or you think that someone is homosexual, just try to treat them you know, as individuals and as like, you know, as you would treat any other person just be kind and not try to be in their face or try to make comments or anything like that. Because, in my opinion, at the end of the day, it's just honestly, it's just your private thing. You're doing your sexuality what you do is your business. And it just it shouldn't affect the way I'm treating you in a sense that I shouldn't be treating you poorly. I shouldn't give you any, any special treatment. Just look at the people as being like individuals as who they are, and don't just strip them off of what of all the other traits and just think about their sexuality because, you know, they have their own lives, families, and things like that.

Int That doesn't make somebody does it. Like, I could meet someone and think, gosh, they're a really kind person or blah, blah. their sexuality does not come into that. Like,

Tracy Exactly, yeah,

Int If their nice to me. And I like them. Yeah, but yeah, that's it. If they're a horrible person, then I don't want to see you again, kind of thing.

Tracy Exactly, exactly. Sexuality, most of the times, it's just not most of the time, all the time. It just has nothing to do. You could be heterosexual or homosexual. And as you said, be a kind person, or you could be a complete asshole and not want to see you ever again.

Int Exactly. Your sexuality doesn't kind of impede on that. Does it? Really?

Tracy Exactly. Yeah.

Int So I think yeah, so I'm hoping eventually it'll be better. But do you think like we said earlier, going back to the children and things do you think obviously that will kind of get better than as the older generations? Sounds terrible, but die off? And the newer generations come through? Do you think it'd be easier?

Tracy Yes, I definitely hope so. But even I think one of the things, things I would probably impede that. It would be the cultural differences. Yeah. So, as I said, here in the UK as I said younger generation, they're more accepting, they have more access to information, and there's awareness. But as I said, culturally speaking, because I know this happens in my culture, even

with the younger generation, they still see it as something, something that's deviant. Or maybe you shouldn't do the same thing. So, you shouldn't have the same views as everyone else. But probably they've encountered homosexual people. They have no idea. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. So, holding such opinions without like actually have a, you know, having the knowledge that you require, you haven't, you just develop those opinions randomly. It just doesn't make sense. So, as I said, it's probably some of those cultural stuff that they actually, they learned, or they've been modelled in such a way since they were young by the older generation. So, it's just so more to that. It's just it's not just that, yeah,

Int Yeah, these things get passed down don't they if your parents are saying those things, you go along with your parents, because they're your role models. And then if you pass it down and down.

Tracy Exactly, yeah,

Int There's always going to be that element. Isn't there of forms of prejudice, I think.

Tracy Exactly. Yeah.

Int Yeah. So, I'll just round it up then there. Is there any is there anything else? I think we have covered everything to be honest. Is there anything you want to add or any final questions you have at all for a stop recording?

Tracy No, I don't I don't have any other questions. Yeah, that's everything. Yeah.

Int I'll just stopped the recording bear with me.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Alicia

Int Okay, I still don't trust teams. There we go. Lovely. Okay, then. So, during the interview, we'll discuss images that we think relate to homosexual stereotyping. So, thank you for supplying those images for me, really appreciate it. And I've also brought along some similar images for us to discuss, and the images that I've selected are not my personal bias. There. Literally, I just put in Google, gay male stereotype and pick the first three images. Gay female stereotype, first three images. So, they weren't my personal choice of images.

Alicia Yeah, I did the same

Int Oh, good. That's great. And are you sitting in comfortable? Do you feel safe talking while you're talking?

Alicia Yeah. I booked a study room

Int Perfect. Okay. So firstly, then we'll jump into the questions. And I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotype. So, what would you consider to be a gay stereotype?

Alicia Okay, so when a male looks more effeminate than masculine, you are going to obviously assume that he's gay, that's not always the case. At times they are feminine, but they are straight. An example can be Eddie Izzard is trans. He likes to cross dress. He feels more feminine than masculine, but he has only ever dated women, he is into women. And so basically, that's what stereotype, sometimes is right? Majority time, right, but sometimes it's not right, as well also

Int Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Alicia Yeah, and with women, you can't, when a woman, like, is more masculine, people straightaway assume that people don't straight away assume that she's gay. I just mean from my experiences. They think, oh, she's just being masculine, because of sports is her interest. She's this way. Whereas when women are holding hands, they're just friends, whereas men who hold hands that's perceived as gay.

Int All right, okay. Yeah, I get what you're saying. Definitely. Yeah. Yeah, I think it's, it's easier for girls, isn't it to kind of like, be affectionate towards each other.

Alicia People just think they are friends

Int Yeah, definitely. And kind of expanded a bit more on what you were saying. So, thinking about gay males. Is there anything else that kind of springs to mind for the gay stereotype? So obviously, you said about them being feminine? And is there anything else that if you saw a man

looking that way you would assume that they were gay? is there anything else like hair or personality or?

Alicia Yeah, definitely. Sometimes, they will, it is different to how a male will normally speak, in a deep tone. Gestures as well, bodily gestures and dressing, people who think males wear tight clothes like, again, they might be gay. Yeah, I think tight fitted clothes. That can be on the one and then gestures

Int Gestures, like what kind of gestures

Alicia The way they stand, like they stand with the legs. The way they sit with their leg over the other, crossed. Or when they're talking the different hand gestures are more like they are when women talk. Yeah. Yeah, definitely. I'm not good at explaining but yeah

Int Yeah no, get what you say. 100%

Alicia Sometimes the hairstyle maybe even when they have the hair to the one side. Yeah.

Int Right. And then going back to lesbian women. So obviously you mentioned about lesbians being maybe more masculine. Is there anything part of the stereotype, similar again? So, if there's anything clothing wise or hair, things like that?

Alicia They have short haircuts and wear like flannels. Oh yeah, I think the like means, I believe as well, there's a meme that's going around saying that sort of position that women sit said they must be gay because they can't sit straight in the chair, do you what I mean. Yeah, yeah. And sitting positions basically. If she got short nails is either she's gay or she plays guitar. You know?

Int Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah, definitely. Is there anything like with else with their clothing? So, would you say anything? I don't know. Like. Would you say that were more man's clothing than women's clothing?

Alicia Yeah, like snapbacks. Jeans. Trainers, Converse mostly

Int No that makes sense.

Alicia Sometimes. Women stereotype straight stereotype is that women who are feminine can't tell if they are actually gay, it's like they can't be gay.

Int Yeah. So, any Yeah, I totally get that I find you hear that a lot. Like I know, they're really girly. So, they mustn't be gay. But that's not the case. Yeah. And so, obviously, current research suggests that homosexuality is more accepted now than it was previously. So, what are your views on this? Do you feel like we are more accepting now?

Alicia It depends basically, within the Western culture it is accepted but in certain cultures, like the Asian culture, especially in my context and culture, you can get killed, can get forced marriage can get various things, get beaten. You can get kept captive and control every move, basically marriage or get killed. Yeah.

Int Awful. So, you feel like maybe that in the western culture? Yes. We are more accepting, but then there's still cultures that aren't keeping up.

Alicia Yeah, definitely.

Int Yeah, it makes sense. And so now what we're going to do is I'm going to pop up the images that you've supplied. So, I'm just going to share my screen. Hopefully, it'll all work. You might see yourself briefly, so just bear with me a sec.

Alicia Oh, yeah.

Int Right. Can you see your images?

Alicia Yeah. Yeah.

Int So, we'll just basically talk through each image. So, looking at the image on the left, he's got beautiful hair, the colours in his hair are beautiful. So do you just want to talk me through this image. So, while you chose it as a representation of gay males?

Alicia because of his hair style to one side. The way he's got his hand up there in the picture as well, how a girl would take a picture. And he's also looks like he has done his eyebrows as well

Int Quite groomed.

Alicia Yeah. very groomed

Int Do you think maybe that gay males also kind of look after their appearance a little bit more?

Alicia Yeah, definitely. Yeah than those who are straight.

Int Yeah. And, and why do you think this image would be considered as the gay stereotype what elements of the image kind of throw out the gay stereotype

Alicia the way he's taking the photo, and his hand gestures behind his head, and just looking at and his hairstyle, he looks also more groomed, and the colours in the colour, he dyed his hair.

Int No that's great. And then moving over to the image on the right. It's Harry Styles, and I'm sure I've seen that other guy isn't he off television, I'm sure I've seen him in something, but I can't think what. So, what made you choose this image?

Alicia Harry Styles dresses more feminine, there has been speculation around his sexuality, but mostly he's only ever dated women. Yeah. Yeah. Speculating is another thing even Harry Styles has spoken out about his sexuality. Yeah, he is dressed is quite feminine as well. He wore dress once and everyone assumed that he is gay, is coming out

Int Yeah. Are there any other parts of the image that say the gay male stereotype to you?

Alicia The headband, the guy he's wearing it on his head. And long hair so a lot of gay men have long hair and the way he is wearing a bold colours, the colours he's wearing as well. And the way he stood next to Harry Styles. Yeah. And he's laughing, leaning back a bit as well. Give the inkling that he may be gay yeah,

Int Definitely. Great. Just scrolling down to your last image for the gay male stereotype. Again, what made you select this image then?

Alicia A male, males who paint the nails are gay or can be gay. Also, his hair, he's also dyed his hair. Also, the way he is sitting as well, and his hand gesture he has chosen which is also the way a girl would take a photo.

Int Yeah, it's quite an effeminate pose. And the way seems to hold himself. Yeah, that's great. So, I'll just continue to scroll down a little bit. So, your lesbian women stereotypes and looking at the image on the left? What made you select that image if you just want to talk me through

Alicia The suit, so women who wear suits it's also said that they can be gay as well and that's not always the case but in this case, it is. There are some women who wear suits are not always gay

Int anything else at all about how they look that would say the guy stereotype to you?

Alicia I do have to say that There's always has to be one masculine one and one feminine one in the relationship. Yeah. Also, how masculine she is, her hair, her glasses, her pose, the way she is standing

Int Yeah. Yeah. And then you'd say like her girlfriend was more feminine looking, with her longer hair and the way she's kind of holding herself?

Alicia Yeah, definitely.

Int Yeah. That's okay. Thank you. So, they're moving over to the right. The hands image. What made you select this one? I was intrigued about this one.

Alicia Yeah, she has got her nails short, like we spoke before. Somebody who always had the nails trimmed to automatically assume that she gay or he must be gay because girls always do their nails, that's not always the case, as well, because my sisters are straight, but they have short nails. Yeah, and she always has her nails trimmed she never lets her nails grow and if she did have long nails, but it's not always true.

Int Yeah. Yeah, I think it is quite a big, I think social media pushes that stereotype. Look, I see loads on TikTok. It was kind of going as if to say nails short. You know, I mean

Alicia As if they are hinting, they are gay

Int Yeah. Moving down to your third image for lesbian women talk me through this one. What made you select this image

Alicia She is training; she is more muscular. Also, women, I just, personally, I heard within friends or other friends say that more muscular women are probably most likely to be gay

Int Yeah, yeah. Okay. Do you think maybe women who are into sports do you think that's part of that stereotype as well?

Alicia It's part of that stereotype and that's not always the case like majority of times it is not all the time. Yeah.

Int Okay and then scrolling down to your image that links to sexuality. And so, what made you select this image?

Alicia A man's hand on top of another man's hand. This is a stereotype that if you see a male hold another male's hand, it's definitely, most definitely gay, or they affectionate towards another man then he must be gay, like, it's not always the case.

Int Then obviously for girls, it's okay for them to kind of hold hands and stuff.

Alicia They are straight girls, and it is ok but when men do it he has to be gay. They have to be gay. Yeah. I don't know why that is, a bit weird.

Int Yeah, it's when you think about it. Like, there's a lot of things that girls can do. And that's okay, like girls can go to the toilets together. Girls can hold hands, girls can hug. I've sat with girlfriends, like my girl mates, linking arms, putting our arms around each other and we're not a couple, like, it's just my friend. Whereas I think the boy did that, they would get a very different response.

Alicia Very different. And that's always the case that is always case, they get called derogatory terms like batty man, the interesting thing about where that term faggot comes from? Back in the 1800s gay people would get rolled up in a carpet, yes, they would get rolled up in a carpet and they would then set it on fire

Int Wow.

Alicia Probably set them on fire with like Cigarettes with light at the end. So, they would get burned alive. That's where that term comes from.

Int I didn't realise that. interesting

Alicia actually shocked to hear that. Wow. Oh my God.

Int It is. Yeah, it is. Right. So, I think that's yours. That's your images. So, I'm just going to flip over to mine now. Yeah, mine came up now. Yep, can you see my images? Lovely. So that like I said these the images I've selected from Google just selected the first three that came up for each thing? Yeah, so I'll just zoom in a little bit so you can see. So, the first image on the left that says the bear, what are your thoughts about this image? So why do you think Google showed me that image is the gay stereotype

Alicia his dress code its tight with leather tight jeans, trousers

Int Is that all that kind of stands out really? The fact that his clothing is quite tight and its leather. do you think maybe because it's quite revealing maybe as well?

Alicia Yeah.

Int Like you were saying earlier about like obviously men gay men usually wear tighter clothing and stuff Do you think revealing is part of it as well? Maybe

Alicia It can be yes in some respects the crop tops, shorter tops shorter clothing, what women have, like hotpants. like how a woman that reveals some of her body parts and they wear girls' clothing as well

Int Yeah, yeah, definitely. So, I'll move over to the image to the right of that one now. So that's the man with the blue hair. And what are your thoughts about this image? Why do you think this represents the gay stereotype?

Alicia What he is wearing mainly, what are they called, are they called, those jeans

Int Oh dungarees?

Alicia dungarees, yeah. That's also a sign that he may be gay because it looks like it. He has got his nails painted he's wearing makeup whereas on the other side he doesn't look so much as feminine

Int Yeah was there anything there with the hair colour again

Alicia Yes for this one yes, the way he has cut his hair. Yeah, I think

Int Do you think hair because obviously we're talking about hair colour before it's just kind of sprung to mind? Do you think hair colour is part of it for the gay male stereotype as well that having brightly coloured hair?

Alicia Yeah yeah

Int Obviously, a few of the pictures you get posted were like two of them and really bright coloured hair, didn't they?

Alicia Yes, they did. I think what it comes down to is colour standing out, then I knew he may be gay

Int That's great. So then just scroll down to the next image. So, this was the next image that Google threw up. Quite interesting, actually I thought, so it come up that this I'm assuming it's a poster for stereotypes. Basically, kind of going against the grain that gay men should be feminine because obviously Gareth Thomas is gay and he's a rugby player. And so, what are your thoughts about this image?

Alicia That's not correct. I don't believe that all gay men are feminine, a lot of gay men are also masculine, for example there was a man came out which I was reading in the Daily mail he is called Carlton, he is not feminine, he's quite masculine. from what I've seen are more like masculine than they are feminine. Yeah. So, I don't believe that that's right.

Int Yeah. Obviously, I think it's such a strong stereotype, isn't it that all gay men have got to be feminine when

Alicia But sometimes it's kind of true that stereotypes are used by small-minded people

Int Yeah

Alicia Yeah. It is not always true, you can't just assume.

Int Definitely. So then just scrolling down to the next set of images. So, these are the gay female stereotype. So, the first image was this lady that came up Lea DeLaria. Yeah. So, what are your thoughts about this image? What made you think Google kind of said, Yep, that's the gay stereotype for lesbians.

Alicia She's, her haircut first and foremost, she has more of a male haircut. She's got tattoos. She's wearing a man's shirt. Her pose as well, how she is posing in the photo

Int Do you think that even a pose is quite a masculine pose as well?

Alicia It's not that masculine but it kind of gives it off as a little bit of a masculine pose

Int Yeah, that's great. And then moving down to the next image. So, this was the next image that came up, the girl with the blue hair so what are your thoughts about this image?

Alicia Straight off the bat it looks to me like like she is a man, she looks more to me like a man, I didn't think or could tell that she's she'll be a female.

Int Okay.

Alicia Obviously it gives off that she is gay mainly because the rainbow coloured shirt, the hairstyle it's a male hairstyle and she has dyed her hair. There is a lot of flamboyant colours

Int Quite bright and bold kind of thing.

Alicia Yeah

Int That's great. Then scrolling down to the third image for lesbian women. What are your thoughts about this one? Why do you think this is the gay stereotype?

Alicia The one on the left looks more like the masculine one and the other one feminine, we have that assumption that females in relationships that it has to be one is masculine attributes, physically one is the man, and one is the woman, yeah.

Int Is there anything like, do you feel that obviously the one on the left then is more masculine? Like even the way they're dressed and things and their hair

Alicia Yeah

Int And then obviously the one on the right is more feminine because she's got longer hair and kind of in a girlier outfit I'd say

Alicia Yeah

Int That's great. So, moving on to homosexual stereotypes. So, the first image that came up was RuPaul from RuPaul's drag race and why do you think this came up as the image for homosexual stereotypes overall?

Alicia Drag, mainly because they are in drag

Int Yeah, mainly just because they're a drag artist.

Alicia That they must be [inaudible]

Int Great Do you think maybe that so that all that kind of being a drag queen would kind of say well yeah, you must be gay then if you're drag queen

Alicia Yeah, that's not, yet again with all of this stuff is not always the case.

Int Right and then the next image that came up was little NAS he's a rapper and singer this was an I'm assuming taken from a show that he was on kind of throwing it out there and kissing another man on stage. So, what, apart from the obvious that there's two men kissing, what else would say the gay stereotype to you from this image

Alicia Because the way they're dressed as well. what make up they are wearing as well. Yeah. The colours, gold

Int Do you think with their outfits it's the lack of it again?

Alicia Yeah.

Int And that it's bright like you said like gold and stuff like that.

Alicia So it's their appearance, first impression is always their appearance

Int Cool. And then the final image for links to homosexuality, is a man wearing a pride flag. What are your thoughts about this image?

Alicia Him walking around the street like that, it would seem that he is gay, but he could be an ally, but other people will not think that at all they would think yes he has a pride round his shoulders, he must be gay

Int If he is wearing it yeah. Do you think the pride flag is quite a large part of the homosexual stereotype?

Alicia Yes

Int So, like if you saw someone wearing like a pride pin badge or even like a pride bracelet, would that kind of show to you that they were gay?

Alicia For me personally I would think they can also be an ally, with other from my own experiences and my friends, straight away would say they're gay

Int Obviously at uni as well we've got the rainbow lanyards haven't, we and lots of people wear them

Alicia A lot of people wear them, it doesn't mean they are all gay because they gave us them because it's such a minority to develop awareness. Mostly allies who wear them nearly everyone I have seen are wearing them. That doesn't mean they're all gay but if they were it would be easier for gay people then, but they are allies. Majority of them are allies. Not always the case that they have to be gay or something to wear one.

Int Yeah, no, definitely. So, I'm just going to stop sharing the screen a minute. Just bear with me a second. Okay, is that stop sharing?

Alicia Yeah.

Int So, I'm just going to ask you a few more questions if that's okay. I just want to touch on your personal experiences. I know your personal experiences are very different to mine through previous conversations we've had. So, if at any point you do feel uncomfortable, and you do want to you do want to stop we don't want to answer your question, please just tell me. Okay. So, have you ever felt the need to conform to the homosexual stereotypes that we've discussed, or have you not been able to?

Alicia I've not been able to, I cannot act in a certain way although I have certain urges because I have the risk of it being, of giving it away to my family members, I have to really erm, what's that word?

Int resists?

Alicia kind of suppress it. Yeah. suppress. Which is really hard to do at times.

Int Yeah, I can imagine. Do you think if so, if you hadn't got those restrictions, do you think maybe you would conform to the homosexual stereotype? Do you think you would dress more masculine or?

Alicia Yeah

Int Yeah, yeah, that'd be the kind of style you'd go for.

Alicia Not fully but yeah

Int Yeah, that's what I do. I'll probably like, I might look just a little bit masculine, like, I'll wear trackies and I wear things like that. But some days, I look really girly. Like, I like to mix it up a little bit. But I suppose I do have that element of the male look; you know what I mean? So obviously, you did mention there like about resisting the LGBTQ stereotypes? So obviously, that's obviously for your own safety, I suppose, so like, obviously, just talk to me a little bit about that, if you could. So, in a sense, you'd have to say that you have to appear heterosexual.

Alicia Yeah, it like I have to, over the years there has been a lot of internalised homophobia and because of it, yeah, to be honest, and also the fact that my younger sisters have got married and I'm not yet married, that raises that has raised actually a questions of why have I not? Why am I not married? What's going on? I made the excuse up until now I can only have, I could have, only have the excuse look I am still in education, so education comes first, and I want to focus on that, and that worked well that did, the excuse, but what am I going to do when I finish university? I'll have to think of something then as well

Int Yeah, to kind of resist it kind of thing. And kind of show that you are heterosexual?

Alicia Yeah, pretend basically.

Int Yeah. Do you feel like obviously when you worked out in your mind that you thought you were gay and attracted to women maybe do you think your image of how you dress yourself did change slightly then or not you couldn't?

Alicia It didn't its, always been like that from the start. I can remember as a old six years old, in primary school I used to try my brothers' clothes and look at myself in the mirror and see how I look in them. I didn't used to like wearing girl's clothes at that's even at the age of six, for some reason I can really remember, I know I did that, I know I did that. And then when I got to year five in primary school, the guy that, I used to choose the guys to hang out with the guys and I used to play football in primary school. You know, when, when, the girls would cheer for me, I would kind of get happy.

Int Yeah.

Alicia Or when guys would score, and the girls would cheer for them. I wanted that, Like I want them to cheer for me as well and do that. I Always, at that time, I wouldn't know that I was gay, but I was gay basically.

Int Always wanted to look masculine in a sense, even from a young age.

Alicia Yeah, I wanted to girls' attention. Yeah. Until I started to grow up realising that this is abnormal in my community, and I could get shunned for it, the consequences are quite lethal. So, from then on, it was like yeah in secondary school that I had to suppress it and pull it down a bit. Because I used to get like told in a derogatory way in secondary school they used to, they used to call me dyke, alien, pussy eater, some nasty words and at that point I thought I need to hide this.

Int Yes, so that made you kind of, I suppose repress it and hide it even more

Alicia And that's where my internalised homophobia came from as well

Int Yeah, it's not good. I wish. I don't know, I wish I wish you had a better journey. You know, I mean, like, it's, it's heartbreaking, really. Awful. And I just my final question really, how do you think we could bring forward homosexual acceptance? So, thinking about your community and

how you were saying, you know, in the Western Community, it's, it's accepted. Whereas in my community, it's not. How do you think we could bring it all, so we'd all be very accepting?

Alicia Understanding, first, I think communities need to be understanding of our situation and what we've gone through mentally, mental health wise, and how it can lead to suicide and others, for us they need to be more understanding. Yes. Okay they may not agree with it but at least be more understanding towards us and don't disown and associate with us. Just, just be understanding of us and don't shun us.

Int Do you think maybe like, a bit more education as well, like you're saying, like, similar to what you're saying there? Do you think maybe learning more about it would help that as well?

Alicia Yeah, like learning about it would help it but they think that they're imposing it on them to be homosexual. It's not that at all, it's just the education of that there is people like this, they exist and how to how to how to be around them how to talk tolerate, it's all about tolerance basically. Teach them how to, like so there is a lot bullying going on in schools towards gay people at higher rate than straight people. I think education is an important factor and needs be put in place. People are taking it the wrong way they think they are imposing, imposing it on them yeah,

Int I saw a good meme the other day about that. And it said, I learned all I learned about at school was straight sex education. Yeah, it turned out gay. So that's basically like, you know, you're not going to turn them gay for teaching them about it.

Alicia Exactly definitely

Int And I thought, that's perfect. Like, you know, basically saying, you know, I didn't even learn about homosexuality, but I'm homosexual. So

Alicia They say that you are surrounding, if you're surrounded, surrounded by heterosexuality, everywhere you go, that you have, that you are going to be heterosexual as well, it's not the case, but there's people who in gay surroundings and they don't turn out to be gay.

Int I have heard that with my daughter, like people have said to me, because obviously, my daughter lives with me and my wife. People have said to me that oh, don't you think that'll turn her gay? I'm like no, she'll be whatever she wants to be.

Alicia Exactly. It's not a choice. They think it's a choice, that people can choose

Int No, it isn't, is it? Definitely. So, I'll round it up there then. And is there anything else that you wanted to add or any final thoughts or questions that you have at all?

Alicia No that's fine, I hope I did answer all the questions correctly.

Int Yeah. Well, there's not a correct answer. You've answered them all perfectly. Like you're, I want to know your experiences and your thoughts. And that's exactly what you've done. So yeah, it's fine. I'm just going to stop the recording.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Amy

Int Just check before I carry on, but usually that means that most of the time on my recordings I'm rambling away, waiting. Okay, just start straightaway. That's come up at the top lovely. So, have you got any questions before we begin at all?

Amy No, I don't think so.

Int Great. If you feel like you don't want to answer anything, just say, if you feel uncomfortable at any point, if you want to stop, just tell me and we can stop the interview. That's no problem.

Amy Yeah.

Int Lovely. Are you sitting somewhere where you feel comfortable speaking as well?

Amy Yeah.

Int Wonderful. So firstly, then I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotype. So, what would you consider to be a gay stereotype?

Amy A gay stereotype? So, I think a gay stereotype could just be how people view someone that is homosexual. So, I think one of the main gay stereotypes that there is at the moment is that gay men tend to be incredibly feminine, or that lesbian women tend to be incredibly butch. And I think, I think nowadays, it isn't as prevalent as it was in previous years, but I still think there's still that hold there that when you see someone that is gay, you expect them to be a certain way.

Int Yeah, definitely and it just kind of going off what you were saying there then about obviously, men having to be more feminine and things like that. When you think about a gay male, what kind of traits do you think of? We were thinking about, like, their personality. Is there anything more to just that femininity?

Amy I think the main word that when you think of a feminine gay man is they're very flamboyant. They tend to dress very feminine, and they may be speak in a higher pitched voice than other men. That maybe I don't know about hair, I'd say their hair can, isn't something that is important in that identity, maybe I don't know. But I definitely think it's something that's more flamboyant. And the way they dress and the way they speak is definitely something that maybe causes it the stereotype. I guess,

Int Could it maybe be like, they go to like, even their job roles and things could even be classed as maybe a feminine

Amy Yeah

Int Like hairdresser.

Amy Yeah

Int Like all those kinds of roles as well.

Amy Yeah, definitely.

Int Great. And then the same about lesbian women really? So, what do you feel kind of hits that stereotype there? Like, what would you suggest would be the lesbian stereotype?

Amy I'd say probably short hair. Maybe dress in not very tight clothing, like more baggy, sort of, not sort of dressy clothing, I guess you'd say. Maybe instead of wearing a dress they'd wear maybe like a suit or something like that. I'd say maybe they're the main ones.

Int Yeah. Great. And have you ever seen these stereotypes applied in real life? So, have you ever maybe done it yourself? Like we all do it without realising I think or, you know, have you seen it where you've been out and one of your friends has been stereotyped that way or anything?

Amy I'd say mainly, maybe, in public, if you sort of see someone who say, if you see like someone, a man who's very flamboyant, you do automatically sort of go, oh, they're gay, and stuff like that. But I don't think I don't think any of my friends have ever been stereotyped like that. And I think it is mainly just when you walk down the street, and you sort of look at someone's appearance, you make that assumption.

Int Yeah, that you can't help it just your brain just goes. Oh, yeah. Yeah. And so current research at the minute is suggesting that homosexuality is more accepted than previously. Obviously, we've made big steps in acceptance towards homosexuality. And what's your view on this? Do you feel like we are really accepting?

Amy I definitely think we've obviously made huge improvements in the world about views on homosexuality and stuff, but I do you still think there's a lot of prejudice there. And, and I do still think there are a lot of stereotypes that I wouldn't say, I'm not sure what sort of group of people still hold a lot of the stereotypes. I know that sort of people that I know. And like my family, my friends, we don't really have or hold any stereotypes, but I do definitely think that there are a lot of people that still have a negative feeling towards people who are homosexual. Yeah.

Int I think in a sense, it's like we've come a long way. But there's still to go in there. Yeah.

Amy It's still there and It's still embedded in stuff so yeah,

Int Definitely. Yeah. So, what I'm going to do now is I'm just going to share the images you sent me, which thank you very much for sending me them. They're great. Let me just get those up. Right, can you see your images?

Amy Yeah

Int I'll zoom them in a little bit so you can see them a bit better. So, looking at your first image of the drag queens from RuPaul. What made you select this image? Can you just talk me through why you chose that as your image?

Amy This image sort of links up my first point where you think of gay men as very flamboyant, very feminine and they sort of, there's a big, I think, when it's to do when you said earlier about how gay men may take part in sort of more feminine work. I think maybe this is another point to that where it's obviously in the entertainment business, they are dancers, singers, you know, they dress up in a very feminine way. I think that's just the main point really, that you expect them to be flamboyant and feminine.

Int Yeah, definitely. Yeah. And then moving on to the second image. And we will just go through each image, really, and just kind of discuss what made you select it? So, what made you select your second image?

Amy I think for this one, I think that there's still a bit of a stereotype around gay men being very promiscuous and being very sexual and, you know, sleeping around with a lot of people, not that that's an issue at all, they can do what they want. But, you know, I still think that maybe that is still a bit of a held stereotype that not many people talk about anymore. I think it's still more down to gay men having to look and act a certain way rather than actually thinking about how people feel about their sexual activity. Yeah. I honestly think maybe the sexual activity between gay men is still looked on in a very negative way. And I don't think many people, especially straight men, I think they're very negative towards the sexual activity between gay men.

Int Yeah, that that, I suppose in a sense that it's disgusting. Like, that's the kind of thing I get from heterosexual men like, oh, why do that for? it is horrible Like,

Amy Yeah.

Int Well like it's each to their own, they probably think that about what you do.

Amy Exactly, exactly. Yeah.

Int Moving on to third image then, which kind of relates to what we were talking to as well about people saying it's dirty and things like that. The HIV AIDS image, what made you select that?

Amy I just still, similar to the other point, I just still think that maybe this is a stereotype that is still quite commonly held and that not really anyone talks about anymore, especially with the AIDS crisis not being that long ago, you know, like my parents remember, like the AIDS crisis, like it was yesterday, you know. So, I still think it might be quite a prevalent stereotype. That not people, many people still talk about.

Int Yeah, maybe like, I think that one kind of sticks with the older generation as well, like, my mom will talk about that quite a lot.

Amy Yeah,

Int I was born in the late 80s. So, you know, it's kind of nearly gone at that point, like, when as I've grown up, but my mom definitely speaks about it quite a lot. Yeah, what happened, and she will say she remember Princess Diana going in the hospital and shaking hands with people who got AIDS, and she was like, it was a massive thing, like, and I was thinking you can't believe it can you

Amy No it seems very surreal that you know, now we obviously know that yes, it's something that unfortunately people still die from and still live with. How it was viewed back then is, it's crazy.

Int And obviously, now people can live on medication for it, and it's undetectable

Amy Recently, I think it was he was last week at some point that a woman with HIV has been cured from it. And she's one of the first ever people to have been fully cured from HIV. So

Int It's amazing. I mean, that's huge, it like steps to where they were in the 80s

Amy It's crazy. Yeah

Int Amazing. Absolutely amazing. So just scrolling down Oh, I love this person. What made you select this image then?

Amy I think it just sort of links to the drag queen picture. To really the more flamboyant side, and the theatrical side, the feminine side, you know, and sort of, and I'd say this image is probably quite inspirational, especially for younger boys who may be really struggling with their not only sexual identity, but gender identity, seeing images like this, as well as drag queens seeing stuff like that can just, I think it just gives them that extra bit of support that they can do what they want, dress how they want, and sort of see that these really famous people don't care. So, you know, why should they care?

Int I think now we you see it more in the media now, don't you? I think then, yeah, previously, and I do think that, again, we've still got a long way to go maybe there as well. But just dressing like this, you know, like, obviously, they're at the Grammys, you know, these images are kind of taken from big shows, aren't they? And yeah, that's amazing that people watching could then be like, oh, actually, I could dress like that, then.

Amy Yeah.

Int They are quite like you said, it's quite a inspiration, isn't it really? So, moving across to the right then to your image of the men together. What made you select that image, then what made you pick that one?

Amy So for this image, my thought behind it was more from a family side of a relationship. I think there's a big stereotype at the moment that gay men can't have children, or maybe that they shouldn't have children. And I think it is less common to maybe see gay men adopt children. Not saying that gay men don't want children. I just feel like there's a lot surrounding the fact that gay men don't have children.

Int Yeah, I've never thought about that before. It's really interesting, actually. Yeah, definitely. You wouldn't think it would you really

Amy No

Int Yeah. Interesting. So, moving down to the lesbian stereotype images. So, the first one on the left there? What made you select that image? And what made you think about the lesbian stereotype?

Amy So I'd say for this one, it's just the common, what should a lesbian couple look like, you've got the one that's very feminine and one that's very butch, you know. And I think that is just what everyone thinks of when you think of as a lesbian couple potentially. And I think that, obviously ignores the fact that everyone comes in every shape and size and whatever, you know, it doesn't have to look like this. But yeah, that was my thought behind it. Really

Int Yeah, definitely. Do you think there's like parts of the image that so obviously, the person on the right, do you think that's your typical lesbian stereotype?

Amy Yes. Yeah, definitely.

Int So like the shirt, short hair, or those kinds of things?

Amy Yeah.

Int Moving over then to the image on the right-hand side. What made you select that image?

Amy So they sort of links to my previous point about the gay men not having a family, I think, when you think of lesbian women who have a child that sort of isn't questioned, and I sort of think people sort of accept that more than maybe gay men having a child, and they wouldn't sit there and go, Oh, okay they've got a kid.

Int Yeah, interesting. Definitely. Think it's much easier for a woman isn't it? Really? Yeah. It's crazy. So, looking at your links to homosexuality then and your first image, the love is love poster. What made you select that image? I'm assuming it's a pride event of some sort.

Amy Yeah. So, these were my thought behind this was just pride, you know, celebrating every sexuality, you can think of, you know, everyone coming together and showing support and stuff

like that, really just showing that it's a very positive thing. And that it's stuff that everyone should be celebrating over. So

Int Yeah, definitely. Do you think maybe the pride flag as well is quite a large part of the homosexual stereotype?

Amy Yeah, I would say so, I think having one flag to symbolise everything is great. Because obviously, within the pride flag, you've then got different flags for each sort of sexuality. So, I think just having one that brings everyone together, is good, is great. Yeah.

Int Think maybe like if you saw someone with, I don't know, Pride Lanyard, you know, like the BCU ones we have or a bracelet or earrings or maybe even wearing the pride flag. Do you think that would make you kind of go, oh, they must be, they must be gay, or do you think maybe that wouldn't be the case with a pride flag?

Amy Um, no. I feel like if I did see someone wearing some sort of visible pride flag that would make me go, oh, they must be part of that community. Yeah. Even though that's not necessarily the case. You know, a lot of people who aren't gay, who is straight still, you know wear that, it symbolises support, whatever. But I don't think that there is a point where you do sort of go, okay, Yeah, though, they must be community. Yeah,

Int Yeah, definitely. And then moving over to the right then the acceptance image. And what made you select that one?

Amy I think it's just how much it's changed over the years and the fact that how views have completely changed. And how now, you know, no one questions it now. Everyone just views it as a positive, well, not saying everyone views it as a positive thing. I think it still can be viewed in a very negative way but, you know, I think no one, really, the majority of people do accept it. Yeah

Int And then the picture that says siblings, what made you select that one?

Amy So I chose this because my brother actually recently came out as bisexual, which was a very big thing. And I think now, because I wouldn't say myself that I'm straight, I wouldn't, I don't necessarily put my sexuality on a label. I am what I am. If I've got a connection with someone then I've got a connection with someone, I don't really care. But I think it was a very big thing for me, to know that I'm not the only person in my family that has, you know, that doesn't have a straight sexuality, I guess. Yeah. And I just think it's, it was just a very big part of my life, and a very big thing for my brother to do to come out as bisexual. So yeah, that's that

Int So maybe like having that support for each other, I suppose and not feeling alone. And

Amy Yeah, definitely.

Int Yeah, that's wicked. That's really nice. And then moving over to it's a sin; I love this programme.

Amy I adore this programme.

Int I'd watch it again, like every week, and what made you pick this then?

Amy I just picked this because I think it was an incredible TV programme. And it obviously highlighted the importance of the AIDS crisis. And I watched it with my mom. And both me my mom adored it, both me my mom sat and cried over it.

Int Oh, that last scene when he'd already died?

Amy Oh, poor Richie.

Int It's too much.

Amy I could cry all over again. Yeah, I just think it was a fantastic programme. And I think it did very well in portraying the AIDS and HIV. Yes, it's serious in the fact that people die from it, and it is obviously a lifetime disease, but that it's not, it's not a negative thing about a person. You know, they are still, they still are people. They still have lives. They still have amazing personalities, you know, it's just something that they have to deal with. Yeah. And I think it was just a very positive way in showing how it impacts everyone and especially when showing how Ritchie's family and the shame that they had. But then you saw the love that other people had for Richie. Yeah. And it just I think it was good in showing that contrast.

Int Lots of different people watched it as well. Like you said, your mom, like my mom watched it as well. And that's not normally my mom's cup of tea. Really Yeah.

Amy There was definitely parts where my mom was cringing a little bit. Oh, God. Oh, no. For me, it didn't bother me at all. But no, my mom still loved it. She adored it. So

Int Yeah, it's really good. I think it's kind of more people, not together. But it showed that he said he showed what went on and that it is it is, you know, livable, and people are still normal when they've got HIV and AIDS. So yeah, I think it was quite a monumental programme. Really. Yeah. And then moving over to call me by your name. I've actually not seen this, but I've heard a lot about it. So yeah. Talk me through that one.

Amy So I picked this because I love this film. It's a great film. I've very recently I think it was last week, maybe week before, I finished reading the book as well. And the book was even better than the film. It was so great. And I think it was just it, it's a good film to show sort of the troubles that people have with accepting their sexuality. Because the whole basis of the film is that there's one guy who comes and lives with a family in Italy to finish off part of his thesis and then him and the son fall in love basically. And there's sort of a lot of, and it's from the son's perspective. So, he, there's a lot of questioning whether what he's feeling is the right thing and if this other person feels the same way and he also sort of has sexual activity with a female as well. So those they're not they're not all sexuality is straight or gay. It's very fluid, you know. And it's just, it's just a lovely story. It's a lovely story. And it's sad at the end, and it just makes me, I just love it.

Int I'll have to give it a watch. Is it on Netflix?

Amy I think it's on Amazon Prime

Int Oh, I've got that. Yeah

Amy Pretty sure it's on Amazon Prime. And no, it's, it's so good. And you should read the book as well, the books even more. It's just the writing is beautiful as well, it's so good.

Int I'll Look into that. Definitely. Yeah, then moving over into Orange is the New Black image. And what made you select this one?

Amy So I selected this, because I think it's the only media representation of lesbian women at the moment. And obviously, it feeds into this stereotype that in prisons, everyone's a lesbian. And the, you know, there's so much sexual activity in prisons. And I think it feeds into the whole Butch lesbian and feminine lesbian stereotype. Because everyone in it, is like either or, they're sort of sort of pushed into those groups, type of thing. And I don't know, I think that was about it really, that trying to think of other you know, lesbian portrayals, I can't really think of any

Int No, yeah, I think like myself, when I think of media and any, you know, homosexual kind of representation. I think Orange is the New Black that pops to my head first as well. Yeah.

Amy Especially because it is the whole the whole point of the show is that everyone's lesbian. Yeah.

Int Yeah, definitely.

Amy Whereas obviously you have lesbian characters and other TV programmes and stuff like that, but none of it is centred around the fact that everyone's lesbian. Yeah, I think that was the only reason I picked that up.

Int And then the image that says, ignored. Do you want to talk me through that one?

Amy I still think that, maybe, okay, so for this I picked, and I think that everyone is so focused on being gay and lesbian, that a lot of the other sexualities get ignored. Specifically, for people like me, who don't necessarily think about what sexuality they are, they just, you know, sort of are what they are, and go, whoever they go with, I think that there's sort of the pressure that you have to be part of a category, and then you have to be one or the other. I think especially with bisexual people. There's a lot of comments that get thrown around saying, oh, it's just a phase, you'll be one or the other. Not saying My mum is homophobic anywhere anyway, at all. But when, obviously, my brother came out as bisexual, one of the first thing she did say to me was, oh, it's probably a phase. And I was just like, oh, no, don't say that. It's not like just, you know, let him get on with it.

Int Because a lot of people come out bi first. Yeah, like I did. I came out bi first, then came out gay. Yeah, now I identify as queer. So, it's changed again. I mean, so. Yeah, I think that's why being bi got that element to it as well, that they'll decide what they are after in it. My mom said it as well. Oh, it's just a phase. And now married to a woman. Even though it's six years?

Amy Yeah. Yeah, I think it's just sort of the ignorance behind it. And not saying that people don't realise it hurtful. But especially I know, for a fact if I wasn't comfortable in my sexuality, if I'd heard someone say that to me if, like, if my mom had said that, to me, that is just a phase that would have sort of made me go, oh, am I not right? Do I not feel okay? and, you know, am I feeling wrong? And should I really think about, you know, being part of one community and not the other, type thing. So, yeah, I think that's why I chose that image.

Int Yeah, definitely is really good one. And then also, we did speak briefly about pride flags before in your first image. Is there anything else you'd like to add with that image?

Amy So I think this sort of counteracts the other image in the fact that yes, there is an element of people feeling ignored within the community, but at the same time, there's a multitude of flags, to you know, represent everyone. And I think a lot of people don't know what these flags mean. I mean, I wouldn't know what most of them are

Int I don't know. Right one with the black and white, not a clue

Amy I know two of them. Yeah, one of them is trans and one of them is bisexual. But other than that, you know, I think even though that there's a lot of flags out there to represent everyone, there's just little knowledge around this stuff.

Int Yeah, I know, the lesbian one as well. That's the bottom left and then two over. That's the that's the gay man one.

Amy Okay, see, I'm learning stuff. Yeah.

Int The yellow in the purple circle. I ain't got a clue what that one is either. not got a clue. I'll be researching after. Yeah.

Amy Yeah, I just picked that image to sort of show that everyone's represented, you know, and it does sort of contradict but link to the other image. So yeah,

Int Definitely. And then the bottom image there the men together, what made you select that image?

Amy Yeah, I'm, I'm going to have to think about that one. I can't remember why I think that, and I'm not entirely sure. I think it might have been something to do with sort of the stereotype that all men are very flamboyant. And they

Int Yeah

Amy I mean, first thing that comes to my mind right now, is that maybe everyone's flamboyant. Or I think, I think maybe there might be a bigger community around gay men, than there is gay women. And because if you think of drag, there certainly can be women who participate in drag, you know, and whether that's they present themselves male or female, you know. But if you think of drag race, there's never been, well I think there's been one female.

Int Yeah, this year, they're in the UK.

Amy And then I think there's been one straight man on it. I think that's also this year. But not every single one of them has been a gay man, or I think a couple of them have maybe been trans and bisexual, but at the time of filming the show, yeah, they were a gay man. So yeah, I think I think it's just that's what I was thinking behind it was sort of feeding into the gay stereotype and the fact that maybe there's a bigger sense of community around gay men than there is other sexualities.

Int Yeah, interesting. So, I actually selected some images as well. So, I'll just put those up now. So, these images aren't selected by me. So, they're not my personal bias. So basically, what I did is I went into Google on the first of December, and I put in gay male stereotype. First three images then gay lesbian stereotype. Female stereotype. Sorry. And then homosexual stereotype. Just selected, what came up, really and so we'll just go through these images, again, similar to what we did be yours. Just what are your thoughts on them really? So, looking at the first image, the

man in the leather, the cartoon image? Why do you think maybe Google selected this as the gay male stereotype?

Amy For me, the first thing that comes to my mind is the idea of promiscuity and the fact that gay men are very promiscuous, very sensual. I view it as a very sexual image. And I think maybe it links to the fact that maybe that, especially at Pride events, gay men tend to dress a very sexual way. I think, not. Not everyone, I think, obviously, a lot of people don't. But I think that is where you see it a lot. And I have seen a lot of comments about, you know, the way people dress at pride, and maybe how that especially because there's obviously children there that maybe sometimes it's inappropriate. And I feel like that links to the negative stereotypes of gay men, and sort of the negative aspects that maybe they're inappropriate, and stuff like that. And yeah, I view that in a sexual way, I guess.

Int Yeah. No, that's great. And then moving over to the image on the right, the blue hair, what are your thoughts about this image?

Amy So I think that links to the femininity side of it, and the fact that gay men tend to be stereotyped to be drag queens, or dress flamboyantly and just take part in feminine activity, I guess.

Int Yeah. Do you think this would kind of represent the gay male stereotype? So, this is like a perfect kind of image for it?

Amy Yeah I think it does. Yeah.

Int And what do you think what parts of the image would really apart from obviously the femininity but is there any other parts of the image that kind of make you think that's definitely the gay stereotype

Amy And I think even the side that doesn't have the make up on, I think because the, you know, the eyebrows are very shaped, and its very sort of perfect. I think maybe that feeds into it as well. That gay men are very groomed. You know, they seem to be very groomed in stuff like that, I guess.

Int Yeah. Is that like there's anything about like, because obviously we mentioned briefly body shape with lesbian women. And yeah, do you think there's anything there like, with gay men?

Amy Yeah, I think when you think of a gay man, you think of someone that's very skinny. I think I think that's a very big one. And I just, yeah, you think of someone that's made, not scrawny, but sort of lanky, skinny, yeah. Rather than like anyone else with any other body type, I guess. Yeah.

Int Yeah. When I looked at it, then I hadn't thought about it, collarbones, yeah. That was really quite prominent. Yeah. They must be quite slim, obviously. So then scrolling down to this third image. And so, I'm assuming this was for like a stereotype campaign and it's Gareth Thomas, the Welsh rugby player. I think. I'll just zoom in a bit more just in case. So, what are your thoughts around this image then?

Amy I think it's very good in getting people to question their own beliefs and stereotypes around gay men. Because obviously, you know, it is making you go, oh, wait, he's not very feminine. Yeah. So, I think it is a good way to get people to question what they think. But I suppose the issue there is that you have very little celebrity influence of gay men who aren't feminine. So yeah, you're using a very good example of someone who isn't feminine but who else isn't feminine? And people see, especially in sport, especially in rugby, rugby's probably one of the worst sports I think for masculinity. Yeah.

Int Toxic to be fair, toxic masculinity.

Amy Toxic masculinity, yeah. And I think people don't realise how much of an impact sport like that can have. Because I know a few people who play rugby and one of them's not a slim lad and he remembers growing up if shopping in certain shops would get, he'd get comments from other lads that he played rugby with saying that he's fat and stuff, even though he's incredibly fit, you know, he runs around for eighty, how long is it? That you know, just because you know, you're a bigger lad doesn't mean that you're fat and stuff like that. And so, I guess it leads into the whole toxic masculinity and getting people to question their beliefs.

Int Yeah, I can imagine it was quite scary for Gareth Thomas to be honest to

Amy Yes. Yeah, it probably was.

Int Okay. You know, it's like, in like in football, isn't it?

Amy Yeah. I can't think of one footballer that's openly gay.

Int But in a way, maybe that could be like, if someone was, what an influence that would be.

Amy Yes I think it'd be crazy.

Int For something like a big football and or a big rugby player and come out and say, I'm gay. You know, I play for Man U or whatever. That'd be huge. Like, so good for young lads who are worried about it like,

Amy Yeah, definitely, definitely

Int Be like, monumental, really. So, scrolling down to the gay female stereotype. So, the first image that came up was Lea DeLaria from Orange is the New Black. And what are your thoughts on this image? Why do you think Google selected this is the stereotype?

Amy I think this just leads straight into how lesbians should look really, you know, the butch lesbian and because, you know, in Orange is the New Black, she plays a very big character and it's just sort of showing that lesbian women should be very masculine, I guess. Yeah, I think so

Int What parts of the image would you say are masculine?

Amy I'd say the short hair, you know, she's wearing a shirt. I say even the glasses, even though I wouldn't necessarily see a man wearing glasses like that, but I think they just exaggerate the masculinity. Really

Int Yeah. I never thought about it because I suppose because they're not delicate. And yeah, you know that.

Amy I think what it is, I think it's just because they're very bold and the very out there.

Int Yeah, interesting. Roll down a little bit there. So, this was a second image that came up.

Amy Okay.

Int Okay. So, what are your thoughts on this image?

Amy I'm not really sure, actually.

Int Yeah. Do you think there's anything that links the lesbian stereotype?

Amy I'd say, I'm sort of linking back to the Butch thing and the fact that they've got short hair. But it's all portrayed in a very feminine way. Yeah. So, it's a bit not confronting, but it's a bit confusing. I don't know. It just makes you question. You know, what the image is?

Int Yeah. Yeah. What it was for, or? I don't know whether maybe because of the rainbow flags. Maybe that's why threw it up at me.

Amy Maybe, maybe.

Int I'm just going to check that we're still recording. Yep, that's great. So just scrolling down to the third image that came up? And what are your thoughts about this image? So why was this selected as a lesbian stereotype image?

Amy I'm not sure. Because obviously, there's an age difference there. But I think these days, when you think of a lesbian couple, you think of people who are the same age you don't you think of like an older lesbian, I guess, I'm not sure.

Int Do you think it kind of moves away from that usual because obviously, like, when we think about,

you know, the image of Lea DeLaria, and the image that you had with the more feminine, more masculine like that, kind of representative a heterosexual relationship. Do you think it kind of moves away from that, really, and doesn't really show the stereotype?

Amy Yeah, I definitely think it does. Because obviously, both of them look feminine. So, I think it does sort of move away from the stereotype of what a lesbian couple should look like, as well as moving away from the, because I think a big thing as well is that you forget that older people still have, you know, sex, they still sexual needs, they still want to explore their sexual identity

and stuff like that. So, I think it does sort of make you go, oh, yeah, there is older people who still have found their sexuality and so on or explore that.

Int Yeah. I think that like, sometimes we forget that older people are gay, too.

Amy Yeah. You do.

Int Automatically think of young people, don't you all the time,

Amy I think as well, if you think of it older gay couple you think of gay men. I don't think I because I could not think of an elderly lesbian couple. I don't think I've ever seen one. The only one that I can think of is on Dr Who there's an episode where they're stuck in this like, alien traffic jam thing. And they're in one of the cars there is an elderly lesbian couple, but they look more like sisters. That's why I think maybe if you saw a les, an elderly lesbian couple, you wouldn't necessarily realise it.

Int Like, maybe we have seen them. But we just don't know they're friends or yeah. I remember watching a documentary on Netflix about an elderly couple. And they were a lesbian couple, but they'd hidden their love, oh you'll have to try and find it. It was the cutest thing. Obviously. They had love for each other. And they'd live together but told everyone they were friends. Yeah. Because obviously it was in, you know, the 40s and 50s and stuff. But they were moving into an old people's home. And they'd actually came out as lesbian, and they were about 80 or 90 years old. I kept saying to my wife that's going to be me and you that. Like, that was also good to see that, like we were saying, you know, you don't really see an elderly, lesbian couple in anything really, or in real life. So yeah, it's nice to have a bit of representation I suppose on the telly and stuff. So, scrolling down to the homosexual stereotype so things that cropped up. So obviously, the first one was RuPaul so as soon as I put in homosexual stereotype, he was the first image that came up. Why do you think that was the case? Why do you think this image was selected?

Amy I think it's just because I think it's just drag is such a huge part of the gay community that, you know, when you think of, like any sort of gay event, really, you expect a drag queen to be there. Yeah. And obviously, everyone I know, so many people that watch RuPaul drag race and love it. You know. So, I think it's just it's now become such a well-known programme. Yeah, everyone knows what it is. Everyone knows what happens on it, you know? So, I just think it's just a huge part of the community now.

Int Yeah, I think he's quite, RuPaul is quite an icon, I suppose from it as well.

Amy Yeah. Very true.

Int Yeah. And so, scrolling down to the second image that came up, so that's a little Nas. I'm assuming it was taken from an awards, maybe he performed somewhere. So, what crops up with that image for you then? So, obviously, they're kissing. So, I'm assuming that's the main reason why. But is there anything else that kind of springs to mind with the homosexual stereotypes?

Amy I think it just links back to the fact that the sexualization of it, really, because I know, especially when lil NAS came out as gay, and started, you know, making his music videos a lot more promiscuous and stuff like that. He got a lot of backlash from it. A lot of people were very offended by what he did. But you know, he's still embracing it. He's still very this is me; this is who I am, you know. But I do think it links to the fact that it's inappropriate, and that gay men are inappropriate and what they do is inappropriate.

Int Yeah. There's anything around their clothing as well?

Amy Flamboyant. You know, the only word that comes to mind again, it's very eye catching, you know, it's very out there. There's very little of it. So yeah, it's just the flamboyancy of it, I guess.

Int Yeah. Do you think the, like when we say about like, the less clothing like, sometimes gay men wear. Do you think maybe that seems feminine as well? Like, is that just thinking off the top of my head, really, because obviously, girls wear crop tops and if we seem to wear less clothing, and think you know what I mean? Like?

Amy I definitely think it's, that is part of it. But I think it's definitely still a sexual thing. Yeah. Rather than more of a feminine thing. I think it's feminine from the first get go but I think the more you see that, you see it as a sexual thing, rather than anything else. Yeah.

Int Definitely. And then just the final image there. So, it's a man walking down the street with his pride flag on. Yeah. And what springs to mind there when you look at this image?

Amy And I think it's just, you know, the pride events, really. I'm assuming it's someone that's maybe walking from a pride, maybe the pride is finished. They are going home, and I don't know, that's all I really think of to be honest

Int Does it represent the homosexual stereotype the flag and things?

Amy I don't I don't I think the only reason it's sort of linked to it is because it's obviously the pride flag. I don't think there's anything else about the image that would make you question it, without the pride flag that was just someone walking down the street, isn't it? Exactly. Yeah. So, I think that is the only thing that sort of links it to homosexuality, I guess.

Int Yeah, definitely. And so, thinking about, obviously, your images and my images? Do you feel like there has been any differences between them? Or do you feel like they've been quite similar?

Amy I think they are very similar. Yeah. Yeah, very similar. And I think both of them maybe have negative and positive points to all of them. And I think with my images, what I struggled with was, I found that thinking of lesbian stereotypes was a lot harder than thinking of homosexual men stereotypes. And I don't know why. And I did sit there. And I think, why am I really struggling to think of lesbian stereotypes, but I think that was reflected in the fact that I had a lot of images of gay men, and then very few for lesbian women on mine. Yeah, yeah. So, I don't know.

Int Do think there's, there's similarities between what has cropped up as well, in the sense that obviously, gay men are seen as more feminine and lesbian. Yeah. So, you think there's definitely the similarities.

Amy Definitely similarities yeah.

Int I'll stop sharing the screen then. Okay, great. So just the last few questions, really. And so, I know, obviously, you don't identify as homosexual. But you said, you know, you just kind of, I think you put queer in your Qualtrics. Yeah. And you just attracted who you're attracted to basically. So just kind of touched on your personal experiences really? Have you ever felt the need but obviously, when you told people that, you know, you're interested in men and women? Have you ever felt the need that you had to conform to a homosexual stereotype or an LGBTQ stereotype at all?

Amy I don't think so. I don't think there's been any sort of stereotype that I've had to. I think the thing that I've always struggled with, is that the I've only slept with men. I've never slept with a woman. And I think that confuses people where if I ever tell people that, you know, I don't care what gender someone is, if I've got a connection with them, and I'm attracted to them, then I am, it confuses people when I say I've never slept with a woman. Yeah, because they sort of do the whole well, how do you know then? You know, I think that only one that has sort of come up in my life is that people question your sexuality because your experience.

Int Yeah. Which is terrible. Really? I mean, what gives them the right to question?

Amy I know, I know,

Int How you feel you know, do you know what I mean like? Sometimes people blow my mind. No, filter. Is there, so obviously, have you ever felt? Because obviously, you've never kind of conformed to that stereotype. Have you ever kind of felt that you've actively resisted it, In a sense? So, because I know, like my personal experience, when I did identify and realise that I liked women, as well. I kind of made myself look more lesbian if that made sense. I dressed more masculine because I thought I had to look that way. And that it would show the people that I was interested. But then in other senses, if I went for a job interview, I'd resist it. You know, I

mean, to like, think I need to look more feminine. Yeah. If that makes sense. So, have you ever felt that you've had to do that, like, kind of move away from a stereotype?

Amy I'm not sure. And I think maybe sort of the opposite of you. Well, there has maybe been times where I felt like my outfit has made me look very Butch but so I've gone oh, maybe people will think I'm gay if I wear this. That's not a bad thing at all, but I do. Especially when I was a teenager, I think there was a couple of times where I'd look at one of, because there was a girl in my friendship group who was lesbian, and I think I'm dressed in the same way as Lea, and Lea looks very gay. So, I don't want to look gay. The only thing that maybe comes to mind is that maybe when I was younger, I did sort of resist looking a certain way. Yeah,

Int Just in case. Yeah. No, I think we all did that. I remember at school, like, debating it, but obviously I went to school in like, 1997 to 2002, I was at high school. Yeah. It definitely wasn't cool to be gay. No way. I hadn't thought about that. Either that was a time where I'd resist it as well because I'm thinking I don't want anyone to think that. I might like Girls Yeah, yeah, like, I think, oh, no, I need to be as feminine as possible with my terrible foundation. It's terrible look, really, but yeah, anything to avoid it, I suppose. So just closing question really now. How do you think we could bring forward acceptance of homosexuality? So obviously, we spoke a little bit about it before and how we feel that acceptance is there, but there's still a way to go. So, what do you think we could do to improve it and kind of make it even more accepting?

Amy I think the biggest thing is education. Yeah, the biggest thing is, you know, bringing it into schools. Because where if you think of like sex education in schools, it's always a man and a woman, you don't see anything else. You don't have specific lessons on how to be careful in other relationships. And obviously, there is the issue that it is children you're talking to. So, at what point is it acceptable, but at the same time, should we question what at what point is it acceptable but acceptable? Because it's acceptable for straights to talk about a straight couple. So why should we put a time limit on when it's acceptable to talk about homosexual couples? And obviously, there is a lot of religious issues. Obviously, if there's people who have certain religious beliefs, and they don't want their children exposed to that, then, you know, that is fair enough. But I think the biggest thing is education and also media representation. Yeah, I think there needs to be more gay and queer characters and stuff, which I definitely think there is, there has been a development on that, but I still think it's lacking in it. I think those two are the two main areas is education and media.

Int Yeah, I think as well in the media, the portrayal of gay men and women is those stereotypes as well.

Amy It does it does.

Int I think they need to show other gay people. Yeah. Like other. So, I think that if you put, I don't know Hollyoaks or EastEnders, all those kinds of things. The gay men are always quite feminine and then the lesbian women are quite Butch. So, I think maybe, yeah, they need to show more diverse and use, you know queer people, non-binary people. Yeah, I think there needs to be, I think media could make a massive impact on acceptance definitely. So, I think that is everything there so I would just, is there any final questions before I turn the recording off or anything you want to add at all?

Amy No don't I don't think so.

Int Okay, I'll just stop the recording now.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Carl

Int We definitely know it is recording. Yep. There we go. Great. So, I will make a start then. Have you got any questions before we make a start? Is there anything that you are concerned about or anything?

Carl No that nothing pops to mind so no,

Int Lovely, are you nice and comfortable and you feel safe speaking where you are?

Carl Yes.

Int Wonderful. So firstly, I want to say thank you for supplying the images that I asked you for. I will also be supplying some images as well that we will discuss then we'll do a few questions first, and then we'll jump into the images and have a little chat about those. So firstly, I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be a gay stereotype?

Carl From what perspective I mean about gay men or lesbian women?

Int Overall, really, you know, you can talk about gay men, lesbian women, homosexual stereotypes as a whole. And what kinds of things spring to mind when you think about homosexual stereotyping?

Carl Can put these, talk about the different groups at once as well?

Int Yeah, yeah.

Carl Okay. I mean, it's far as to say with gay women goes 'I'd say its main stereotype is well things like I expect most lesbians to have short hair, or possibly, to also look a bit. I don't know how to describe it. They look a bit tough.

Int Yes.

Carl Yeah.

Int Like a masculinised appearance?

Carl Yeah, that's how I describe it. Yeah.

Int A gay man. What kind of things would you think for that?

Carl I think most people expected gay men to even look quite young or quite bold, not so hairy, looks very well after their appearance for, kind of looks very camp or very fem

Int Yeah. what would you describe this camp? Like? What kind of visually? Would that kind of explain?

Carl Well, the personality is quite flamboyant. And the dress kind of wildly and their voice sounds kind of elevated.

Int Okay, great. And how do you think these stereotypes are applied to homosexual individuals? Do you think maybe they're applied in a malicious way? Or maybe we do that without realising? Kind of not by accident, but you don't kind of realise you're doing it. And how do you think they are applied to gay people? Would you think maybe both?

Carl Think it maybe both? I think it also depends on the context. Maybe some people outside of the gay community don't have, aren't as informed as it could be that not all people in the community are the same.

Int Yeah, definitely. So, you feel like maybe in the LGBT community, it's very much we know, there's many different stereotypes. Whereas outside the gay community, there might be different views that there is just this very singular, gendered stereotype.

Carl Yeah, that's how things fit. Yeah.

Int That's wonderful. And so, we have discussed a little bit about the different features for men and women there. So, I'll kind of skip over those questions. when have you seen these stereotypes applied in real life? so thinking about real life situations for yourself? Or maybe for friends or even in the media?

Carl So for possibly media I'd say, on TV programmes, such as things like well, a well programmes about gay people, or people such as, what was that one on Channel Four called a while ago about that?

Int It's a sin?

Carl Yeah, that's the one. Yeah, I think that one of all, the way the characters were betrayed, it has a few stereotypes in it.

Int Yeah. And they kind of stick to them, don't they?

Carl Yeah. So, it was quite rigid in the way the characters looked in them. There are also mainstream films like *Love Simon* or *Call Me by Your Name*. So, the main characters also fit kind of like a typical stereotype of what a young gay man would look like.

Int Yeah, definitely get what you mean. Yeah. And,

Carl And places and will mean you probably know it's a fox in Birmingham, don't you? Yeah. So, I think most of the crowd that go there. Well, thinks it's most mostly lesbians I think, I don't know if, I don't want to say it's in a bad way. I just feel like there's I wouldn't say it's a stereotype. It's just like kind of a kind of general people you get in there, like how they dress and how they look it's like or they're like this stereotypical sort of lesbian look.

Int Yeah, do you feel like they all look quite similar in there? Like, there's not really an array of different lesbian stereotypes? Or are there different versions?

Carl Can be different versions? I mean, it depends on who's there. I mean, I mean, I've been there on few occasions with friends. And so, friends I go, if they can all look quite different. But so, when I've been there, on off of nights, most of the women look the same. Really

Int Yeah. What would you say they look like?

Carl So well, traditional well lesbian looks so kind of bit more masculine looking for a woman

Int Yes. maybe like short hair and things.

Carl Yeah.

Int Great. so, the current research that's out there at the minute does actually suggest that homosexuality is far as homosexuality is far more accepted now that it's that it's ever been, we are taking really big steps in acceptance. what's your view on this? Do you feel like we are that accepted now? How do you feel about it?

Carl I'm not sure I've haven't read some research myself. But I'd say in the wider community. Yes. It's a it's more accepted of seeing things to suggest it is more accepted. Socially and in the media. Yeah, it's still it's sad. It's little pockets of things that can happen now. And again, that would look like things haven't moved so forward. In other parts about like, how it's become a bit more hostile around some parts of Birmingham, what like what we had over the summer, last year, when all those incidents were happening, I think on the hurst Street area.

Int Do you feel like we are making the right steps but there's still that space? Maybe for us to move on a bit more?

Carl Yeah, I think so. But also felt maybe some sometimes you're always going to encounter those pockets of well, what would you call it? If I didn't if you call it fear or hate because you say it's never going to get 100% acceptance everywhere, are you, it's going to be there. well Black communities, isn't it? And Asian community isn't. So, things are pretty meaningful to them in terms of racial acceptance, but you'd always get little pockets of discrimination or hate or get some more anywhere you go.

Int Yeah, yeah, I get what you're saying. Definitely. And I'll pop your images up. So, I'm just going to share the screen bear with me for a minute. Okay, so can you see that your images?

Carl Yes, I can.

Int Lovely. I think I've put them in the right order when you sent them over. so, we'll firstly look at the gay male images you selected. So, can you just talk me through why you chose the first image of the flag?

Carl Think I chose that because it more felt like it represents the role in my view that well to be a gay, some people think to be a gay then you have to identify with the flag don't you to be a gay man. And you have to be out and fit with every idea of where it is to be gay to be part of the community. Whereas you don't I mean not everyone's always out and not everyone's always on display about it or not everyone pinpoints to every group within a set flag.

Int No, that makes sense. Definitely and why do you think this would be, would form part of the gay stereotype, the flag?

Carl Think well for people outside of the gay community might well expect that to be how more gay people portray themselves? It's how they identify. Right? That's the only way they know to explain it.

Int Yeah, no, I understand what you're saying. Definitely. I'm just scrolling down to the second image then the three men and could you talk me through this image then please I'm not quite sure who they are. Actually. talk through it with and just explain why you chose it for me.

Carl Yeah, they are actors. So, the man in the middle is Nick stone. He was on love Simon. He played the main character Simon Spellman. And the character on the left that's trying to think... I've got the film with that somewhere, is. Yeah, that's Timothy. So yeah, they've played main characters in LGBT films too, in you call me by your name. What was trying to illustrate with that One is that I know, this is more of like a stereotype, not outside of the gay community, but more inside. So, most of the time, you guess. So, it's like most men my age. So, say like around 18 to about 30, we can't kind of get this pressure stereotype on us within the community itself. So, they expect us all to look like, very well kept. Or look, I don't know if you're familiar with the term, it's called twink, to expect them to be thin, or maybe a little bit of a well-kept body a little bit muscular, but not too muscular. So, a little bit thin, and be very good looking. And have a good sense of dress sense. So it's just like, didn't know how could I describe it, you know, how younger women, they've also got that expectation to look pretty and well kept, like wear, say, a decent amount of makeup or hair worn a certain way or purchasing brands of clothes, or I mean, it's like that for gay men, but it's more like a sort of physical aspect to have and sort of aesthetic aspect, if that makes sense.

Int So always kind of expected to look well-groomed hair nice and kind of lean

Carl Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Int Kind of looking. I suppose in a degree those like you kind of compared it, like, very feminine aspects really of being very groomed. And eyebrows done, and all those kinds of things similar to what you were saying about girls being expected to do certain things as well, I suppose.

Carl Yeah.

Int And so, I would just scroll down to your next gay male image. And can you just talk me through why you selected this image piece and why you think it represents the gay stereotype for men?

Carl Well, so my idea with that one is well if, say, a gay man is in a relationship, per se, I think most people outside the LGBTQ community expect most people are coming from relationship to look kind of similar in a way. Okay, so the two men in the image looks kind of similar, they both well say young, both the same ethnicity, both the same build, yeah. And so, most of the time, couples have comments about if they have different ages so for different age, they may like say, if one partner is quite young, and the other is quite old, or if one partner has a different ethnicity to the other. Or if you get one man whose looks very different to the other. So, if you've got one, it's kind of got more like the twink look to him or a bit more muscular to him, like he goes to the gym quite regularly. And then you've got the other who's kind of like got a bear look to him, or who's quite hairy or quite a bit chubby, he sometimes gets a bit of a look well comments about it. I mean, not just only people outside of our community, but inside our community as well. It can be quite a bit of like, stereotypes, and prejudice that people can incur. Yeah. There's also this expectation in the gay community that some people, well there's a bit of disputes about it. Some people think you have to be in a relationship to be happy and fulfilled in yourself as a gay man. I think others well Don't think that there's that sort of pressure. It's kind of split. Yeah, I think that can also be quite common in both heterosexual communities can't it though, so think like that. Don't they that there's pressure to be with someone. Yes. And be fully fulfilled in life.

Int Yeah, like love is everything. Yeah, happy, and yeah, kind of fulfils? Definitely. So just scroll down to your lesbian female images. So again, the lesbian flag has been displayed there. what made you choose this image then?

Carl For the same reasons, such as choosing the gay male flag, really so. So, so not all, lesbian women may identify with a flag or them say not all of them might fit into, in every single group role portrayed on the flag, the colours betray or there might not be, as well public about it. Instead, they might not be as out with their sexuality or the might of just came out as lesbians or are still becoming more aware of what it means to be a lesbian or make up their own minds of lesbian is. So, the flag is what's probably more publicly identifies as what lesbian is but say everyone has different ideas of what that might be.

Int Yeah, definitely. Just scrolling down a little more here. So, looking at the image on the left of the girl in the green shirt, and what made you select this image, then what parts of the image made you think of a lesbian woman?

Carl So, when I was looking on the internet I did search for stereotypical images of a lesbian woman, and that one did come up and I thought well in my mind yes, so that well is what most people expected lesbian woman to look like. So short haircuts and a more masculine dress sense. So still kind of like a well, I don't know if I'm using the right terminology to describe the shirt, but it's sort of like a sort of punk rocky sort of style. So, and I don't know how else I can describe it really

Int Would you say that kind of imagery, kind of encompasses the lesbian stereotype? Like all those things you said about the short hair and shirt.

Carl Yeah, that's definitely what we would encompass, yeah.

Int Yeah. Great. And then moving on to the image on the right of the two women kissing and what made you select this image then?

Carl Think about the same reasons as gave for the gay men as well for those gay men could but there's also difference, I felt with lesbian women, it can be a bit more intense. Yeah. But I feel like some time I've seen some sometimes seen this happen, so sometimes maybe people won't believe, people are, well women are lesbian, if they don't say show it. I mean, like they expect them to, like kiss in public or hold hands. And it's just a say, expectation that well, some people are well comfortable with, public displays of affection. Or you have to rub it people's noses in it to be like, or you or prove it to them that you are a certain sexuality whereas you don't?

Int Maybe because of their appearance because they look feminine?

Carl Yes, because the women in this photo they look and don't look like the stereotypical lesbian. They look more like what will be the say the sort of image of her more heterosexual woman wouldn't it, Yeah, but so I think maybe if, say someone well a heterosexual man saw and these women and this woman comments, they're a lesbian, they might not necessarily believe them. It's just maybe the culture we live in today like, say LGBTQ, is more accepted but sometimes you can still get that response if a woman looks a certain way, and say maybe and sometimes you might, you might not get believed that she identifies as lesbian.

Int No, yeah, I totally get what you mean. Definitely. Scrolling down to the homosexuality, images, obviously, we've got the pride flag. So, I'm assuming the same reasons again. Why choosing the pride flag? Is there anything else you wanted to add about choosing the pride flag?

Carl Yeah, I also choose that because that's mainly how I know most LGBTQ+ people identify themselves with a flag. So, I mean, as far as I've been trying to remember when the rainbow flag first came about, when I first started, came out, the flag wasn't displayed so much. This was going back to about, so when I first started exploring it was about what 2012 between 2014 So the rainbow, rainbow flag wasn't widely used so much back then I think it was more started being used about 2016, 2017. Maybe?

Int Yeah. it became quite a big figure in the community.

Carl So but I feel like when people want to say who acts or are looking for signs of, well, if an area might be LGBT friendly, or if someone identifies as LGBT, they might be looking for the rainbow flag might they, Yeah, So when certain LGBTQ are trying describe how they identify as a certain person within the LGBT community, so they might say, I don't know, I'm not sure

what to each of the colours account for but they might say, red for gay man or red for lesbian woman. Yeah,

Int No, that makes sense. Scrolling down to your second image, and you want to talk me through why you chose this one, please.

Carl Yeah, that's an image of Brighton. So, for like, well that was the main place in the UK where homosexual sexuality first became accepted, wasn't it? Yeah. I feel like in the UK, that's its well, the main idea of well, where most gay people might go in for a short-term holiday within the UK. So, when people say think of a gay community, they might associate it with Brighton. It's where it's most commonly known.

Int Do you feel like it's more accepted there to a degree homosexuality?

Carl Yes, I would say so. I mean, I've been there myself, and it is quite more open to be homosexual in Brighton than it is in other cities of the UK, such parts of the Black Country where we're from and others and further up north like places in Scotland, say might encounter it, it might be even more, even less accepted. Yeah. Especially if you've got communities in the UK, that might be more religious, I mean, if there's small pockets of those that might be around these days, like Catholic communities? Yeah. So, they're less frequent in say Brighton.

Int That's good. That's cool. I need to visit there. And your next image. Could you talk me through this one, please?

Carl Yeah, that's Gran Canaria. So that's more popular holiday destination, in the Spanish isles for gay men. Most say friends, I have to say, well, gay men, they've all been to Gran Canaria. I mean, I haven't myself. Yeah, but I feel like some of them will do, say if you haven't been to Gran Canaria, are you even a real gay man?

Int That's great. So obviously, that's the place to be.

Carl Yeah, it's like if you want to go to a party for a whole fortnight and drink endlessly and have no responsibilities, that's the place to go, Yeah, It's like the Ibiza for gay men.

Int Oh, wow. great.

Carl Yeah. it's like a rite of passage for them.

Int Yeah. And I also have got some images that I'd like to discuss as well. And just so basically, these images. what I did on the first of December, I wrote gay male stereotypes and selected the first three images that came up. Obviously, these images would be different now Google changes them every day. But it's just to show you that these aren't my choice. They're not my representations of stereotypes; they're just kind of what Google's thrown out at me. So, looking at the first image, the bear What do you think about this image? Like how do you think it represents the gay male stereotype?

Carl I think, in one way, I'd say that maybe the leather because like there's expectation if, if you're a bear, or say a gay male that into wearing leather as a sort of kink, but not everyone likes to do that I mean me I don't like to wear leather. or so.

Int Maybe like in the community, there's a lot more stereotypes than non-community people realise.

Carl Yeah, I'd say so. So, there is a lot more stereotypes within the LGBT community than what people outside it might realise. Yeah, because yeah. So, if you're, if you're bear let's say, I think most LGBT have expect more bears to look like that.

Int Yeah.

Carl Or well, so outside of the community. Well, most people might not even know what bear means at all. I mean, I've met some people have a conversation about that didn't even know it means with that that look on their faces, look on their face like what are you talking about

Int Yeah. And why you think this would be labelled as a homosexual stereotype? Like, obviously Google threw it out there as the homosexual stereotype, so why do you think that would be the case?

Carl It's not something that normally identifies with a heterosexual person is it for wearing leather or when it's just not that they only wear it in the bedroom itself its seen gay men wearing out and

at pride as well as a sort of celebration outfit. It's just I mean how many day-to-day images of heterosexual people do you see wearing that sort of outfit besides out wearing, Well, leather pants. Yeah. Yeah, not something you normally commonly say outside of more the LGBT community

Int Yeah. Moving on to the picture on the right of the person with the blue hair. So, what are your thoughts about this image when thinking about gay men?

Carl So, think outside the LGBTQ community so when it comes to dyed hair, I'd say most typical heterosexual men would probably think if you dye your hair that's typically a sign your quite, you might be, say a gay man or might be quite camp so yeah, I don't think it's quite say a regular idea amongst most heterosexual men that men dye their hair, or they bleach their hair. Yeah, and there's also on the image I can see the man is wearing makeup, so that that would be also another thing so to heterosexual men it could be considered quite unusual for a man to wear makeup. So, when they see a man wearing makeup, the think, okay, automatically, that man must be gay, or he must be camp. Or he must be trans or something.

Int Do you think maybe like from the heterosexual community, the imagery of a man looking more feminine? Is what we

Carl Yeah, definitely. See, so that's how a heterosexual man would identify a gay man that they would be more feminine that will be, use more feminine products. and well wouldn't look like a stereotypical man.

Int Yeah, yeah.

Carl Just look more out there and be expressive with their self-image.

Int Yeah. And do you feel like that's the case within the gay community as well, or it's not so much seen that way.

Carl Not in the gay community. No, I'd say in the gay community. It's more accepted And so you're freer to choose however you want to look, you don't have to be, have to wear makeup. You don't have to dye your hair. You don't have to, well have piercings, or wear leather or look a certain way. Yeah, it's just yeah, I'd say it's died down. It's just it's say, I mean, most so like, so, Gay men have the view of like, if you were, if you're a gay man, it has. It's just enough that you, well, I don't want to be crass here but it's just enough that you sleep with men.

Int Yeah. No, no, no, no, definitely. Makes sense. So, scrolling down to the third image. This one really interests me to be honest. And obviously it says all gay men are feminine, right? And then have a picture of Gareth Thomas, who isn't feminine at all, but identifies as a gay man. So, what are your thoughts about this image?

Carl I mean, is it like is this image is a form of protest?

Int Think so, yeah. And this was obviously just what Google threw at me again, this was the third image that came up. So, I'm assuming they are trying to kind of show that stereotypes like it says are views of the small minded and that there is more to a gay man then just being feminine, I think.

Carl Yeah, I'd say that in a way to a degree this image because there's been discussed earlier outside the LGBT community there is still that view that all gay men are expected to be, look very feminine. So expected so that you'd expect one to wear makeup or to have a dyed hair or wear leather, or identify with a flag, wear the flag or be very flamboyant in their personality or be very say showy about it and be very open for sexuality. And not necessarily all gay men are I mean some hide in secret; some look like typical normal everyday people that can look just as much as the same as any other heterosexual man out there. You still wouldn't know that they're gay. Yeah. And I'd say yes, stereotypes really are where it say stereotype are a view that small minded, I would say, not so much a small minded say just more so much the view of the uninformed. Yeah, just more so as informed as they could be because they're not part of the community. So, they haven't really seen what it's like themselves. So, I think but yet an outsider of the community and you don't really know how to portray them, so your mind makes up sort of images in your

head. And that's what stereotyping is, isn't it? It's just the minds way of trying to think of an explanation for things we don't find. So rational, isn't it?

Int Yeah. Yeah. That's perfect. Thank you. So just scrolling down to the gay female stereotype. So, the first image that Google brought up was Lea DeLaria, why do you think this was represented as the gay female stereotype? What parts of the image?

Carl As we discussed, the short hair is more definitely one of them. And also, this one didn't come up in my images, but I think the tattoos were, I mean, not that, or say all lesbians have tattoos and just more heterosexual women do have tattoos as well, So that, Oh, I can see what's tattoos into her arm there, the word butch, So if yeah if, if a woman has the word butch tattooed on her arm, I think that probably would throw up some questions whether she was probably lesbian.

Int Yeah, yeah. do you think anything about what she's wearing as well?

Carl Yes. So, what she's wearing, it looks like a top, it looks like a grey T shirt.

Int Yeah, it's a shirt, I think. Yes.

Carl So, her fashion style is kind of understated, in a way. So, I think it doesn't really show off her, her body. So, it's, that's probably what a heterosexual person would expect a woman to look like. So, they'd look more feminine. So that show off their well more feminine aspects. Whereas say, most say, some stereotypical view of a lesbian there might not be comfortable with their body, they might not show it off so much.

Int Within the lesbian stereotype, as well, there is parts around body image as well, maybe, like you were saying about showing off the figure. Do you think maybe part of the stereotype is that a lesbian woman would be a bigger woman, if that makes sense?

Carl Possibly, yes. I mean, I'm not too familiar with it with being an outsider to the lesbian community myself.

Int Yeah, yeah.

Carl But I mean, I mean, I can imagine sometimes you do probably get these aspects of super, superficiality among lesbian women as well, like they're expected to look a certain way to be viewed as attractive. So, they might have to look a bit more, might look at certain aspects of feminine or they might. So, there might be expectation, and if they're not, so say if they look well a bit bigger in size or say that that might affect it as well. Yeah, or the way they dress. So, some of those aspects can carry over as well. Yeah. Yeah.

Int Right. Scrolling down to the next image is the girl with the blue hair. So, what are your thoughts on this image? Why do you think maybe it represents lesbians?

Carl I think yeah, that is a typical image of what as I say people would often outside of the community would see a lesbian as so not only has she got short hair, she has got, it's all dyed and she's wearing the rainbow T shirts so that bit in this sort of image like it's staring you right in front of the face it's like, I'll scream at you I look like a lesbian woman so she is clearly gay.

Int Yeah, yeah. So, you're just looking at it you think definitely lesbian?

Carl Yes. Yeah, that's what most people would think I didn't think or look at the source and why they look like that, that just clicks right away.

Int Yeah, no, yeah. Yeah. Oh, what was you going to say?

Carl It might not always be the obvious. Well, yeah, that's how it would be seen most of the time.

Int Yeah. And the third image of the I'm assuming a couple. What do you think about this image so what kind of springs to mind? does it kind of go against the stereotype or what yeah, what are you thinking about this one?

Carl I don't know

Int Do you think it represents homosexuality?

Carl Think that probably, not really sure, being outside the lesbian community, I'm not really too sure

Int If you were looking at the image, you know, from kind of no background at all just instantly kind of looking at it. Would you see anything that says Yes, there must be lesbian?

Carl Yeah, I think it does kind of say in a way, because women don't necessarily have to be lesbian to be that closely intimate with one another do they, yeah. I mean, if you look at the image, they're not even kissing. They're just really close in proximity aren't they

Int Yeah, yeah. So that might not necessarily be gay?

Carl Yeah, they might not necessarily be at all. Yeah, I think so that's a common view amongst well say, heterosexuals, two women get too close like that there must be something going on between them. Whereas there might not necessarily be they, they might just be very friendly with one another. Yeah. So, I think also comes to mind is well, I don't know if that's a typical image of what Google had in mind of what a typical lesbian couple looks like. Because, say, some percentage of lesbian couples might not even look like that. So, I mean, like, say, all lesbians can look quite different, as in all gay men can look very different. Yeah. So, my first sort, I'm surprised that, say you may also get more, more couples of lesbians where the one who, might be look like the more traditional image of lesbian, and one who might necessarily not Yeah, or you get one say, a lesbian couple who looks well just like to typical well feminine women, and more just than than just having be lesbian. So, I think that's also what, it throws up as well. Yeah.

Int Yeah. Great. All right. So, the last set of images, then is the homosexual stereotype images. So again, I just popped in homosexual stereotype into Google and the first image that came up was Ru Paul. So why do you think RuPaul would come up as a homosexual stereotype?

Carl Because in, this year, well the past two years, particularly the most common show, amongst the LGBT community has been RuPaul's drag race. I think so that it's become more a show that's been quite associated with our communities now so that they that most LGBT, well might dress in drag, or they might be quite big fans of drag, or certain I mean, so that's how an outsider viewer may see it, me personally, I don't dress in drag I never have, I mean, I've seen a few drag shows. But I wouldn't say I'm particularly a mad fan of drag, I mean, it's just, if, if I've got friends I'm hanging out with, and they go see it I'll join them, but I won't go out of my way to do it myself. Yeah. Or so like I said dress in it and it's well I do admire a drag artist in a way about the way they express themselves. It's just not something I would identify myself with.

Int Yeah. Kind of showing those differences again, actually, from someone from the homosexual community. And, you know, I'm not that fussed about doing drag, whereas someone not from the community might think, well, they almost do drag.

Carl Yeah, that's exactly how I'd say it. Yeah. That's how they think of it. They all must do drag. So, but we don't,

Int Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And the second image that came up was little Nas. I think this was at like the Grammys, or you know, some kind of show like that. And obviously from the picture is two men kissing so I'd say, that's obviously the most obvious reason to show their homosexual but what else from the image kind of pops out to you that would make them, would make you identify them as homosexual?

Carl I'd say the outfits they're wearing so that kind of not sure. So, the fact that there's quite a lot of flesh showing Yeah, and it's not so the outfit, it's not Well, typically, the more publicly more accepted image of a heterosexual community where you have flesh showing but like the way that have sort of like a sporty outfit, so like so go into the gym more for doing a bit of boxing. Yeah, and if man's showing quite quite a lot of flesh, and he's wearing that sort of outfits, so it's kind of like a sort of show outfit. It's kind of like stage outfits

Int And anything else that pops out on the image apart from their clothing?

Carl I'm trying to look more closely because say it's a bit small but are they wearing glitter?

Int Yeah and make up. Yeah,

Carl that's what I say throws it up as well. So, the fact that wearing glitter on their faces as well, that might suggest it as well. Yeah. that sort of perspective.

Int Great. And do you think those kinds of things form the gay male homosexual, like the gay male stereotype? The more feminine attributes, I suppose.

Carl Yeah. I'd say in a wider way. So outside of the gay community more so yes. Sometimes it could be in the gay community as well, but not so much, but I think, so there's probably is sometimes there is expectation in the gay community that like, right, all gay men must be comfortable with dressing up like this or showing off their body a lot or wearing glitter. Whereas not all are like I know myself, I wouldn't be comfortable with dressing in that sort of style or wearing glitter on my face Or, I mean, if it's not there have confidence issues with my body, it's just like, I want to say, I don't feel like that's sort how I have to portray myself. sort of not my sense of style.

Int Yeah. So, the, this is the final image that came up, the man wearing the pride flag. So, what kind of things spring to mind when you're looking at this image and how it represents homosexuality and the stereotype?

Carl I think it represents like, well, possibly the ideal world for like the homosexual sexuality stereotype. Because, you see, the man is wearing the flag on his back. So, and he's walking freely on the street, and you just say, going about his day, like it's regularly accepted, and like, he is just blending in, no one's really noticed. And I think that's the thing people in the LGBT community strive for the like, they want to be accepted as normal everyday people, they want to walk out amongst the crowd and be seen as, as well just the same as everyone else. I mean, not that not like the same that just like not having one look at them in like a weird way like they're some sort of alien, or like, so that must be or it's wrong to express themselves. So, I suppose it could also be taken another way, well say that, well, probably that not all say gay men all wear the flag. So. So I think like, what also says is that well all these people that are on the streets in front of him they probably well saw him wearing the flag on his back they'd automatically will associate Yeah, he's gay or LGBT. So that's why if he wasn't wearing the flag on his back, that wouldn't notice would they?

Int Yes, he just blends in with everybody else.

Carl Yeah. So, so that will lead back to one of my points as well. So, like, so not all gay men are as expressive as that. So, we don't all go about wearing the flags on our backs. We don't all have a very feminine sort of personality or very flamboyant. So, say, ones that are not like that most of the time, you wouldn't notice. So, it could be seen in either of those two ways.

Int Yeah. That's great. And thinking back to obviously, your images and the images here. Do you think there's been any differences? Or do you think they were quite similar and kind of displayed similar stereotypes? Yeah, and why? Why do you think that? If so, would think they were different?

Carl I think they did, show some similarities in some ways. So how we had ideas of like that, LG, well the LGBT, gay man, lesbian flags, you've discussed here and well the images of how gay men more gay men and gay women look. So, looking quite feminine or looking quite masculine. And well how a lesbian woman is expected to look and how a gay man expected to look. Yeah. I mean, I think it was difference than the images we came up. But I think that was just so random well formula of Google at the time, we must have searched Yeah, when I searched say, those images came up and when you search those images came up, it could say very well depend on the algorithm, or the way we phrased our searches at this time. Yeah. That's great. I'm just going to stop sharing the screen now. Like, so I just wanted to ask you a few questions and touch on your personal experience of stereotyping if that's okay, if you don't mind. Yeah. that's ok

Int So, have you ever felt the need to conform to homosexual stereotypes that we've discussed? Or any other homosexual stereotype for example, when first coming out? Did you ever feel the need that you have to conform to these stereotypes?

Carl No, not at all. Not when I first came out at all, no I didn't feel any need to conform. Yeah, so I've always been quite comfortable with the way I've looked, to me, and how I express myself I don't feel like I have to be overly feminine or be or whatever so very flamboyant with my personality or camp too to be known as a gay man. Or but don't have to more look like a bear or wear leather or any of those groups to be gay. And mean, I don't know the only way of say have

felt pressure is well say I think you the one in a well expectation is if because there's quite a thing among gay men with monogamy, well gay men community so sort of there can be quite a big or aspect of well sleeping around, it gets more attention than what well what long term relationships would do so you're not likely to get approached more often. So as a gay man, so if you say if you're more monogamous and looking for more of a long term relationship whereas you would get more attention if, yeah, whereas he gets more approached if you are so if you're always looking to have sex or if you're always looking to be open about it or mess around so you might say yeah, just I know if and if you don't do it, say often get comments like are you uptight or you're stuck up or boring? And so well say it's just it doesn't get viewed as seriously as well what it would amongst a hetero aspect because if a woman got well those sorts of comments thrown at her then the next word that person might come out with id rape, Might it. Yeah, well not appropriate whereas if a man gets let's say a gay man gets those sorts of things thrown at them inside the gay male community it doesn't get taken seriously.

Int It's quite normal for a gay man to be quite promiscuous?

Carl Exactly yes. It's quite seen as quite normal I suppose. Some people might not be comfortable this mean myself on occasions I've not been comfortable with this. there are moments I am comfortable with it and moments when I'm not, can be both ways, sexual interest peaks and when it troughs

Int No, definitely it makes sense. has there ever been a time where you felt that you've been stereotyped as homosexual by another person and what way was that applied? So obviously due to the way you dressed or anything that or have you never actually been homosexually stereotyped before?

Carl There are a few things. Well, I think there's a few things but wouldn't say by the way, I've dressed because I've always dressed kind of like the same as any other person. I think probably in well say the company I've kept most times so. So, when I was younger, I used to have more friends in girls than I did with boys my own age. And think my tastes in music was so like, listening to things like Lady Gaga or Rihanna, a lot, So, once people found out I was listened to that sort of music, they would also think or say, okay, yeah, he must be gay. There was also sort of behaviours I would do so I wouldn't, well, you would never see me have a girlfriend when I was younger. So, I was always more comfortable, comfortable with spending time with girls my own age. Say and the thing is, well, I wouldn't say be the sort of person who ever would have thrown myself at one of my friends when I was that age because yeah, not the sort of person I am. I'd say that way the sort of way that make diggy little comments are so long, sort of sort of like, they were trying to I don't know if it meant it in malicious way at times or if it were just trying to pique their curiosity but so they would do things that will be seen as flirtatious, or as a joke, trying to like gauge whether I was gay. I wouldn't react back to it. Yeah. Yeah, all those things other things they would do so like when I first started at uni, I had this close friendship with a guy called Chris or tried to try to make a close friendship with him, but it wasn't trying to you know, well, that wasn't because I was sexually interested in it was more because I was trying to be friendly. Nice. Yeah. Yeah. So, I liked him as a friend. So that people thought, okay, well, no other man could be that interested in being of a man's friend say must be gay, because he's coming across too friendly.

Int Yeah. And what about like Obviously you said like, you know, you dress how you like and all those kinds of things? And have you ever felt the need to kind of like, resist the LGBTQ stereotypes or like thinking about the gay stereotypes we spoke about? Have you ever felt the need to kind of pull away from it and look more heterosexual represented I suppose maybe even to protect yourself?

Carl In a way Yes, I'd say in a way to protect myself because I do get a fear of like if I was to walk out the door and dress in drag or dressed in makeup, or say, have my hair dyed or all those sorts of things what people are more open with it do I would probably get abuse shouted at me or

might get attacked in the streets. Yeah, or even with my family they might find it weird. Not if they probably would, but say they're just probably for like, was that the? Was this the same lay that they knew? Was it a small boy? Yeah. Never used to say be interested those things as a small child. And if I was now to start doing it now, make a sudden change in my life and start doing all that stuff they'd find it difficult to adjust to it first, because I've never been interested in it before. Yeah. When I first came out, it was thought like it was probably just, it wasn't so much of like an active choice I made it was sort of like subconscious. Yeah, that's sort of like so I knew that I was kind of like how I was already and how I wanted to express myself. So, I felt like I didn't need to be like, overtly feminine, or accept myself as overtly gay or camp to be gay, it was just enough for me that well just sort of well find men sexually attractive. That was enough for me

Int That's great. And how was your? Well, has your identity changed over time as a result of these stereotypes? So, I know you've obviously said that you've always just kind of been you. And but have you seen any changes in yourself because of these stereotypes? Or have you just kind of remained true to yourself?

Carl And so, for most part, I have I mean that if that well changes, there have been they've been quite small. So, say, we'll change would be that I have more LGBT friends now. Whereas when I first came out, I barely had any, any at all. Yeah. And well say there would be things like going to pride me, well went to pride for the first time was only because well, being my friend, Karen, but that was before I came out. And I didn't really see it's part of me going because of being gay man, I went because I was going to have out have a good time, my friend that was it. So, but now I'll go because of being a gay man, well being gay, and well identifying within our community and parade our rights.

Int More comfortable with it now.

Carl Yeah, and then there's also things like, well, so my interests at home. So, like, I have more LGBT based films, like I have love Simon or have call me by your name at home. So, there's even things like main hobbies like what I watch on TV. So, like Netflix shows as well. That's changed as well, because like when I was younger, I wouldn't have even dreamed of watching these kinds of shows. But now, I'm older and more informed and more accepting of myself, as I say I see it as more kind of more as I can well more of a pastime to watch these sorts of things.

Int That's interesting. So, I'm just going to close up now to be honest, we're coming towards the end. And so, thinking about acceptance of homosexuality, and how do you think we could maybe bring this forward? Obviously, we said before about acceptance is quite high now. But like you said, there's always those pockets where it's not as accepted. What do you think we could do maybe to kind of increase this acceptance of homosexuality?

Carl No, it's difficult to it's difficult to say really, because I mean, with Acceptance comes a lot of things mean there's well things like empathy, he isn't there and well, as we know, we both know is empathy. It's very difficult to have empathy when you can't put yourself in someone else's shoes, isn't it? Yeah, yeah. So, I mean, if it has to be more like in the way the pockets with more resistance, I think if it be only if These people would have more experiences or where they'd be able to see it from our perspective. So, like if I had family members that were LGBTQ plus or say, say something happens in their life, so that might change it. So, they might have a change in their sexuality later on in life. Or it could be that the community around them changes. Yeah, so I don't know, I mean, there's

Int Kind of contact with people from the community could

Carl Yes, that's all that thing of contact and personal experiences. So like, more personal experiences they have they have in their life of, with this sort of community that the more open be open to it and more so that they've become experienced to it and more than see it as a norm, see it as a normal accepted culture, but thinking about community as sort of like a Catholic community, because strongly Catholic like, LGBT, that's not something you'd see in a strongly Catholic

communities. It's quite frowned upon. I suppose well mean homosexuality in the well that from the Bible is viewed as a sin, isn't it? Whereas say someone say, was Catholic and they identify as LGBT, their LGBT but that can never come out. But it's only that moment when they stepped outside of that sheltered wall, then they can be more expressive. So, it's like, so if, ever, anyone ever needs time to reach out, it's I'd say, that's one of the ways we'd be able to, you know, push it forward. So yeah, be more open to people. So, I mean there are more categories that are more open to this. So, it's just like extending the hand of acceptance. And if I ever had any concerns, or if it's things like, I know, well talk more well community groups or TV shows, I mean, there's so there hasn't been a great number of those already. It's just like, things. It's small things you can do also,

Int Like making more of a norm, I suppose.

Carl Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

Int Do you think maybe the younger generations, it'll kind of get more accepted as time goes on?

Carl Yeah, I'd say younger generations that will get more accepted as it goes on, because, say, with younger generations, say, say particularly were born I'd say, say, you have that kind of like, say, thing, we come to accept the environment around you very quickly, don't you? Because it's what you grew up with. It's more comfortable. So, like, I mean, when we were growing up, so we had things like more technology was more on the rise didn't we, we had game consoles, DVDs, or smartphones. So then now these have become part of a typical everyday life as well as our parents, they didn't have them and sometimes you can get comments like, from older, say, parents or older people, like how do you find it fun be stuck in front of that phone!

Int Yeah, you're always on that phone!

Carl You're always on that phone. You're always on those video games. Why can't you quit and why you always on social media? So, like, I think it's sort of a novel idea, but you could put sort of like branched out into the same as the LGBT community communities isn't it. Young people who grew up with it and being sort of like normal, normal to them like the norm to them, but since people from an older type of a pastime period might not see that as the norm because they never grew up with it did they.

Int Yeah, exactly. No, I get what you're saying. So obviously, like as time goes on, then maybe these younger generations are coming through. They've been brought up with it, that it'll help with the acceptance in that way.

Carl Yeah, that's how I think of it. Yeah.

Int Yeah. That's great. So that's actually everything. We've covered everything just slightly over the hour, which is great. And is there anything else you would like to add, or have we got any final thoughts or questions

Carl No, not at all. No,

Int No. Well, I will just stop the recording then just bear with me a second. Okay.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Jean

Int Just wait for that to pop up at the top just to make sure it's definitely recording so should pop up in a second. There we go. Lovely I will make a start then so have you got any questions before we begin at all? Don't worry if you haven't.

Jean If I need to take a break or anything, is that okay?

Int Absolutely fine. If at any point you do feel like that, just please let me know. I'll stop the recording, and we can take a break. Whatever you want to do is absolutely fine. We'll go with however you feel.

Jean Okay. Yeah, that's it.

Int That's fine. You sitting somewhere where you feel comfortable chatting, and are you okay?

Jean Yeah. Is it? Are you able to speak any louder? Or

Int Yeah. Is that a bit better if I speak like that?

Jean Yeah, that's fine

Int Lovely. So firstly, then I'm just going to jump in with a few questions, and then we'll move on to the images after. So firstly, I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be gay stereotypes?

Jean I guess it's things that are typically associated with being gay. Or things that maybe signal to other people that you are gay, like, maybe like, what somebody might wear, how they might act. The type of things they might say like catchphrases, or just like, yeah, things that signal to other people. That, oh, I'm gay. And if you are to you, you would know about it, but not necessarily. Yeah, you can kind of like everybody knows. Yeah, like, I've shaved like a slit into my eyebrows. And the only other gay people will know what this means, yeah. Or like a certain lip piercing or something?

Int Yeah. No, I get what you mean. And how did you feel they're applied to gay people? So, do you think maybe they're applied in a nasty way? Or do you think people do them without realising, is it just something we do naturally? Or maybe a bit of both?

Jean Yeah, a bit of both. It's quite a complicated thing. I think. Gay people, like, even will apply it to themselves, and label themselves, you know, like, I'm Butch or I'm this or I'm that. But then I think people that are ignorant or don't fully understand, what sort of, I don't know if they're only exposed to or they are only aware of like, women having short hair are gay, the only gay guys they've been exposed to or know about are flamboyant, then they'll generalise and categorise that as being like, that's what they're all like, kind of thing. Yeah. Yeah. What was the question again? Sorry

Int You answered it, to be honest. And so how do you think they're applied at this current time? Do you think we apply them less now we're more accepting? Or do you feel like it's still something that we do regularly? You did touch on it a little bit just now.

Jean I think they're applied less now. Because, like, the younger generation, at least with women, I've seen their, a lot more comfortable being like feminine or wearing what they want to wear not feeling like I need to cut my hair short. I mean, yeah, they still, there still is that but it's not as prevalent. I don't think like, I need to do this to fit into the gay culture or for other people to know that I am that way and whatever

Int Makes sense.

Jean I think it's less prevalent now.

Int That's cool. So, if you were to think about a gay male, what kind of things would spring to mind regarding the stereotype? And so, if you saw a gay man walking down the street, what would kind of make you think, oh, he must be gay. And is there anything springs to mind?

Jean Like sort of the bounce in the walk like the way that I walk and talk more high pitch, more or like Dramatic and like screaming like, Oh my God. They, you know, like the typical language of like, Oh babe you're so fierce and like things like that. Yeah, just wearing makeup or doing their hair a certain way would be like the stereotype of like, Yeah, girl slay, like all that type of stuff

Int Would you say like they're more on the feminine side of things?

Jean Yeah, yeah.

Int Yeah. How about lesbian women, how would you describe stereotypically a lesbian woman?

Jean The stereotype or what I would

Int Well the stereotype. And then what? Yeah, maybe add in what you think as well, that'd be wonderful.

Jean Yeah, because I'm in reality, I wouldn't be able to tell them is actually asked them but like, stereotype would be like, I don't know. Like, a masculine don't mess with me on a walk. Like, maybe boots or, like a? I don't know, some kind of jacket. Yeah, like, short hair. Like, so. You

know, like, tough walk Like, I don't know, just what you mean. Like that would be like, yeah, the stereotype.

Int So in a sense, more of a

Jean More masculine yeah yeah

Int Yeah. And have you seen these stereotypes applied in real life? So, is this something you see in the media? Your friends? Like? Are you still seeing that these stereotypes do still exist now and are still portrayed that way?

Jean Yeah, I mean, not as much now as like, maybe 10 20 years ago. But I do. Yeah, I still see it.

Int But it's just not as prominent.

Jean It's not as prominent in media and stuff.

Int That's cool. So, when we think about, like, how much homosexuality is more accepted now than it was. Obviously, we've still got a bit to go, but it's a lot better than it was. What's your view on this? Do you feel like homosexuality is a lot more accepted now? Or do you feel like, it's not really?

Jean I think that is, but I think that potentially only applies to like Western culture and society. I'm not sure about other countries around the world. But I think definitely, with the laws having changed. That's really helped, like, shift attitudes as well. Yeah.

Int Great. What I'm going to do now then is I'm just going to get up the images, that you sent over to me. So, bear with me a minute whilst I just share my screen. Can you see your images?

Jean Yes

Int Lovely, I won't be able to see the screen that you're on now. So, if you do need to me to stop or anything like that, just tell me, I can still hear you anyway. So having a look at your first image of Elton John. You just want to talk me through why you chose this image. So why you chose it as a representation of the gay male?

Jean I can. Yeah, I think he's just like, a prominent gay figure, like gay icon. I don't know all the details, but like, in terms of what it was, like, when he was younger in his career, like, being gay, you know, you couldn't just, it wasn't easy to just come out and have no repercussions for your career and stuff. So, I don't know, I think just have a lot of like, respect for people like that. Obviously, he is well known, like, is not like a problematic person or whatever. Like it's a good representation for, like, the gay community to have someone like that and to show that like, you know, you can be successful regardless. And yeah, he's just a talented, great guy. Everybody knows who he is like,

Int Yeah, great. So, is there anything about his image that would kind of hit the stereotypes we were talking about before? So, the femininity and things like that.

Jean Um, he wears, I don't know that much about him, but I know like, obviously, he has the iconic glasses and stuff. Yeah. I mean, he was like shiny glittery suits and stuff. So, he does. You know, like, it doesn't fully fit the stereotype, but you know he's Jazz's it up a bit. Yeah, he can be a bit flamboyant. But yeah, I think, you know, if you're a performer, then that's not completely abnormal, like, Freddie Mercury and people like, you know, but yeah, it kind of meets the stereotype a little bit. Yeah.

Int Cool. I'll just move down to your second image, which is the lovely Olly Alexander. And so, what made you pick this image then? If you just want to talk me through why you chose this image?

Jean Um, again, like I think he was in, it's a sin. And in terms of like, well, what straight people say to me, like, he's quite like known and people, like, respect him and listen to him. And he's, like, a good advocate for the gay community, I think, yeah, he's, again, he's, like, really talented, got great music. He is, he is like, a little bit feminine. Like he changes his hair colour all the time. But yeah, I think he's just one of the first people I thought of in terms of UK gay, like, culture and icons

- Int** Great. And how about any image is there anything that kind of jumps out to you that would fit the gay stereotype
- Jean** Um, yeah, like, he is quite feminine and how he is like, he wears jewellery, I think and, and like, the type of clothes and hair hairstyles that he has, isn't typically like, masculine, I suppose. But yeah. Yeah, if you were just like stereotype. Feel like, I should have put Sam Smith in this as well
- Int** Yeah, I do love him. Yeah. Scroll down to your next one, then it's Tom Daley, isn't it? So, what made you pick the image of Tom then?
- Jean** Again, he had like a lot of media attention and, like, representation. In terms of like, being gay, like, oh, this attractive, like, successful person. Oh, my God, it turns out, he's not straight and it was perceived as like, oh, my gosh. And it was like, Yeah, and I think that may be altered certain people's perceptions of like, in terms of their expectations and stuff. But yeah, it was just nice to see. And it wasn't actually a horrible backlash. Some people were a bit, you know, but yeah, I think he just struck me as someone that maybe changed public opinion or is quite, you know, well known and respected again.
- Int** Do you think like the shock of it all as well, was the fact that he didn't, may sound terrible, but look gay. So obviously,
- Jean** Yeah, yeah, I don't. I don't know how you're supposed to again, like look gay. But yeah, not that If you're a swimmer, you can really like wear makeup and jewellery and the outfit, but yeah, I think they were like, oh, my God, he doesn't look this particular way that we thought all gay people looked. We're totally shocked that
- Int** Kind of put a spanner in there a little bit, I think. Yeah. Pretty cool at the same time.
- Jean** It was a good thing to happen. It needed to happen.
- Int** Definitely. And then George Michael. So, what made you pick the image of George Michael?
- Jean** Again, he's iconic. Like, you know, he, again, I don't know all the details, but you know it for him, it was like it, I think his I don't know who the people are that they have around them, like PR people or manager or whatever. were Like, you can't come out. You can't come out like it will ruin your career. And he had, he just dealt with a lot of shit. And like, obviously, he's a lot of his career was like, a lot of his fans were like, women that fancied him and it was like, oh, well, how are you going to sell records if you know. It wasn't like, oh, that's great, you can be who you are. And it was it was quite difficult for him. I think what I've heard anyway. And yeah, I just has like a lot of respect for him, I guess, because of that and
- Int** Like what he went through and stuff.
- Jean** Yeah. And again, like, that nobody knows, like over and I think I asked my mom before when she was like, oh, couldn't I believe it? And it's like, yeah.
- Int** Like when Philip Schofield came out and everyone was like what?
- Jean** Oh, yeah. It's like, oh, I fancied, and it's like, oh, my fancy George Michael for so long. And I can't believe it, it's such a shame and I'm like why is it a shame?
- Int** Oh, I hate that. Yeah, when people say what a shame. I was like, Is it?
- Jean** Like you are ever going to go out with him anyway?
- Int** He is not going to take you for coffee. Yeah, definitely. Do you think there's any parts of George Michael that would kind of fit the typical gay stereotype or do you think he kind of moves away from that?
- Jean** I was trying to think, I don't know enough about him because he is like, maybe like my mom's era or whatever. But I don't know how like he moves if I don't think it is like that flamboyant. Yeah. As much as other people. Like, especially in the music, industry, and actions. He wears, he was jewellery, and he wears, I think it was like earrings and stuff. Or like he did, but I don't know. I don't think he is like, majorly stereotypical again. Yeah, maybe that's why people were shocked. I don't know.
- Int** Maybe. Yeah. So, moving on to your lesbian female stereotypes, I'll just zoom

Jean Yeah, these are just the first people that came into my head.

Int Ruby Rose always comes to my head first as well. Think she's wonderful.

Jean Everybody just fancies, oh, I don't even fancy her. But everybody just seems to like to know who she is. So

Int Yeah. And I remember having my hair cut like Ruby Rose as well. I remember saying, you need to cut my hair like Ruby Rose. Okay, it was exactly the same. it was perfect. So, what do you think what made you pick this image? Then is it because all, like you said all lesbian women fancy Ruby Rose?

Jean Yeah. So, I picked. I didn't, in terms of images. I didn't know what images to pick other than people. I think these are like, the people that stood out to me as being like, well known prominent gay, like, I don't say gay icons. But I suppose gay icons would also be like, Madonna and Britney and Kylie, but not actually gay people. Yeah. So, these are the people that I just thought were like, the well-known representation of the community. And I think she's like, as of recently, like, most like lesbians that I speak to will know who she is. Yeah. So, I guess that's why Yeah, I picked her. And again, like, I guess she defied stereotypes. I mean, I think she used to have like long hair, and then like, cut short and came out and stuff. But she was like, Oh my God, she's so pretty. She's a model. How can she? How can she not be straight? Like, yeah.

Int And do you think like, some of maybe her acting career could have influenced what because did she play a lesbian role in Orange is the New Black?

Jean Yeah, she did. Yeah.

Int Yeah. I was just thinking, stigma could influence as well.

Jean Influence what sorry?

Int like the stereotype and obviously people her becoming such an icon within the LGBTQ community.

Jean Yeah. I mean, definitely not just coming out but the role in Orange is the New Black would have solidified that, like her being an icon in the community. Definitely. Yeah. Like, just the amount of people that probably fancy her as well. Is like

Int Is there anything in the image that kind of like shows you the gay stereotype, so any

Jean Only thing I can think now I'm thinking about is I think she does have tattoos and stuff. And then obviously, like cutting the hair short, and then maybe if she chose to wear like, a leather jacket type thing, but when she had, like, you know, the long hair, was wearing dresses, modelling like I don't think anybody would have ever thought anything of it? I think isn't

Int Just from changing your clothes or her wearing you no longer hair and dresses people wouldn't even

Jean People wouldn't even think Yeah anything to do about her sexuality and then now it's like, yeah, and now she's it's almost like she's tried to put effort in just to seem more masculine or Butch or whatever to be like hello women like where are you?

Int Yeah.

Jean Almost stereotyped herself

Int Yeah, yeah, get what you mean she's kind of put herself into that bracket to kind of tell everybody she is.

Jean Yeah, yeah.

Int So looking at the next image, I can't remember this girl's name.

Jean Kristen Stewart

Int That's the one yes, Twilight, isn't she?

Jean Yeah

Int What made you pick this image then?

Jean Again, I think she's like an iconic, typical. Like, I don't know if she actually came out as bisexual or gay, but she's just, she's just strikes me as very gay.

Int What is it that strikes you, what makes you think that she's gay?

Jean I don't know how to explain her like, she's like, she's just like the typical depressed lesbian she's like she's done more roles where it's been like, she's had female love interests and stuff. And honestly, I've never, anything I've ever seen her in where she has like a male love interest. I've never noticed any spark, eyes light up anything.

Int No, I get what you mean? Not like how she is looking at the girl now in this image?

Jean Yeah, yeah. It's just like, there's no chemistry. It's like tragic with the, but then when you see her in roles like this, it's like, okay. Yeah, you can. I don't know. I don't know how to explain it because it's not very scientific. But I just kind get a sense of like, she doesn't strike me as very straight. But I think she didn't want to be typecast or not get roles in the industry.

Int It's mad to think that nearly every image we talk about, as well as there's always the effect on the industry as well.

Jean Like I was always the effect on their career. Yeah, it's really sad. Really.

Int We are more accepting now but they've still got to have this background, you know, like that constant. What is it going to affect my career if I come out? Which is really sad

Jean Because the big roles like Twilight, if, if you were like out, and they were like, well, you're gonna be the leading lady in this. How the hell are they going to believe that you have chemistry with this person? Yeah. And then like, oh, the PR of I think with her and Robert Pattinson. I don't think they actually had a relationship. I think. I'm not really sure what happened. But I think they like had to pretend like they had to be together. Like a

Int Like a cover up kind of thing?

Jean To, Yeah, to get all the fans like, hyped up about it like, oh, they're going out in real life. To sell the film. It's all quite fake and dramatic. Yeah, it's sad.

Int Yes. And scrolling down to your next image of Ellen. And so, what made you choose the image of Ellen?

Jean Ellen is just iconic like the things gone by the way is it supposed to have

Int What's gone?

Jean The screen sharing thing? yeah.

Int No hang on then let me just stop it and put it back on again. Can you see it?

Jean Again, like it's nice to have a successful gay woman really like to come out and for it to not affect your career. I mean, I know she's had like backlash and problematic things recently now but like to have your own show and acting career and everything. It's, she is kind of a stereotype. Yeah, with the short hair, and the suits and stuff, but I don't know. She's just like, nice, funny, successful person. So, it's nice to have that representation. Um, like, I don't know if it made me feel more comfortable. Like, when even when I was younger, like, I don't know if it's like a subliminal message thing or what it is, but like if somebody would like put Ellen on when I'm around their house and have a cup of tea, it's like, I know that they accept me. And they're like ooh I love Ellen and it's like, it means that oh, yeah, it's okay If you're gay, like

Int Yeah. Yeah. I've never thought about that. That's pretty cool.

Jean And people used to like, sort of put it on and like, it was like an unspoken thing. If you like, Ellen, it means that you're like, accepted.

Int Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense.

Jean But yeah, I think she was worried it would have ruin her career. Again, but

Int It did to a degree, didn't it? They cancelled her show

Jean They did Yeah, but she still persevered and was like, f*ck it

Int Yeah, now I'm smashing it. So, scrolling down to your next image? I'm not sure who this is?

Jean This is Haley Kiyoko

Int All right. Okay. What

Jean Every single lesbian under like 25 doesn't stop going on about her. Yeah, every, like every lesbian that under the age of like, 25 won't stop going on about how she has quite a bit of music

out. Again, she kind of breaks the stereotypes. This is probably one of like the butchest photos I could find her.

Int Really?

Jean Yeah, well, other than when she has short hair. She's quite, she's seems to be quite a feminine person.

Int Yeah, kind of challenges the stereotype a little bit?

Jean Yeah, she definitely does. She definitely does. She's got quite a few songs about like, liking girls or kissing girls or whatever. And she's like, pretty much known and out as gay and

Int Oh, cool. I'll have a look out for her

Jean She's, yeah. I should get like, promo money for the money. Hey, Hayley I think she's like, it's an Asian name. I don't know if it's like Filipino or whatever. She's American, but I don't know what that last name actually is. Yeah, but yeah, she's, I don't know if I'm allowed to swear or not.

Int Oh, no, you're fine. You're fine. Yeah,

Jean She's definitely just like, F*ck the stereotypes. This is how I am. This is how I'm going to look; I like girls, I sing songs like that.

Int Like exactly what I was going to say. Do you think kind of a rebellion against the stereotype is in? I don't have too Yeah.

Jean Like, I don't have to look a certain way if I don't want to if I want to cut my hair short and do this. I will. But I like wearing lipstick and doing this and that. So, which is good It's nice to see that.

Int Do you feel like now lesbian women do try and challenge that gay stereotype more and not look Butch? In a sense?

Jean Yeah I think so. I think it can depend on how people present. Like, in terms of if they feel how masculine or feminine they feel that they are. But I think it's more dependent on that individual person now. Yeah, rather than the pressure of like, I have to it's like, do I want to? And if like, people like being feminine and wearing dresses and lipstick then, they'll do it. And then and if they're like, actually, that's not really my thing, then they won't. And I think there's a lot more freedom, acceptance to kind of do what feels right for you. Yeah. Which is really nice. Definitely. Instead of feeling like pressured to look or dress or act a certain way.

Int Yes. And your next image is the two girls. And what made you pick this image?

Jean Yeah, these are like lesbian famous as well.

Int Okay. Am I to old again?

Jean Probably. The one on the left is like a YouTuber and the one on the right is a singer. But they're American. Yeah. Shannon, on the left and Fletcher on the right, I was kind of picking the person on the right. Just because she pretty much defies the lesbian stereotypes. Um, yeah, I think how to like, explain

Int How do you think she, did you say defines it or

Jean Defies, like she's pretty feminine I think she's always been out since she released her first album. Like, I've always known her as like, the lesbian singer. Not that she, probably doesn't want to be known as that, but yeah, she's, she has like typical pop tunes and stuff like it's kind of like having somebody like Katy Perry or somebody feminine like, and actually then, like for them to be out. It's nice because it's like, you don't necessarily expect it like, people expect, like a certain stereotype. Yeah, so it's nice to have that representation where it's like, well, actually, she's just like, normal girl next door like, yeah. You know,

Int And you don't have to look a certain way.

Jean Exactly. Yeah.

Int And your next image. I don't know who these are either?

Jean You don't know who these are either? They're both YouTubers these two again, like defy, kind of defy the stereotypes. These are like YouTubers. Lesbian YouTubers Rose and Rosie, and

they've been together for like, I don't know, like at least 10 years or something. Ridiculous. maybe like Eight years, and they have a baby together. Yeah. And I felt like, they're the only people that I've been able to really relate to and stuff, even if it is just like, online, like on YouTube and stuff. Like following their journey. And like them just being them. Like, it's

Int Nice to find someone who you can relate to and it and kind of see yourself.

Jean Yes

Int Do you think maybe like, within the gay community, we kind of act to, actively avoid the gay, not actually avoid the gay stereotype, but can kind of say, I don't need to look like that. But maybe outside the gay community, It's this. Lesbians should look butch kind of motive.

Jean Yeah. Yeah, I think within the gay community, it's less, there's definitely less you need to look or act a certain way. But then, outside of it, it's like, oh, you're gay? Like, I don't. You don't look gay, or you don't seem like what straight people perceive the stereotype to be but then within the community, it's, it's different. Yeah, I suppose like, the community itself. You don't have to really; I don't think you need to look or act a certain way. There's not the same pressure really anymore. People are just more accepting of like, how you are, how you, how you want to look. Yeah,

Int Yeah. So, your last image for the lesbian ones? What made you select this image then?

Jean Do you know who they are?

Int Nope

Jean Tegan and Sara, they are like

Int Oh, I've heard their names.

Jean Iconic yeah. These are like, again, typical, like, lesbian that. So, they're obviously identical twins. Okay. I think they're both gay. I'm sure they're both gay and they write songs together and etc. All the typical, like, lesbian love songs and whatever. Yeah I just think like, I guess their hair and the way they dress, and stuff is like, they kind of give that stereotypical image like vibes off. But they're kind of the generation before like, Hayley Kiyoko, and Fletcher and like Shannon, the other ones that younger people seem to like now, and I think there's obviously must have been more of a pressure to look or act a certain way before and now it's not really there as much

Int So like a bit of a generational divide, like,

Jean Yeah, things have shifted, I think. Yeah, yeah. And maybe they would like grow their hair longer and dress how, like wear whatever and still be successful musicians, like amongst the LGBT community and amongst other people.

Int Yeah. That's really interesting. So, your last few images then, and looking at images that automatically linked to homosexuality for you. And so, we've got nightingales. been there a few times.

Jean Yeah. The classic place

Int Oh, yeah, definitely.

Jean This is where I mean, this is where I've met like, a lot of people. Yeah. Yeah, I suppose. I suppose there's the LGBT centre as well. Yeah, the Birmingham LGBT centre, and then this, it's like, I suppose there's the village and other places as well, sidewalk, but this is just like, what I would associate as like, where gay people go congregate and meet each other and feel accepted and whatnot. It's not the greatest that you have to be 18 and there's alcohol involved but until there's like an LGBT coffee shop or bookstore, this is the place that people kind of meet I suppose

Int I'm remember at uni everyone say saying we're going to nightingales tonight like every night

Jean For anyone like yeah, like gay guy or anyone like that? Like, oh, do you go here, we going to Gales, it's like always like, Gales the thing to do the place to be.

Int Yeah, definitely. There's a bit of a, I suppose an icon in Birmingham, isn't it for gay people to go and feel comfortable I suppose.

Jean Yeah. It's probably like the biggest most popular club.

- Int** Is there anything from the image that kind of anything else? Like just looking at it visually.
- Jean** Yeah, obviously the rainbows, the flags and all the colours, they've got like, the flamboyant stuff. Yeah. They have some like, cool artwork. I know, like inside as well, that that homophobia is gay. Yeah. things like, taking the mick out of like, something being called gay as an insult, basically. Yeah. And sort of like, yeah, like, instead of it being an insult, they've kind of taken it and used it. Owned it kind of thing,
- Int** A bit like owning the queer.
- Jean** Yeah, like, they're sort of own the label. It's like, we can't use it as an insult anymore, because we call it ourselves.
- Int** We're not bothered. Scrolling down to the flag images. I know you've got, there's a few. So, we'll just kind of group these together the three flags together.
- Jean** Yeah, that's fine.
- Int** And what made you pick the pride flag then apart from the
- Jean** Pride flag is just like the most obviously iconic one. And then I suppose I picked the other ones because, I don't know, it's a long debate and conversation to have. But they've added like, they've added things to the pride flag only like recently, over the last five years or two years or something to like, include people, ethnic minorities, people of colour, like as if they weren't included before. Yeah. Which I don't, which I feel they were but and then they've added the trans flag. Yeah, in in like some kind of V shape as well. As if again, they weren't included before. I guess it's like they're even more marginalised communities within the LGBT community itself. But yeah, I like the original flag, but I just thought I'll try and be inclusive. Yeah, with the other ones as well. Even though I feel it doesn't really need it.
- Int** Yeah, if you saw the pride flag then would that kind of make you feel like, oh, this is a place where they're very accepting. Or save someone had a pride pin badge or something?
- Jean** Yeah, definitely. If they had it, like if I went to a bar or went to a restaurant wherever, wherever and I saw that, I think I'd, I feel like okay, I'm, I'm safe to, to be out or to be myself here. Like, the extent to how I will feel comfortable that I would feel, I don't know exactly.
- Int** Just take the edge off a little bit kind of thing it would
- Jean** Yeah, I don't think I'd be like that confident that I was just like, start going up and flirting with people, but I'd be like, oh, okay, I'm like, I'm accepted here. Yeah. I can be myself. I don't need to, like, hide what I'm saying or doing. And I feel more comfortable. But if somebody individually was wearing it, I'd feel like they were part of the community. Yeah. So that can be confusing. For me, like, if we're like a lanyard, lanyard, or whatever and it's, and it's got like, they've got like pride stuff on I'm like, Oh, they're, like, gay or whatever. But it might not be the case they might just be accepting. Yeah, so that can be a bit confusing.
- Int** Yeah.
- Jean** Yeah, but when but like, if yeah, if I have a friend and they have like a pride flag on the wall, whether they are part of the community or not, it's nice, because it's like, you know, we see you we love you. accept you. Yeah. So is a nice, reassuring, like, anxiety relieving feeling.
- Int** That makes sense. Definitely. So, scrolling down to your next image, the two women symbols, and what made you pick this image then?
- Jean** Yeah, this is another thing that I've felt is an iconic symbol. That was, I could go on forever, but I'm not going to like, there's obviously like, the pink triangle as well, which I think was used in the Holocaust. And what, like, people were sort of branded and symbolled with. But yeah, this one is just like the typical symbol for like, women that, like women. And it's potentially more subtle, I don't know, if, like everybody knew, or knows what it meant, or whatever. But that's kind of like, I don't know, something that I feel like, I don't know, like, I was going to get it tattooed on me before.
- Int** Just thinking that, I was thinking that'd be a nice tattoo.

Jean Yeah. Like, a subliminal signal of like, oh, I'm, yeah, interested in women without like, brandishing yourself. Not like if you put that like a little symbol in black, like, somewhere subtle. Somebody would notice it, and, like, that would know without you having to necessarily communicate. Yeah, that, Oh, I'm gay or whatever.

Int But then maybe other people wouldn't, but that'd be okay. Kind of thing.

Jean Yeah, like, it's a way of sort of, like not brandishing yourself with like, a massive rainbow flag and screaming about it but like, subtly being like, oh, do you know what this symbol means? I don't know how to explain it.

Int I get what you mean. Yeah, definitely. I really love this last image, by the way, and I was just having a look at them just again, just before we, this is great, like. These are things that I have heard loads of times and other people have told me about it as well. So, what made you pick this image then?

Jean It just came up on my google image search. And I was like, yeah, yes to be like, I'm just going to throw it in because I feel like these are a lot of I don't know if it's, is it a stereotype or a judgement? Yeah, that people kind of have there's quite a few of them. I can't read them all from here. You've got are you sure?

Int Yeah. You don't look like a lesbian and it's not really Sex

Jean Yeah, these are all like the typical things that you'll that you hear. Like, oh, you haven't met the right guy yet. You haven't done like all that kind of stuff, and it was just like all-in-one meme. So, I was like, Okay.

Int I think as well a lot of these things, in my personal experience have all been said by men. So, I've heard men say these things to me. I mean, oh haven't found the right, man yet or that's not real sex and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So sometimes I don't know whether it's a bit of naivety, maybe.

Jean Maybe yeah not sure there why but they are like, yeah, common misconceptions.

Int Very common things that I've heard people say, 100%.

Jean Yeah. Like, most people will hear it like, oh, you're too pretty to be a lesbian, or whatever Like, random thing people want to say. And I think that was meant as a compliment. Yeah, but it is quite insulting, like,

Int Thanks for saying I'm pretty but yeah, no I get what you mean

Jean But I am not sure how to take that

Int Well, yeah. So, I'm just going to pop up my images. Now and have a little quick chat about those. So, can you see the images have just changed?

Jean Yep.

Int So basically, these image aren't, they're not my opinion. So, what I did on the first of December, I just went into Google, and I typed in gay male stereotype, and this was the first three images that it threw at me and then I did the same for lesbian and the same for the homosexual stereotype. Don't want to put my bias into the research. So yeah, these are what Google threw at me. Obviously, it would be totally different now because it changes, I think Google does, it's crazy. So yeah, looking at the first image, the image of the bear.

Jean Yeah.

Int What are your thoughts about this image? You know, does it kind of scream the gay stereo male stereotype to you or not

Jean It does not scream, like, gay male stereotype to me personally, it makes me think of like, BDSM culture. Yeah. If anything with like, the type of stuff that he's wearing. You would probably see somebody that is dressed like that, like in a Pride Parade, or, or whatever. But I think because I know, gay men personally, I'm sorry, I'm getting distracted, but because I know gay men personally, I know they're not all like that. So that's just like a very sexualized image, like a specific type of thing that certain gay men might be into

Int The more sexualized element

Jean It's more sexualized definitely. Not, I don't know, of that many guys that go around, like wearing tight leather, like pants and all that type of stuff. Yeah.

Int No, that makes sense. So just moving over to the image next to it on the right with the blue hair. And why do you think Google would have kind of thrown this one at me as a stereotype?

Jean Because of the like, the makeup, which looks kind of like drag make up. And then like, they have got some kind of like, tight leotard, or something, I don't know what they're wearing, but the nail varnish and just the different colours and the makeup and stuff, the femininity of it.

Int Yeah. Yeah,

Jean I suppose.

Int And then just scrolling down to the next image. I saw this one. I thought this one was quite cool, actually. Because it's kind of what we were talking about on your images, like dispelling that actual

Jean The myth yeah

Int All gay men are feminine, So yeah, why? Why do you think maybe this one cropped up? Have you got any thoughts about this image at all?

Jean I can't see all the details on it. I can say that all gay men are feminine thing, right? That that's the that's been the stereotype for a long time, and obviously there are more like, masculine muscley like, type guys that identify as gay so yeah. I think that kind of is questioning the stereotype.

Int Yeah, yeah. Do you think maybe like the original stereotypes may dispel over time, like maybe won't be so prominent and we'll have these different stereotypes coming through of you know, muscular man and things like that.

Jean Yeah, I think so. I think I think like, it's more like the people that I don't know the people that fit the stereotype or the people that people notice more. I think there's obviously a lot of gay people that just blend in, like and look normal or whatever. Yeah, or act normally that nobody bats an eye on notices like no one notices because they don't think about their sexuality until or unless they come out to them. And unless you have a conversation with every single person and come out to every single individual person, people are not necessarily going to be aware that you are even gay. So, there's probably like in the wrestling and football, like, you know, all these, you know, masculine communities or engineers or whatever, that are gay but aren't necessarily out or, or don't tell their colleagues or yeah, you know, yeah,

Int That makes sense. So just scrolling down to the images for gay female. So, the first one that came up was Lea DeLaria

Jean Yeah, Orange is the New Black.

Int Yep. She yeah, she just embodies doesn't she says

Jean She is just like, the stereotypical Butch basically.

Int Yeah. So, what parts of the image kind of jump out as the stereotype to you?

Jean Um, I don't know, I suppose like, the short hair . The masculine, like, acting, like tattoos, the, like wearing shirts and stuff. Yeah, just being very gay, in terms of how they act as well.

Int Yeah, my wife actually looks just like Lea DeLaria

Jean Oh really. Does she even do the do the looking women up and down thing?

Int I say to her, like, you are literally the same person. Any kind of an advert for a gay stereotype, I'd just pull her in and be like tada. Scrolling to the next image, then with the blue hair, seems to be a thing. I've just realised that.

Jean I'm not sure what the blue hair is supposed to mean

Int That's weird isn't it, what kinds of things would you think with this image? Then, why would, why was it selected as the lesbian stereotype?

Jean Um, I guess the short, colourful hair is perceived as a thing. I mean, it's mainly the pride flag colours that would strike me as it being a gay thing. Yeah. Otherwise, I don't think so. Because I'm not, like I don't just see, like, oh, a woman with short hair and think, oh, you must be a

lesbian. Otherwise. You know, like, I think a lot of people were disappointed with pink when she didn't like, she's like, Oh, no, not actually gay, just masculine. Yeah, I don't think that necessarily means anything regarding someone's sexuality, but obviously. Yeah, the image is like the stereo stereotypical, like minimal makeup, masculine clothes. Short hair, etcetera.

Int Yeah. And then the final image for lesbian women, and this one cropped up. So, what are your thoughts about this image? Do you think it kind of fits in with the gay stereotype or

Jean I don't think it fits in with the stereotype. It's obviously come up because of the intimacy between them but yeah, I don't think looking at them. Yeah, I don't think they meet the stereotypes really. But yeah, it's obviously come up on the search, because they are two women that like each other, which is the definition but it's not necessarily the stereotype.

Int Yeah. Great and then just scrolling down to the final images. So, when I popped in homosexual stereotype RuPaul came up, literally the first image and there was about five images of him in a row. I was like, wow, so why do you think RuPaul was kind of pushed

Jean Literally like the opposite to what I am. He's obviously like, with drag race being like, so iconic. That's very much like. Let me think how to explain, I guess. I don't know, for gay guys. That seems to be like the stereotype of like, you have to be dramatic and act flamboyant and wear makeup and do this and know how to put clothes together and do cheesy stupid things like lip synching. And it's, yeah, it's obviously come up because it's like, the thing that most people are familiar with. Yeah, in terms of like, LGBT media representation and stuff. It's not something I particularly like, but

Int I think when you're saying like, then about like, your, like, gay men watch it and it kind of shows that you have to be flamboyant. You have to be this. You have to be that. I've never really yeah,

Jean Definitely. It definitely reinforces the stereotype for gay for gay men.

Int I've never thought about it like that before. But it really does. Like, yeah, the men in it are like that, aren't they?

Jean It's like, you know, and I'll say to people that you really you don't have act that way like, if you don't want to wear eyeliner, and like, actual whatever, you like, you don't need to do that to be gay or to be accepted as, as a gay man. Yeah, I think it confuses the, the lines in terms of like, people's understanding of trans people, though, as well. Yeah. Obviously, it's drag, which is like an art thing, but I think people can be quite confused. Like, is this person a woman? Do they want to be a woman? And it's like, no, it's just a gay guy dressing up in makeup and singing, big hair and stuff. And then they, yeah, it's an act and then they take it all off and then they're back to being a guy. Like yeah, okay.

Int Yeah. No, yeah, definitely. And then the next image is little NAS.

Jean Ah yes he is the latest. The latest out gay guy, I think this he's probably quite iconic because just the fact that he's black like, and he's the first like, like, prominent, like big, like, yeah, black gay guy to come out and be like, yeah,

Int And he's a rapper as well. So that's quite yeah,

Jean Yeah. I don't, I think he sings and raps. But like, yeah, he. He's like, I guess he's like, the first of his kind to do that. I mean, there's probably other, like black rappers and stuff that haven't come out or that aren't as well known or whatever. But it's like, there's, especially with like, the hip hop, rap community, I don't know, if you like how much you know about the hip hop rap community but like, there's been like, quite a bit of homophobia. Yeah, like 10 20 years ago, especially. Like, it's not okay. Like, it seems you have to be masculine, you have to be tough like you. This, it's not something that you would be accepted for, like, it's something that you would try and hide, I suppose.

Int Maybe like in this image, they kind of go against that. Being tough being masculine with like,

Jean Yeah, yeah, it's basically like, f*ck it this is who I am. Yeah. Which I love. Like, like, this is the type of music I want to do, this is who this is who I fancy this is, you know, like, Yeah, f*ck society's rules. And, like, I'm going to go against whatever, and just be myself. Which I think a

lot of people respect and it's probably been refreshing for a lot of people like he's obviously got a lot of success. I'm sure he's got like haters and whatever, as well but he's, like, seems to be doing really well. Yeah, like, number one Billboard Album or something. So. So yeah, he's doing his thing, and it seems to be more accepted now, which is really good.

Int Yeah, definitely. And then the final image that Google throughout for homosexuality was a man walking down the street with a pride flag.

Jean Like he's been to pride and had enough

Int He is like I am out if here. what kinds of things spring to mind with this image then? Regarding the stereotypes?

Jean Again, it's like there isn't, there isn't really anything other than the flag, that would make me think like, you fit any kind of stereotype. I mean, not even the hat really is like, I don't know, is a fedora hat a gay guy thing? I don't know. But no, it's just yeah, it's just a normal guy walking down the street, but happens to have a pride flag on his on his back as a cape. So, I guess there isn't anything that would make me think, oh, he's gay or not straight until you see that and then it's like oh right okay.

Int The pride flag oh okay, maybe he is then

Jean Yeah.

Int Yeah, I'm just going to stop sharing the screen. Again. There's just a few more questions I want to ask you, and then we'll be all done.

Jean It feels you have to, like you can look however you want now but you have to carry a rainbow with you everywhere. It's like a new way to signal oh, by the way, I have my hands full I don't have this. I don't have that but I'm carrying this around with me

Int So just so you know, just so

Jean I haven't shaved a slit in eyebrow or wore this or done this, but I've got this

Int Just roll it out like, tada.

Jean To signal to everyone yeah

Int So the final few questions, I just wanted to ask you, kind of go touch on your personal experiences a little bit if that's okay?

Jean Yeah.

Int So have you ever felt the need to conform to the homosexual stereotypes that we've discussed?

Jean Yeah, when I was younger, I did. But I think it was like, in the same way as when you're younger and impressionable and you want to fit in with like, the trends and stuff. Yeah. But I think it was more to get, like get a potential partner or to kind of show, to signal that yeah, like, I am interested. Like, I'm not like the straight girl. Like the gay guy's straight girl best friend kind of thing. Like I am actually. Like, here in this club or wherever because I'm gay or whatever yeah, like I use, like wearing chinos and vans and things like getting like I don't know, like, wasn't really a gay thing. But like a stretcher in your ear or like trying to shave like the side of your head or underneath or wear your hair a certain way or wearing like a snapback cap or like, baggy t shirt, like just anything that would be like oh, I'm not, by the way, I'm not straight kind of thing.

Int To kind of fit in with the LGBT community or to kind of share with other people you were?

Jean A bit of a bit of both but I suppose more to signal and show other people that I was because I didn't really get attention from women. Like I got attention from guys and obviously I didn't want that so yeah. Yeah, like I think like I got an eyebrow piercing which isn't really me, but I did like stereotypical butch thing and cut my hair, like when I first came out and stuff and yeah, and even when I did all that, like I didn't really get attention or anything

Int Maybe then first because I'm, personal experiences as well, I did the exact same thing when I came out gay. Hair went short you know, quiff, checked shirts you know? All that.

Jean Yeah.

Int And so do you think maybe like, we do that at first, but then kind of create our own identity afterwards. I personally don't feel like, I think I have some elements of the gay stereotype still,

but I like to look androgynous. I like to be in the middle. Do you know what I mean, sometimes I'll wear a really pretty 50's style dress and have a red lip but then other days like today, I've just got my Adidas tracksuit on.

Jean Yeah

Int Kind of maybe start off, very stereotypical, but then kind of create our own adaptation

Jean Identity. Yeah, I think so. I think when you're first coming to terms with and accepting yourself and like, being gay and what that means and whatever, and yeah, like you were the plaid shirts or whatever they're called, and you do all the, what you think are like the typical things you should be doing. You do that for so long, and then you kind of realise, okay, I don't actually like this. I like the, I like, Yeah, I like these things, but I don't really like this element or that or I don't really want to, like, have a motorcycle or do this or do that. Like, I'm happy to just do this. And this is me, and then you kind of accept yourself and figure out what you personally like and don't like, and then you just are that person, and some people fit the stereotype more than, than others. Some people like, hate anything, like masculine and some people. Like, you know, like, is it Lea, what's her name. Yeah, like, and some people are and then you just are yourself. And it goes, yeah, and then it goes maybe just like free to be how you want to be kind of thing. Yeah, if you want tattoos get them if you want piercings or if you don't, then don't like

Int Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Do you feel like you've ever had to resist the stereotype for maybe, so kind of, to appear heterosexual maybe, and to put it or maybe to protect yourself? Or in a job interview? Like, when you did feel like you're dressed a little bit more of the stereotype, do you feel you have right to not do that?

Jean Um, yeah, I have been concerned when it comes to my career, I suppose. So, like, if, if I'm in a job, I'm like, should I come out? Like, if, if I'm wearing like, polo shirts and, like, I sit in quite masculine ways. And like, more, it's more behaviourally so, or, like, sometimes I'll dress kind of, like, I wouldn't wear a dress I'd wear, like, maybe a suit or type thing or something. And I have worried like, will they be able to tell, and will that affect me like, well, I get sacked because of this? Or will they make assumptions because of this? Or like, not leave me alone with another woman or not trust me to do like certain things Because yeah, because of, they've like, perceived me as oh, yeah, she's definitely gay because of how she dresses and stuff. And yeah, so certain industries would, I think accept it more than others? So yeah, it's definitely been like, a worry, a fear

Int Like a constant thought in the background

Jean Yeah like constantly or like, or will people think that. Like, I'm trying it on with them? If I'm, even if I'm just like, friend being friendly, or whatever, like, once they know that I'm gay. Like, is it going to be a problem me working in here? Like,

Int That's another stereotype to be fair, isn't it? Like, I remember when I came out a few of my friends were like oh, do you fancy me then? I was like,

Jean Yeah. Like, don't flatter yourself.

Int Like yeah come on now. No, definitely not. It's like saying every man see, do you fancy him? No. Well, same thing

Jean It's like, yeah, I'm going to fancy people, but I don't fancy everyone. Yeah. And it's like, and it's really awkward to, because it's like, how, how do you negotiate that? Like, how do you say, oh, like, if you're, if you do have a colleague, and you're like, oh, yeah, I'm single, I'm interested in women or whatever. And you want to find out if they are as well. And then they're not. And then, and then it's like, oh, why did you ask me that? Now, it's awkward or weird, or, like, it is quite difficult. Like there's no like manual or instruction manual on how to like, go about these types of things. And like, nobody else has to, like worry or bother. Like, it's just assumed that you're straight

Int Yeah, that makes sense. Then kind of going off the back of that with like, acceptance, and stuff, really. So how do you feel like we could bring forward acceptance of homosexuality in our

society like earlier I remember you mentioned about younger people and things like that. And do you think maybe they could have an impact? Or are there any ideas on how we could bring it even more to the forefront?

Jean That's a good question actually. I think like education from an early age, maybe like, some kind of like, Question and Answer thing or where it's like, I don't know like, like you're addressing stereotypes from a young age, and you're having like, older people, maybe go into schools and say, like, I'm gay, or I'm this, I'm that and like, allowing younger people to ask them questions. And sort of, I think it defies the stereotypes more when you actually meet someone. Yeah. Because it's not like an abstract concept. Yeah, like, oh, I saw this person on the TV or whatever, it's like, I've met quite a few gay guys and they're not all like this or like that.

Int Yeah, interesting. Definitely. Yeah. And do you think like, as time moves on, so obviously, as these younger generations are coming through, hopefully having more education, things like I know, for example, my daughter is 12 and they talk about LGBT matters all the time at school. It's always at the forefront. Whereas when I was at school, I didn't, never have, never ever,

Jean Like I don't know is like now. Yeah.

Int From what my daughter says, it's really good. Like, they speak about it all the time. They've got special groups. And yeah, like, they actually came home the other day with a she/they badge that they'd given her really, really cool stuff that I was just like, Okay,

Jean Nothing even close to that happened when I was in school

Int No nor me, nothing at all. So do you think that could help then like, obviously

Jean Yeah definitely. I mean, yeah, I'm saying maybe they should do this. Maybe they should do that. But I don't know what they're actually doing. And if it's prevalent across all schools, I think, yeah, depends on the teacher and the school and stuff. But if they could make at least sex education, and not just sex, because, you know, it's a bit like, oh, it's Yeah, about that. But just LGBT education in general, like LGBT history, if they could make all that like, exist across, just like mandatory across schools, that would probably be really good.

Int Yeah. Definitely.

Jean Yeah, like the next generation coming up, but I don't know what they already do teach because obviously, it's a lot different now. And yeah, is a lot more accepted and people are more understanding, at least like in the UK, compared to how, how it was.

Int Yeah, definitely. So, I think that's actually, we've covered everything there, which is wonderful. Is there anything else you'd like to add? Or if you got any final thoughts or questions? Don't worry if you haven't, by the way.

Jean No, is it possible to like get a copy of the study?

Int Yeah, definitely. 100% And what I will do, I'll just stop the recording now and then I'll be able to tell you all that, the debrief, so let's stop the recording now.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Rachel

Int Just so I know it's definitely recorded. Let's bear with me a sec.

Rach Okay.

Int There we go, that's popped up at the top. Great. So, um, during the interview, we'll discuss some images that you've supplied. So, thank you for those images and there's all sorts of images that I've found as well that we'll have a little chat about. Before we start, if you've got any questions at all

Rach I don't think so.

Int No, no, that's fine. And are you Okay? Where you are like you feel comfortable? Where you are sitting and things?

Rach Yeah. Think So, yeah, yeah.

Int Lovely, I'll make a start then. So firstly, I would like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be a gay stereotype?

Rach I think it is different for people who are gay and who are not gay. Okay. And I think like, people who are gay, they kind of like, you deliberately have things to show other people that you're gay. Straight people necessarily don't pick up on

Int As in slightly different for gay people than for straight people?

Rach Yeah, I feel like a straight person. Probably you would see a gay person different to how a gay person would. Like I said that stereotype is probably more like the media and stuff like that. But then someone who's gay is more likely to know the subtle things that gay people put for other gay people.

Int Yeah, it makes sense. Um, so what are your perceptions on how they're applied at this current time? So, thinking about how we are more accepting now, and do you think that the gay stereotype is still applied to homosexual individuals?

Rach Is this, is just my perception of the gay stereotype. What is the gay stereotype?

Int So normally, the typical gay stereotype obviously, there's lots of different ones out there. But the typical gay stereotype that people usually subscribe to, are that men are more feminine, and women are more masculine. So that's the normal from research that I found in my dissertation. And that is what people subscribed to as the homosexual stereotypes. So, do you think yeah, do you think they are still applied today? Or do you think maybe younger generations it's not so much

Rach I think this route like what you just said, like, and I think with men like gay men. This I would say they are still quite like feminine, But I think that is also being gay. Like they want to show off their gayness. Yeah. And but then there's also like, you get like the bears. They're really not feminine but they're also stereotyped. Yeah, definitely.

Int And when you think no talk about gay men and bears, when you think about a gay male, what springs to mind for you? So, if you get to it, you think of a gay male, what kind of things would pop up in your mind like physical features or their personality or characteristics

Rach Like a very nice like, groomed. Well-presented beards, like nice clothes, this is really bad, I'm saying this, like, there are obviously you can't you don't know what, there are stereotypes that do exist. Yeah, they are like fun, outgoing

Int No sounds great. And how about a lesbian woman? Is there anything that springs to mind for you and regarding lesbian women, you know, as any certain stereotypes there

Rach There's like you got like your lipstick lesbian which is, but they're not a stereotype that someone that's not necessarily in the gay community might not know about that. And if you've got a typical, like Butch, lesbian with like, short hair, like, this is really bad but like, play would be quite like laddy. Yeah. And there's like also the, like, feminist, who's like super feminists and where's all the feminist clothing and yeah. Yeah, with like the stereotype of I hate all men. Yeah.

Int So kind of shifted a little bit to talk a little bit about acceptance. So current research states that acceptance of homosexuality is on the increase and nowadays, homosexuality is a lot more accepted than previously. So, what's your view on this? Do you feel like acceptance is better for homosexual people now?

Rach I think it's hard. I think it's the yes; it is because it is more accepted. It's the smaller, like subtle comments that people make that kind of make it hard and people aren't necessarily aware of when they say these things. yeah, I like I was in a school and it's still an insult to call people gay that's still an insult and so I think in general, there is more acceptance, but I think it's some people can be subtly homophobic without necessarily being aware.

Int Yeah. There are exceptions, but we've still got a bit of a way to go in a sense.

Rach Yeah, like, if I use my mom as an example. She'll be like, she'll speak to, she'll say, she's all accepting and stuff but then, like, when we watch strictly, and it was like John and Johannes, she

was like, hating on them every week, like they should not be together and stuff like, just like, silly gay men. Just stuff like that. Like, to me that kind of

Int My mom and Nan did, they did the exact same thing.

Rach Yeah. Yeah.

Int Yeah. Because I think it kind of goes with what you'd like. My mom's quite similar. Like, she's very, seems accepting and she'll, if someone says, like, Oh, my daughter's lesbian. She's like ooh and mine and like, it's like a bit of a token thing. But then at the same time, she'll say stuff like, your mom was saying, like about, you know, well, they shouldn't be dancing together. You shouldn't have two men dancing together. It's not right, though. Yeah, totally. I think. Yeah. We've got a lot of acceptance, but we've got a way to go as well, I think.

Rach Yeah, and I think it is. Because like, to me, I'm not like out to my mom, which is why I am here. so, yeah. It makes it hard, I think it is those, like, comments make me think maybe there is no acceptance.

Int Yeah. And then obviously, that makes, you obviously make it a bit harder for you as well, then I suppose Because you don't want to say anything, just in case, I guess.

Rach Yeah. Yeah. we have become like; you have to kind of accept gay people. Like it's become like, like, if you don't do it, it's bad but then people really don't necessarily be doing it. They're just presenting that way if that makes sense

Int Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Well, I'm going to do now then is I am just going to share the screen. So, it'll show the images hopefully, that you sent to me. So, bear with me a second and I just get it up. can you see your images?

Rach Yeah, I can. now, yeah.

Int Lovely. So, we're just going to quickly talk through each image. So, looking at the first one, then of Ellen. What made you pick that image? So just want to talk me through why you chose it as a representation of gay women.

Rach I think there aren't that many, still aren't that many gay women in, like the media, and people don't have that much exposure to LGBT. So that they looked at the media and said, Oh, it's someone like Ellen. She's like, one of the very few openly gay people in the media. If that makes sense.

Int Yeah, definitely. And that's obviously the stereotype. She kind of fits the gay stereotype doesn't say, I suppose.

Rach Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Int Is there anything from the image that kind of pulls that gay stereotype out? Is there anything about her appearance that you would say? People would know she's gay kind of thing.

Rach Probably like, the short hair, and the suit. What is a really, Like, Like, obviously, you don't know what someone's sexuality is from what they look like

Int Yeah, definitely. And just moving over to the image on the right. I can't remember their name, it's the Girl with a Bows, isn't it?

Rach Yeah. yeah, she is very big on like, TikTok and social media for like, young people. I think she has kind of become like a bit of a representation for people like younger. Yes. Does that help us answer your question?

Int Yeah. And do you think maybe she's like I wouldn't say a new version of Ellen but a new face within the LGBT community. So that's maybe why you chose that picture that she is quite an advocate for the community.

Rach Yeah, because I think she's; she doesn't really seem to care about it. She's just kind of this is what it is, like And I think also probably does represent like, there is probably more acceptance within younger people and generations maybe

Int There's more of a shift isn't there? I think between the younger generations and the older generations.

Rach Yes

Int Moving down to the image below that you've selected. What made you pick this image then? The girl in the white vest? With a partner?

Rach I think there's a few things going on. One the rainbow, to let people know. There's the shaved head, which is also a sign. Tattoo, the beanie.

Int There's more than I realise now you're saying all that. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Rach Oh, yeah. It's like if you want to dress gay. That's how you would dress.

Int Yeah, that's yeah, that's

Rach Okay. Yeah. But then I don't know if that would be as known to a straight person.

Int So, it might be slightly different. If your sexuality is different.

Rach Yeah.

Inter And then the image on the left of the girl with the shaved sides on her hair, what made you pick that image?

Rach I feel like she's really trying to show it off. She also has dyed hair. I feel like I associate dyed hair with like being gay, yeah. And I feel like she's quiet she doesn't seem to care about like, stuff. Yeah, she's like, to me, like I think you will get past the point of caring well, like, if you're out you just like whatever I'm already out mate. It doesn't matter. Yeah.

Int So maybe in a sense, like, she's like, you can look at me, I don't care. This is how I like to look. And that's the end of it.

Rach Yeah, she's not bothered about following the norms and stuff. It's doing what she wants.

Int That's cool. And the image to the right. Is that what's her name again?

Rach Is that Cara?

Int Cara Delvine or something is it?

Rach I don't think I chose her because of her more because of what she's wearing. Yeah. And most likely what she is presenting. The baseball cap is also a another thing. I actually have a picture of myself wearing a baseball hat backwards. So maybe I was just feeling like feeling that.

Int Yeah, like the picture kind of encompasses a lesbian stereotype basically with the snapback and all that kind of stuff.

Rach Yeah, like the way she's standing as well. I

Int Maybe like the lesbian stereotype just kind of go with the more masculinity side of things. So, like you said about the stance like and what she's wearing, do you think that that could be part of the gay stereotype for women?

Rach It probably is. Yeah, like, it's more of, thinking how people perceive it then definitely, yeah. Yeah. And I do go back to what I was just saying. Like, once you realise your gay, you know, It, like once you realise it's not uniform, and you just kind of let yourself be free in kind of everywhere, like body language and stuff.

Int Yeah, definitely. You can kind of be the version of you that you want to be.

Rach Yeah, yeah.

Int So just moving down then. So, looking at the image on the top left, what made you pick this image

Rach I think it's again, like the way she's standing. She's wearing quite like sporty clothes I feel there's a bit of a stereotype that lesbians are all sporty and quite, into that kind of stuff.

Int I feel like this is like more of the newer generations of lesbians coming through if that makes sense. Like when I go on Tik Tok, I feel like the more masculine lesbians or even when I go to pride, like I feel like this is quite a more current gay stereotype. You get what I mean.

Rach Yeah, definitely. Like I that's how I would see and but you're right, that somebody else older, probably. Might not

Int Definitely the whole top bun. That's new

Rach Yeah.

Int addition

Rach yeah.

Int She might even have a cheeky undercut as well, what we can't see

Rach I imagine her in like a, like a sporty sports bra, as well.

Int Yeah, definitely. Yeah. And then

Rach and men's boxers. Yeah.

Int So again, quite masculinising her appearance.

Rach Yeah, yeah.

Int And then moving over to the right of that image. What made you choose that image

Rach I think it's like this, like, baggy loose clothing. Not like going off their body not really caring. Yeah. I don't know. It is hard because I feel like the stereotypes are you going to want to be gay? Like you kind of want to, you kind of do want to show off that so I don't think it's a silly stereotype. It is just how people are if that makes sense. Because you want other people to know, they want other gays to know Yeah.

Int I actually really like her shirt, thinking Oh, I like that.

Rach I know I'd wear it, it is quite cool

Int With a pair of mom jeans, I'll be well away. Just scrolling. The rugby player on the left. What made you choose that image then when thinking about lesbian women?

Rach Again, I don't know if this is a stereotype or just my experiences because I feel like on hinge. There are a lot of photos like that. And I come across a lot of photos like that on like the apps. So yeah. I don't know whether that's a stereotype or more my experience?

Int Yeah, yeah. So, do you think again because of the sports side of things again?

Rach Yeah, and quiet, I feel that's quite a strong picture, like powerful

Int Definitely, definitely. And then moving over to the image on the right of that one, with their arm up, what made you pick this image?

Rach I think I probably and goes back to a few things that we've said like about the stereotypical, like feminist like, do what I want I don't really care and like not caring about norms, because it's not for men and for women and that like this movement, but I don't know the stereotype again, but like, it's like freeing, it's just part of being free and not like the being held down by stuff. Yeah, she's cool. I feel like she just does what she wants and just doesn't care. Yeah.

Int Was there anything else in the image as well? Like that kind of stood out to you as the gay stereotype.

Rach The flag definitely Yeah. Yeah, I think people, that's the way people like embracing themselves and just trying to be happy with it. And yeah,

Int Yeah. Cool And then scroll down to the next page. Thank you for supplying all these images as well. They're great. Put loads on, the top left image of the person sat down. What made you, why did you choose that one? Why did that spring to mind for the lesbian stereotype?

Rach Yes, her whole, like her energy it's quite laid back. I suppose she's saying she is starting quite a masculine position. I feel like that's also a dating app profile picture.

Int Yeah. I agree. Yeah. That's a profile picture and then just moving over to the image on the right there. What parts of this image made you select it?

Rach I don't know. I feel like there is a bit of a stereotype that Lesbians like look like, boys, or act like boys. I feel like that's quite a boyish picture. I don't know.

Int Yeah. 100% check shirt is. I've definitely had that one.

Rach Yeah. The openness of it as well. I think, um, as well as becoming a bit of a stereotypes Like, I've seen this a few times out, a lot of gay [inaudible]

Int I can't hear you very well, unfortunately. It's going a bit crackly.

Rach Oh, sorry.

Int Oh, no, that's better now.

Rach Is that better? Yeah. Yeah,

Int Just repeat that last little bit for me. What did you say? Sorry.

Rach And what did I say? I'm just, this isn't necessarily something I agree with, but I do see online a lot that like trans. Some trans men are just lesbians and yeah, I think that's kind of a bit of a stereotype that's like online Yeah.

Int And then just moving over to the next image that you've put next to that as a woman the cartoon kind of picture what made you select that image?

Rach I remember I did have some kind of thought process behind that one, but looking at it, like and maybe it's just like she's, I actually don't know. I'm sorry.

Int I actually it's a really interesting picture to be honest. When I was just looking at it then like Yeah, right. Yeah. It's a really good image anyway, like, obviously hands touching are everywhere and yeah, it's okay to do that when it's not. You know what I mean? So,

Rach Yeah, maybe that's what I would say like she just doesn't want. I don't know. Yeah.

Int No, no, get what you mean. Great.

Rach Yeah. There was some sort of kind of thought behind that, but it's just gone

Int At the time it was wonderful. And then scrolling down to the next image the fist with the tattoo, the female logo and what made you select that one, then?

Rach I think that's about like, the lesbians, like, don't like men and yeah. Like looking out for each other as well I feel like and yeah, don't know

Int Lesbian power in a sense.

Rach Yeah.

Inter Girl power but like lesbian power instead,

Rach The best power yeah.

Int Moving up to the right there the two girls in the, oh they got girl power on the T shirts. We were just saying that. Yeah. What made you select that image then?

Rach And I think it is that there was the girl power tops and like the idea of like being feminist and yeah, sorry

Int It's absolutely fine. So just scrolling down to the associations that you've selected. So, the first image with the pride flag and the hands, holding hands, what made you choose that image?

Rach The pride flag is obviously like everywhere. Yeah, I think with that image its I don't know whether I'm just making this up, but and maybe it's because I've got that image in front of me, but, like, I feel like with like in a gay relationship, you do have a lot less choice and options. Like, naturally, people are more inclined to be with people the same race of them, but I feel like gay and lesbian people might be more open minded to more of a mixed-race relationship, they're less restricted by stuff and they've got less options I suppose.

Int No, yeah, definitely, and then just moving over to the right again and the Vans they are vans aren't they, yeah. What made you pick that image?

Rach I feel like they're a very lesbian shoe Yeah. In just in terms of wearing it, but then also like, the skateboarding that's like lesbian Yeah,

Int Yeah. They kind of form part of the stereotype I do get what you mean, definitely. So, scrolling down to the lesbian vibes image, I love this image. what made you select that one

Rach I see on Tik Tok a lot like lesbians do like witchcraft. Like with all the crystals and doing all that kind of stuff. I don't really understand it all. But I see that on Tik Tok a lot. I think it's like, also part of their, that is another way of expressing lesbian identity, I think.

Int So that could be like a newer version of the stereotype maybe?

Rach Yeah, in a way. Yeah. Yeah.

Int And then you've got the pride bangle what made you select that one?

Rach I feel like a lot of like, LGBT people do just want like a simple way of showing, showing it like something they can wear like every day. And I feel like a bracelet is a typical way of doing that I guess, to let other people know, to help themselves. Yeah. pride.

Int Yeah, definitely. Let me just scroll down again. So, looking at the, what was that? Sorry.

Rach I was just going to say like, I think with the rainbow, I think that's something that's very, like more of a straight stereotype. Obviously, rainbows, but it's more a straight person might be a bit more than maybe a gay person.

Int Yeah, yeah. I get what you mean. Looking at the vegan image, what made you select that one

Rach I feel like there's a bit of a stereotype that lesbians in particular are vegetarian or vegan. And yeah, I feel like I know more people out who are vegan or vegetarian. It's just kind of part of it again.

Int And then moving over to the pin badges, obviously they're pride pin badge badges. And yeah, why did you select that image? What kind of sprung to mind there

Rach I think the badges themselves are quite like a gay thing. even if it's not necessarily a gay pin badge It just goes back to what I said that they do wear it because they do want to show it's like, yeah, and so like, it might be the less stereotypical, like the lipstick lesbians or the like the masculine men who wear a pin badge to let other people know about it. Yeah, definitely and the Coca Cola bottle with the love is love on, what made you select that image? Sorry, I've just dropped my tea on me. I think a lot of brands like to, like get onto the, like jump on the bandwagon. Yeah. I feel like it's for the branding and for like the consumerist purposes rather than necessarily being supportive of them

Int Kind of going along with everybody else kind of thing.

Rach Yeah, but I feel like it's kind of normal that brands do it at some point. Yeah. Is this helping you or not?

Int No, it is. Yeah, this is all perfect. This is great. Honestly, everything you are saying is spot on, definitely be good research. And moving over to the right. I love this vase. I've got a similar, It's not a vase, though. It's just a little sculpture in my hallway. I absolutely love it. And so, what made you select that image?

Rach I think when, like, your gay, you just want to you don't really care. You have it in your house. You don't really care. So, another way of just showing it off, I feel like gay men in particular, can be quite artsy. Yeah. They do have stuff like that in their houses. Yeah. Well, yeah.

Int So that'd be quite similar as well with the male version as well. It's just below like the plant things.

Rach Yeah.

Int Yeah. I think they're both great. I'd love them as plant pots.

Rach I nearly bought one today the same, like in the same. Yeah, they are cool.

Int Yeah. Then moving over to the image next to the male plant pots, the girl in the Nike crop top and what made you select that in that image,

Rach I feel like there are some brands that are more like lesbian, like Nike, you can get like boxers and stuff and the sports bras. That's just a way of doing it and I don't necessarily think Nike is a LGBT brand. I think LGBT people sometimes use the brand to let others know.

Int Yeah. Yeah, that might Yeah, I get what you mean. So, Nike aren't LGBT brand, but it's something that gay people have adopted as part of their fashion sense, I suppose.

Rach Yeah, but I really like that image as well. Like is not like a full outfit. Like, just wear like, like a sports bra or underwear, but not at all like head to toe.

Int Yeah, was there anything else about that image as well, that kind of would make you think about that homosexuality? Or was it just the clothing?

Rach And I suppose it probably is the shaved, shaved heads.

Int Yeah. Yeah. Cool. Scroll down again, so these your images for gay men. So, looking at the first image at the top, what made you select that, That image? What parts of the picture?

Rach And I feel like the is quite a thing for a lot of reasons. The nails the hair, the beard Yeah.

Int Do you think maybe hair colour is part of it then when you're talking about hair?

Rach Yeah, I'm sorry. I do think that dyeing your hair is a quite a gay or LGBT thing to do, like in a bright colourful colour. Yeah.

Int Yeah. No, cool and then scrolling down to the next image. I'm assuming it's a pride parade there on, what made you select that that image? so what part of those images made you think of gay men?

Rach I feel it is a bit of a stereotype that gay men can be quite sexual and, like, go round, like that, like wearing like clothes and they can be they're all just there's definitely a stereotype as well that they're all having sex with each other, but it is not the case.

Int Yeah. Yeah. It's not the case. But yeah, and obviously, I'm assuming as well, the pride in the background again.

Rach Yeah, yeah.

Int Okay. And then the next image think he got like a harness on I think and what made you select that that image?

Rach In my head that is very gay. I can't really tell you why.

Int What is it like because of the harness is it? Is it clothes? Or is it his appearance? Like what parts of it?

Rach Think all of it like that is quite muscly, the way he has his facial hair, the waist down in the harness Yeah.

Int Yeah, cool. Then the next image of the two men kissing, apart from the obvious. What made you choose this image for your representation of gay men?

Rach I feel like sometimes, you know, I don't know if this is just a thing that's in my head, but I think but sometimes like gay men can be in partnerships where they kind of look similar. Yeah. I feel like they're kind of like dress that like start dressing similar to start doing their hair the same, yeah,

Int Just scroll down again. Oh, I love her

Rach I do to

Int Yeah, it's not actually my daughter's favourite drag artist as well. I will have to tell her after, what made you select this image, then?

Rach I think there is a bit of a to non, too to like an outsider a stereotype that a lot of gay men like dressing up in women's clothes, like women's clothes and that they are doing like quite feminine, Feminine again. Yeah. Yeah, I that obviously that's not the case. I think that's maybe how people perceive that. It's probably to do with what you do see on the media, like you do see a lot of boys, I think I probably see more drag queens than I do, gay men.

Int Oh, definitely lately with how big RuPaul is and stuff like, yeah. It's out there a lot now, isn't it?

Rach Yeah. Which must be quite hard if you are a gay man and just not into that.

Int Yeah, especially if you feel like you've got to be like that to be gay. That's quite a tricky place to be in, isn't it?

Rach I think that is sometimes how I feel like I feel like I need to make myself more gay. Like present more gay. Yeah.

Int Definitely and scrolling down to your next image the man with the pride flag. I think yeah, yeah. What made you pick this image then for gay male

Rach I can imagine him doing like, camp flamboyant like dance with the flag and like that is bad but like I think about like canal street You do kind of see that happening. Yeah. And that's probably how other people see it happening as well. I think the top like that associates like a crop top on a man with being gay as well.

Int And then look more feminine style, isn't it?

Rach Yeah.

Int Yeah, definitely. Just scroll down again. Sex education. And so, what made you select this image then?

Rach I, again like he's someone that everybody knows about, like a lot of people watch sex education. And when they watch TV and stuff, that's probably how they associate other gay people to be

like, if they don't know any gay people. And yeah, like I think the media does have a big impact on how others perceive gays, but also how gays perceive themselves.

Int Yeah. Do you think maybe again, it's the fact that he's got makeup on and obviously it's very like glittery and is quite colourful, in a sense.

Rach Yeah, I think the glitter isn't necessarily a gay man thing. It's more of a like a pride thing. Like an LGBT thing in general rather than a gay man specific thing. Yeah.

Int And then scrolling down to the image. I'm assuming these are a couple. And what made you what about this image then that made you select this?

Rach I suppose it's like the way you in the like the heart like I feel like you wouldn't, you'd get a lot of like, cis, straight masculine presenting men would not be doing that. Yeah. So, it's probably just like that action more than anything.

Int Yeah, this is the last one that Yep. So, the next image with a yellow background? What made you select that one?

Rach I think there's a bit of a stereotype that bi's aren't really real, sometimes. Like. Like, if you're bi, you're either like just doing it for attention, You're greedy and you're not really actually bi, you're either gay or straight. I think people sometimes don't necessarily accept it, which doesn't necessarily lead to a gay man. But it's you might be like, if there is a gay man or someone who is bi then, they might people might be like, oh, you are gay rather than bi.

Int Kind of people wouldn't take the fact that he's by it's like, no, you must be gay.

Rach Yeah, yeah.

Int And then your final image there. And what made you select this like talk me through why you chose this one for the gay male?

Rach I think a gay man is very obviously very stereotyping here, but they like they are well presented, they dress well, they're often smart, they care about what they're wearing. They care about how they look, stereotypically know about fashion and dressing themselves.

Int Yeah, they always look well presented, in a sense. Yeah. Right. So really fab images there. I've loved going through them. They're really good.

Rach I really enjoyed it

Int That's good. That's really good to hear because I worry that people, it puts people off when I say you need to supply images. So, I'm really glad you enjoyed it. I'm just going to pop up my images now. So, can you, are they, is it swapped over to the other images now?

Rach Yeah, it has

Int Lovely. So basically, these images aren't my personal choice. I literally put in on the first of December, I wrote in gay male stereotype on Google and selected the first three images then I wrote lesbian stereotype and then homosexual stereotype. So just the first three that came because I didn't want to put my, my bias in a sense into it. And so, looking at the first one the bear image. What springs to mind for you there. So, what, what are your thoughts about the image, and do you think it does represent homosexuality?

Rach Is that like cut out in the front of the trousers.

Int Yeah, yeah, like chaps' style.

Rach Okay,

Int Ill zoom in a little bit. Is that a bit better?

Rach I think that's kind of a bit more how some people perceive it like I think having a kink at pride a lot of people think by being gay and like having a kink or whatever. I don't know a lot about kink, they kind of intertwine them and I think are we just talking about stereotypes?

Int You can go a bit off tangent if you want as well.

Rach If you asked me to draw a gay man that is not how I would do it. Yeah, because I think it's quite as I said a lot of gay men have a lot more respect than just getting their body out and being half naked on the streets.

Int Yeah. It's quite a sexualized image isn't it?

Rach Yeah, and a lot of, that does happen that, a lot of gay people do get sexualized by on both sides like men and women by like others, it is interesting. I put, whatever that's called the top on one of mine as well. Yeah. I had one of those. I think the trousers leather trousers, like the tight leather trousers, if I saw someone wearing them, you know, I'd probably be like, okay, they probably are gay. But not with the cut out because I don't think that's a fair, fair representation because I just think, most gay men have a lot more like, I don't want to say dignity but Yeah dignity.

Int They wouldn't just go down to your local shop. No, then moving over to the right, the boy with the blue hair. So why do you think Google showed me this image as a gay male? And what are your thoughts about this image?

Rach That's quite an interesting image, it's interesting that it is split in half. Yeah. I think that is true to some gay men, like they do have more masculine and feminine side. I feel like most gay men probably are like one way or the other not kind of both. I feel like a lot of gay men, I feel like this is how we see gay men to be like wearing make up like this, but I feel like most gay men are not really that interested in doing that.

Int Yeah, that makes sense. Definitely. Yeah, scrolling down. So, this was the other image that popped up which I actually found really interesting. And I'm assuming it's a stereotypes poster to be honest.

Rach Yes

Int All gay men are feminine. And there's Gareth Thomas who's obviously far from feminine. And so, what kinds of things spring to mind for you there and why do you think it kind of came up on the gay stereotype search

Rach It really reminds me of the poster that was up in my school and is still up in the school I work in now. That says like, the one that's like, some people are gay get over it. Yeah. I think it's for it's quite hard for people to come out as gay. And it's quite like the Laddie culture and stuff makes it harder and I think in certain, like those certain demographics and like backgrounds there's less, there is less gay people because they're not able come out. And something like this probably helps a lot of people because they see in the media, like all your images that gay men are feminine like Eric from sex education. And for someone to see something like that, if they're not exposed to anything else, that could probably help a lot of people.

Int Yeah, definitely. I agree. When I saw it, I thought that's spot on. There is, there's more to it, than just a gay man being feminine, basically. Yeah,

Rach They're just a man really that there's just Yeah.

Int Yeah, yeah. Be feminine. masculine, it doesn't matter. Yeah. The stereotype is made out that all gay men are supposed to be feminine, I think.

Rach And then if you do something like masculine activity, like rugby, then you're not gay

Int Yeah, exactly. So just scrolling down now to what Google threw at me for the gay female stereotype. So, the first image is Lea DeLaria. What are your thoughts about this image? So, do you think she kind of encompasses the lesbian stereotype or?

Rach I think, I mean, I don't know who she is, but I think that's probably how a lot of people do still see lesbians, Yeah, that probably is a bit outdated like you go on TV, you don't really see that many butch lesbians, but is that because there's not many lesbians on TV? Yeah, I feel like that's probably a bit more outdated But, but butch lesbians do definitely exist and there is a stereotype around them, specifically.

Int So, do you think maybe the stereotype has kind of shifted generationally then? Like, maybe this is a stereotype for women who were, you know, in their 40s? But then there's a different stereotype for women who are in their 20s.

Rach Yeah, it's harder to explain what that is. But yes, all the clothes are, like what I put on mine I suppose you know like how you dress.

Int Yeah. When we were talking about the girl with the bun and the sporty clothes, that's more like a newer lesbian stereotype, isn't it? Yeah. Just scroll down to the next image that another blue hair image. And what do you think about this image, then? Like, why do you think this would represent a lesbian female stereotype?

Rach But the only thing I can say really is like the rainbows, and the short hair, it is an interesting image. It's making me think of like, like drugs and stuff, but I don't associate that with. I personally don't associate that with LGBT, but I don't know if others do.

Int Yeah. No, interesting. And then the third image for lesbian females? I'm assuming they're a couple. And what are your thoughts about this image

Rach I'm not sure. Because, like, you see, you see a lot on social media about like, like, I'm looking for a milf kind of thing. And you wouldn't necessarily get that as much in the straight community. I don't. But I also I don't know how serious people are when they say, I'm looking for a milf because yeah, and so. But I do think because like, there is less Option and choice and stuff for Gay people, there is as well as physically stereotypically bigger age gaps, then like, straight relationships

Int Scrolling down a little bit more. So, when I put in homosexual stereotype RuPaul was the first image to come up similar to what we're talking about in your images. And so why did you think that? You know, what are your thoughts about these images and how do you think they represent homosexuality

Rach I think know how people do it, but not how it is. And often you'd get like a drag queen. As like, if there is a drag queen there It's got to be a gay thing. Or like you might have because you can't have a gay event without a drag queen. Like the drag queen is kind of like the token gay thing. Yeah,

Int that makes sense. I think Yeah, whenever you go to any gay event, there's always a drag queen isn't there? Definitely. Yeah.

Rach I actually went to a drag king show two weeks ago.

Int Oh, wow. Um, I follow a drag King on Facebook. Adam all

Rach Oh, yeah.

Int They are Fantastic.

Rach I love them. But you always see drag queens that you never see drag kings in Like the media

Int No, yeah. I only stumbled upon Adam all I saw them at a show. And was like, wow, I've never seen a drag king in my life at this point. And I was like, who is this person? This is amazing. But yeah, like you said that. You don't hear about drag kings ever? It's queens.

Rach Yeah, it's that's interesting. Yeah.

Int Obviously, I know a drag race. That is one of the most recent ones. They actually had a woman take part, which was a Cis woman, but she Yeah, she, I'm sure it was drag race UK.

Rach She was a drag queen. So, it was actually like, she didn't dress as a king. Yeah.

Int Yeah. Then trying to show where the representations aren't they, I think. Yeah.

Rach But it's probably I feel like the stereotype for, like, looking at drag queens and stuff is probably more of a stereotype that a gay man is like feminine. Yeah, that, that a gay woman is not feminine. But I don't know if that's just based on my experiences

Int Yeah, definitely. Scroll down again. So, the next image that came up was little NAS. I'm assuming this was a show of some sorts, what are your thoughts about this image? Why would this kind of represent the homosexual stereotype?

Rach There is a bit of a thing of, I don't know, because obviously I am on like dating apps, and you do all sorts of things. I don't know what it'd be like, on straight. Like as a straight perspective. You often see like, a threesome, or like, are looking for Unicom, that kind of thing. And this is probably kind of showing the threesome and also like the stereotype that all gay men just have sex with any gay man just because they do

Int More like promiscuous and things like that.

Rach Yeah.

Int There's anything a lot about their clothing or anything? Or is it just that do you think

Rach The lack of top is quite a gay man thing but yeah, yeah.

Int Okay, showing more skin, basically.

Rach Yeah

Int Yeah. A bit like in your images. What are the guys just in their underwear? I suppose.

Rach Yeah, yeah.

Int And the final image here, and so it's a man but his pride flag as a cape. And what are your thoughts on this image? Then? Why do you think this would represent homosexuality?

Rach So, I am just looking at the other people in the picture. Are they like soldiers?

Int I thought that you know, the one right in front of him does look like it and then there's like, a, there's those men in high vis and stuff? Isn't there

Rach Which is interesting to take that picture in that way? But there's a reason they've like put their gay well, the rainbow man in front so it's probably like to show like the like the resistance like we're still all fighting and pushing back and yeah, even like, I think some people don't, like straight people, they don't understand why it needs to be done. Sometimes. I think sometimes they say like, oh, you're doing it too much. You're all like we need to. Yeah, resist, there's a bit of a stereotype that, like we're going on and on about and going on about our rights, but they don't understand why

Int Why are you doing it? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Interesting. So, I think yeah, that's it for the images. So, I'm just going to come back and stop sharing the screen.

Rach Right.

Int So, I'm just going to ask you a few more just on your personal experience now if that's okay. So, have you ever felt the need to conform to homosexual stereotypes that we've discussed?

Rach So, I'm kind of like only like, the past like, year two years. Have I like, kind of accepted myself in my head. Yeah. And I, and obviously, with like COVID, lock down everything, I didn't really go out. Didn't feel like I needed to. But I think recently, now I'm kind of getting more and more out sometimes I wish that I looked, well looked more gay And I think sometimes I do want to go out and buy like clothes that I might not necessarily otherwise buy, just to look gay. if that makes sense?

Int Would you do that to kind of fit in with a community or to show other people that you are like, what, like what we were talking about earlier?

Rach Like both, I think you want, I don't necessarily, I am not that bothered about people because I don't really care about what they think. Yeah. I think it's more sometimes like you want other gays, to know. Yeah. I did, when I did go out, the other week, I tried to make myself look gay, I was wearing a shirt with, like boobs on and rainbow earrings. But it's also like, I can't fully look gay because I'm not out at home. So yeah. like my earrings I put in after I leave the house. Yeah. Yeah. No get what you mean.

Int So, do you feel like to kind of go off, like putting your earrings in after and stuff? Do you feel like sometimes you have to kind of resist the stereotype a little bit? So, whether, you know, to protect yourself or so other people don't realise you are? Or maybe, you know, uni, work things like that?

Rach Sorry, I might do I have to like, hold back.

Int No go for it.

Rach What was the question? Sorry, my brain a bit then.

Int No, no, it's fine, basically what I was asking, is if, yeah, like, if you do kind of hold back and like, do you resist that stereotype to kind of protect yourself? And obviously, like, you were saying, You're not out at home and things like that. So, is that something that you have to do so that people don't realise that you're gay, if that makes sense?

Rach Yeah, I think sometimes I don't want people to know, I don't I don't know maybe sometimes, Like, I think like seeming gay and like looking gay is good for some people, then, Like, I kind of feel like, I shouldn't need to do that. Like, and it's like, why, why? Why am I doing that? Why am I doing something that I wouldn't necessarily do? Because I just think it's like, the whole like, coming out, like, why do I have to come out? It's the same way like, why do I have to dress like that?

Int Like, yeah, no, I totally get that. I remember doing it myself. When I came out, like, put about 15 years ago, 13 years ago, something that I totally kind of masculinised my appearance, and really thought that I had to look like a lesbian, to be a lesbian and to fit in and all the rest of it. When actually now some days I look a bit you know, I probably say I'm more androgynous now, like, some days I look masculine, some days I have like a really 50s style dress on with a red lip and a quiff like, I can flip from one end of the spectrum to the other because I felt like now, I feel more comfortable. If that makes sense.

Rach I think I do get that like sometimes I do want to do it a bit more too kind of I think if you kind of fully embrace the whole culture, then you can fully feel better about yourself. And it can kind of help you feel better if you're fully, if you fully immersed, you know. That could be something that does help.

Int Yeah, definitely. And do you think that we're, kind of similar to what I was saying, really. Do you think like, over time as people come out and people move through their journey of being gay. Do you think that maybe their identity could change? Like, with the stereotypes, obviously, when we were talking about, like, coming out and really sticking the stereotype, and then moving away from it, do you think that's something that happens quite a lot?

Rach I don't know, on TikTok I've definitely seen videos of like, before I was gay, now I'm gay, but I haven't really seen them. Like, going back, if that makes sense. I've seen the common stereotype but not necessarily, going back on it. Yeah. I suppose as people get older, they get into relationships and get more comfortable with it.

Int Yeah, I suppose and then kind of develop their own version, I suppose.

Rach Yeah. I think with me, Like, at work I probably wouldn't dress fully gay. Because yeah. I feel like I'm the only gay one there. Probably not what? Yeah, I don't want to be the gay one. Like, you don't want to be the one you just want to be a person.

Int Yeah. 100%. And just kind of moving on like about, you're saying, like, you know, that being the gay one and stuff at work? So do you feel like there is, like we were saying before, about acceptance, and how we could do a bit more and stuff. And yeah, how do you think we could do better? Like, what kind of things do you think we could do to make acceptance better and kind of deplete the stereotypes a little bit? Maybe?

Rach I think it's just simple things. Like when people like say to me at like work like, oh, so you don't have a boyfriend. I'm like, no, I really don't have a boyfriend. Yeah. Like, what would you say to that? Like, I don't have a girlfriend either. But if I did what, like, what I'd be like, I actually have a girlfriend. I just don't know,

Int I get that all the time. Like, people will say to me, like, oh, what does your husband think about that? I'm like my wife.

Rach Yeah.

Int And then sometimes they still do it. There was someone at my martial arts class who kept repeatedly saying husband, and I'd said, like, a million times like she and things like that. And in the end, actually, literally sounds like I am married to a woman, and he was like, oh, sorry And I was like, well, yeah, I did hint. Yeah, he has been for like, months, and months. And I was like, this is getting awkward.

Rach Yeah. Yeah, I think it's the little things like that, like the little comments. But it's probably more bigger stuff that I don't know what they could do, because I work in education

Int Maybe in schools and things like that?

Rach Yeah, I mean, I work in a school. And there is one kid that does say like, homophobic stuff. And they've got, and they've been given like, one to one session with like, the pastoral woman on like acceptance and not discriminating. But I feel like, definitely it's better than when we were in school. Like I had, like, no mention of gay or whatever. And they definitely do have stuff mentioned. But I think it's still you still hear like, the kids be like, Oh, you a lesbian? Like, like, yeah. And they are 10 years old, I don't really understand like, where they got it from and stuff. And so, I don't know. And yeah, I don't know

Int how people would move it forward. Yeah, it's a tricky one. And I think, I think like you were saying about like my daughters in year eight at school. And she does. Yeah, I suppose Yeah, she does look quite androgynous to be fair, but even then, like when she had her hair cut short, all the boys in school were like, does that mean you're a lesbian now? And she was like, no, no, but all the time and like if she because she prefers to wear trackies, and things like that. She gets it all the time. And she's like, she'll say to me like, Mom, I'm 12 like I don't even know what I like. Yeah, I'm like don't worry about it babe, you know, it is what it is it doesn't matter. But it's a nightmare, that automatically these things that people assume make you a lesbian. It just blows my mind.

Rach Yeah. I think it's kind of got to be more than more than schools, because these kids are obviously getting it from somewhere. I think even as a school teacher teachers talk like about it, they're still going to go home to these attitudes. It's kind of a bigger picture, I think. Yeah. Really, what could be done Because there are more and more rep, there is more and more representation in the media there's more, I don't know, I suppose it's like, like when people make racist comments? It's like tiny little sort of things. This is just so ingrained in society that it's hard to get rid of.

Int Yeah, maybe, as the younger generations are coming through, and the older generations are kind of disappearing. Do you think that would make it get there? Do you think kind of younger generations are leading the way in a sense?

Rach I think they are but, for other like, we probably look at those, we probably noticed those people more than other people there still will be the very, the laddy lads like oh, cannot do that and it probably is just because we're more aware of it. Yeah. I don't know.

Int It is a tricky one in it. Yeah, hopefully one day, it will be better. Fingers crossed.

Rach It definitely is better than when I was growing up.

Int Yeah. Yes same as when I was at school I wouldn't dared, telling anyone that I like girls. No way.

Rach I think that's why it's taken me So long Like I found my diary when I was 10 And even at 10, I was writing about it but still, I think I just really, really suppressed it till I was about 20.

Int I think I was about 22. And yeah, my daughter was about nine months old at the time. And then I was like, this isn't for me. Actually, I've got something to tell you all, yeah, that was but then what a difference after like, Yeah, crazy. Yeah, yeah, I think that is all the questions to be honest and got some really good stuff there. So, I'm just going to stop the recording.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Rae

Int Otherwise, I get scared it's not recording. Bear with me. There we go. Got it. Yeah. Lovely. Okay, then. Um, so during the interview, we'll discuss images that we think relate to homosexual stereotyping. So, thank you for supplying your images. I've also bought along some similar images for us to discuss. So, the images that I've supplied aren't my personal bias. They are what was selected off Google. So, on the I think it was the first of December, and I literally wrote, gay man stereotype, female, stereotype, gay homosexual stereotype, and pick the first three images that came up, basically. Because I just, I didn't want to put my bias onto the imagery. So yeah, we'll have a chat about those. Do you have any questions before we begin at all?

Rae I don't think so.

Int Great. And, and you're feeling comfortable, you feel like you're safe to speak and all that?

Rae Yeah.

Int Lovely. That's great. So firstly, then, we'll have just a few questions, and then we'll move on to the images after. So, I'd just like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be gay stereotypes?

Rae I think that kind of depends on the context. And also, whether you're talking from like, within the community or about the community in a way that you're not part of. And also, very, very generationally. So, like, you know, I, this is going to sound dismissive, and I don't, I don't mean it to be, but you know, there's a lot on TikTok at the moment about like, having very sort of like, like, broad ways of flagging up, who may or may not be part of these communities. In a way that, for instance, I don't really recognise because I feel like, you know, this is very much something that is, that comes from, like the United States, and that is a generation that's like, slightly younger than I am. So, I know that those are not things that I recognise. So, in terms of, like, stereotypes, for like gay men? Do you mean like, what? Which stereotypes do I have? When I think about it? Yeah. What about stereotypes in general?

Int You kind of go into either or really. And so, my next question was about your perceptions on obviously, gay males. And so really asking about, you know, what your stereotypes are, or maybe even stereotypes that you've heard of that you may not apply yourself to gay males that could even include, like, obviously, appearance, job roles, what their hair, their, you know, grooming, all those kinds of things.

Rae I think a lot of the stereotypes of the sort of root of them is this almost like failure to adhere to gendered norms. So, like, the idea that men you know, if they're gay, they are more effeminate or feminine or have feminine interests, and similarly that women are more are more masculine, but almost in a way that feels really like, you know, pathologizing and like, it can't be helped, like, not just gay men, like feminine things, but, you know, gay men can't help but being feminine. Yeah. So, there's, yeah, there's a very sort of like, like, almost like, yeah, this element of like, failure or, or, you know, misery or inability, that's like, you can't do this. Yeah. So yeah, I think for the stereotypes I would have about gay men. Is you know, maybe this is also a very sort of, like, influenced by early 2000s, like, pop culture, but like, interested in fashion, and I think speak in a very sort of melodic way or more expressive, I guess? And yeah, very sort of like you know, gossipy, or bitchy or things that you would more readily associate with a stereotype of what straight women might be.

Int Yeah

Rae And then similarly, with lesbian women, maybe, that they've got traditionally, I suppose, actually, it's more sort of like, I think the stereotypes around gay women are maybe like slightly more complex. And so I think on one hand there is this very strong hyper femininity, almost of in, in spirit in terms of like caretaking and you know, valuing, you know, this idea that, you know, if you have like a conversation with a lesbian it will take like, you know, the first hour is spent going over your emotions and, and then you get to the actual conversation. Yeah, every every you know, every meeting has to start with an emotional check in, which is really good, but, you know, it's very, like, let's get on with it.

Int Yeah.

Rae But then on the other hand, also, yeah, these, this idea that lesbians would have naturally be more masculine or have masculine interests like DIY. You know, ring of keys kind of thing, like having things are very practical, very, I suppose also, like, very closely related to stereotypes about like, autistic or neurodivergent women just very simple things are very practical or very sort of, like, not frilly for the sake of being frilly not doing gender conformity, because it's a societal standard, but doing the things that are more maybe, almost in a sensory way, comfortable, so loose fitting clothing, Birkenstocks. And like, the strong connection with animals, and obviously, mostly cats.

- Int** Yeah. Yeah. That's cool. And with them, obviously, you said about the loose-fitting clothing for women, for lesbian women, what would you suggest would be kind of clothing for a gay male?
- Rae** I think maybe almost the opposite, like tight fitting clothing, clothing that shows off the body or, you know, shows off, like nakedness or alludes to promiscuity, like mesh shirts, or, and then, you know, going into various subcultures maybe sort of like leather. Yeah, yeah. I think, I don't know, I don't know, where the sort of like feedback loop begins. But I feel like a lot of like, either festival clothing is inspired by gay men's fashion, or gay man's fashion is inspired by festival clothing. But I don't know where that. Yeah, where that loops around.
- Int** That's great. And also, I'm just trying to, obviously, we're talking, you briefly touched on there about how you were saying, like, are we talking about stereotypes that we've heard or stereotypes within the community, which has come up quite a lot with my interviews with other homosexual and non-heterosexual participants, that there is a difference between the stereotypes within, that maybe the straight community don't know about and things like that. And so, I just wanted you to try to go into that a little bit for me. So, do you feel like there are different stereotypes within the community?
- Rae** Yeah, I think, I think the more nuanced and more sort of like a tune to a particular locale. So, for instance, I'm based in London at the moment, and there is quite a, if people talk about, you know, East end lesbians that's very different from Beckenham lesbians.
- Int** Oh, wow.
- Rae** Yeah. And, like Brighton lesbians,
- Int** I didn't realise that.
- Rae** Yes, like, East End is sort of most of Well, I suppose. It's, it's changed now. Because of gentrification, but I think the idea is that like, East end lesbians are quite intimidating, very working-class women very, maybe more in line with like, Butch femme culture, and like, pub culture and bar culture, etc. In Beckenham, lesbians are sort of like suburban middle class. And then, I suppose Brighton is like, you know, suburban middle class and have children.
- Int** Yeah, that's really interesting.
- Rae** Yeah, so I think there's more nuance to it. And I also think that the negative slant is not inherent to like the employment of a stereotype, I think, you know, when, like, the idea that it's like, inevitable that someone will fit into this category, isn't necessarily there. I think it's more like, you know, there's more of an acknowledgment that these are things that now are also actively employed to find other people. So, it's not just like, oh, you will naturally wear this but also like, are you wear this because then people will recognise you as part of this group and then you can find your community.
- Int** I've had that quite a lot. Actually. A lot of my participants have said, the reason why I did it was to find other gay people. And when the first person said that, to me, I didn't realise that that's what I did as well. So, I really masculinised my appearance when I came out gay, super masculine, like really, I mean, even, you know, boys clothing, boys' underwear, like everything. And at the time, I didn't realise it was probably what I did it for, to show people I was gay.
- Rae** Yeah.
- Int** So I could potentially find a partner, find my community. And when the first person said it was a bit like, you know, like, oh, maybe that's what I did. And but yeah, I've had that quite a lot of people say about like, doing it just to kind of fit in somewhere. Yeah, really interesting
- Rae** I fully cut off all of my hair when I came out. And it wasn't, it and it was not a good look.
- Int** Yeah, when I, when I mean, I went like, shaved all the sides. I've had a quiff, like really, Boy hair basically like, oh, yeah, as masculine as I could possibly be.
- Rae** Crazy, I think actually, like, tattoos and piercings in that can also be very, very. I don't want to say like, telling, but also like particular kinds of, yeah. I suppose there's also something there about like, like, modification in general, like, you know, dyeing your hair or like, like, like pointing out the artificiality of what a body can be, that I think it's more readily accepted or

associated with, like, maybe LGBT communities more broadly. But yeah, so again, like moving away from this idea of like, oh, people have to be one certain way, because naturally, we are that and then I think once you realise, oh, like that appeal to nature is completely fake. I think it just opens up ideas like, oh, well, that means that, you know, I can just dye my hair, and it doesn't, you know, yeah, that's fine. Or I can get piercings and tattoos and like wear weird clothing that isn't seen as a professional because these rules are all made up.

Int Yeah. Yeah, I think you kind of make your own version, don't you say you like probably go in. You know, very blinkered and follow the stereotype, then after a bit kind of thing. Actually. I probably don't need to do this. Like, like, now I look. Sometimes I look like a boy. Sometimes I look like a girl. Like, I like looking quite androgynous anyway. But then other days, I'll have like a really cute 50's style dress on with a red lipstick. Yeah. I totally mix it up now. But yeah, at first, I really kind of was blinkered and thought that was all I could look like. You know what I mean?

Rae Oh, but I think even like precedes that particular moment because I don't know, I grew up in the Netherlands, and there's very strong sense of like, gender conformity, like, there's so much power in growing your hair out long as a woman, that I think even even you know, indulging in the stereotypes is already sort of like a point of like, oh, I don't have to do this. Like, I don't have to have long hair. I don't have to wear dresses. Because we all this is all just made up like the idea that I have to do these things because I was assigned this gender and because people expect me to want to appeal to men. That's all just made up.

Int Yes It's crazy. And it when you really think about it

Rae It is so stupid, is it shows like, there are so many aspects.

Int Yeah crazy. And so, kind of moving on slightly now. So obviously, current research does suggest that homosexuality is more accepted now than previously. And so, what are your views on this? Do you feel like we are fully accepting now do you feel like we've still got a way to go or

Rae I think certain elements are accepted, and in certain contexts. I do think especially maybe lately with a lot of legal changes, especially in the US, but also people trying to make legal changes in the UK, that there is, again, this sort of push back against gender nonconformity, or maybe to the more sort of, like, sexual aspects of these communities. I think a lot of a lot of rhetoric that's tried to advance like gay rights, has worked through, like, the de sexualization of these identities, which I get, and I understand, I also, you know, I do think that there is more to these communities than just the sexual aspect. Yeah, but I think it has also made it then more difficult to, to, like, that is it to like, like, make a case for things like, Okay, well, we do actually need, you know, we do need explanations in school about what gay and lesbian sex is, because people need to be safe, and people need to like, and young, young people will, you know, whether you like it or not, they will experiment with these things. And they might as well know what they're doing. And they might, you know, it's been proven time and time again, that, that education on these topics for young people actually is, allows them to be more protective of their boundaries. And yeah, but because this whole sexual element has been, like, removed from, from these communities, or seen as, like a very, very adult thing to interact with. The idea that you would explain this to a child or that you would explain to a child that, you know, adults have sex sometimes. It that's now sort of, like seen as almost like a grooming tactic. Yeah and yeah, similarly, I think that there's a very, still very strong idea that in order to be like, an acceptable kind of gay or lesbian person, that means that you have to, like, appear in a very respectable way. Yeah. So, like, you know, I, I present in the way I do, and I know that there's a combination of gendered expectations and ethnic expectations, that mean that I'm not really ever read as a lesbian, which is annoying. But also, if I compare that to like, my butch friends, they face so much harassment on a like, on a daily basis, that I just don't really have to deal with. And it's no, it's annoying to not be recognised for how I feel, but also, like it does, in many ways keep me safe.

Int Yeah.

Rae And I think that's the same for, you know, of course, a lot of gay men will face homophobia at some point. But there are some people who are like, slightly more protected by presenting in a more masculine way. Yeah.

Int Yeah, that makes sense. I feel like as well with this question, the more I've spoken to participants about this, it's kind of made me realise that maybe we're not as accepting as I thought we were like, we're far more ahead than when I came out gay. I mean, I came out gay in 2009, I think so it's quite a long time. So, we are more accepting and then but the more I speak to people about it, and actually think, well, hang on, I have to mitigate myself so much. So, like, if my wife and I are walking down the road and we are holding hands, and we walk past an old couple we will let go of each other's hands. But I do that for them, like, I don't want to upset them. You know what I mean? Like, and I think, if we were really that accepting, I wouldn't have to do those things.

Rae Yeah

Int Yeah, I think even though I'm doing these interviews with lots of other people, I'm finding out loads of really interesting stuff, like think, about my own journey, thinking, wow, like, maybe we're not where we, on paper, like top level. Yes, we are accepting but actually when you delve in a little bit. Yeah, maybe we're not that good.

Rae I remember the first time that I kissed a girl like outside of the setting of a gay club or bar, and I didn't know the area I was like, we're going to get attacked. And like that, yeah, that was like a moment where I'm like, oh, I should be really enthusiastic about this because I really like this girl and she's really nice and she's clearly interested in me. And the only thing I could think of was like, we need to, you can't do this. We're outside. And, and this is like, 2016. Yeah. You know, very recent. well maybe not that recent, that's very long ago now

Int I'll say it's recent to me. I feel like lately when people say like, 2010, I'm like, Yeah, that's not long ago. And then actually, it is. The years are flying by. So, what we'll do now is we'll just move on to your images. So, I'm just going to share the screen. You'll briefly see yourself for a minute while I pop them up, there we go. So, can you see your images now?

Rae Yes

Int Lovely. So, what we'll do is we'll just go through each image. And I just want you to talk me through them really. So, looking at the first image on the left, the check shirt? Could you just kind of tell me, just talk me through it really, and why you chose it is as your representation for lesbian stereotype?

Rae I think it's one of those things that is a stereotype that, for the first time I sort of recognised myself and without, without making the effort to, like, join into, in a stereotype for recognition, because I think it might have been on like Tumblr or Twitter or something someone posted something about how every lesbian has this shirt. And I do have this shirt.

Int Yeah, me too.

Rae Actually, I didn't even intend to wear this, but my friend just bought me this like weird blanket hoodie kind of thing. Yeah. And he couldn't he made it into like a, he bought the version that has the red chequered thing, because like, oh, that's, that's the lesbian pattern. So, you have to have that one. Yeah, not like another one. I didn't Yeah, I didn't even intend to wear this today. But it's a stereotype though. I accidentally conformed to. Yeah, I think, yeah, that there's something about the practicality of having the, you know, having lots of buttons and being able to adjust things rather than having to be form fitting, it's quite loose. It's quite airy. Has this sort of like outdoorsy feel, it's got pockets, and it is, you know, quite like masculine.

Int Yeah I think the check shirt is a massive part of the stereotype. Like even when you see on TikTok, I see videos on people on TikTok saying, like, I must be lesbian, because I'm wearing this shirt and like those kinds of things. So, I think definitely that shirt is, has become somehow, like

a main part of it, I think. Yeah, definitely. So, moving on to the image on the right there, but I'm a cheerleader. What made you select that image?

Rae I think because it's one of the only lesbian films that really seems to be this like, like this, like film for like, like, lesbian culture where it's really, there really seems to be a split between people. Not just haven't seen it, but don't know it exists. I don't know. I don't

Int I didn't know it existed I've never watched it.

Rae Wow, It's, it's amazing. It's so good. It's such a good film. But it's one of the only lesbian films that I know where there's, the jokes in it, and the references in it seem to be really made for a lesbian audience or for at least like a gay audience, more broadly, maybe. And, yeah, it's just one of those films that if, if people know it, it's immediately a classic. I don't know anyone who has sort of like has seen it and you know, didn't like it, or didn't understand it. And yeah, it's, you know, you've got other films like *Blue is the Warmest Colour* or like the *Handmaiden* which got, you know, more famous and a lot more like critical acclaim, but they also seem to be made for a wider audience. And I think the fact that seems like it was made for this very niche audience that sort of propelled it into this like weird cult status. It's great. I really would recommend that you watch it. It's so it's, yeah, it's great.

Int I know what I'm doing tonight then, that's my plans. So, moving down to your next image. With the story well, comic in the background, what made you choose this image?

Rae I think, I think because again, like, Alison Bechdel is just kind of one of those authors that inadvertently was one of my earliest exposures to les specifically lesbian culture. Because my mom gave me *Dykes to Watch Out For* to read when I was like 12, which is, I don't, yeah, I don't know what she was. She's a very, like, open minded person, but also like, definitely fodder for like, right wing people to say that people are grooming their children into being gay, because that was, I don't know, that's just such like a, a weird thing to give a 12-year-old. But I'm happy that she did. Yeah. And I think also, there's something about Alison Bechdel like herself, just looking like, what I imagined like a stereotypical lesbian to look like. Yeah, and her work just, again, being one of those things that in certain spaces, no one will have heard of it, no one will know who she is. And then within lesbian spaces, there will always be someone who's like, who not just like, loves her work, but is like obsessed with it. Yeah. And I think with both Alison Bechdel's work, and then I'm a cheerleader, it can be, it can in itself be like the basis for a lot of connections between people.

Int Okay that's great. So, when you were saying about, she kind of embodies that, the lesbian stereotype, do you mean then because of how masculine she looks in her short hair and things like that?

Rae Yeah. Yeah, mostly in terms of looks. But I think also, you know, some of the work is very, sort of stereotypically like, introspective. This line between, you know, everyday observations and stuff like a rural town. And this really, you know, high art high, highly academic engagement with critical theory and literature that is just quite familiar to the lesbian communities that I know where, yeah, on one hand, you have, you know, you can go from like having a conversation about like, I don't know, a relationship or a breakup, and then you immediately go into like, Yeah, but what does what does Sigmund Freud say about these things? What does like what does this tell us about, And, yeah, it just veers between this really sort of like, caring personal effective from to this, like, highly theoretical concepts. And that just feels like the way that a lot of these communities have conversations.

Int Interesting, so moving down to U haul. Yeah, just talk me through this one, then. So, what made you choose the U haul image?

Rae That yeah, it's just the stereotype of people like immediately moving in with each other. But I think also, there's something very sort of meta textual about, we have these stereotypes that seem to come from the US and then apply them in Europe, or you know, where I'm from in the Netherlands. Like, I don't think in the Netherlands, people would immediately move in with each

other, but the stereotype still exists. Yeah and yeah, I do think that there can be something like, codependent about a lot of same sex relationships but that kind of makes sense given the context of, you know, there's not many of us to choose from. So, if you find someone you kind of want to like cling on to them. Yeah. Yeah,

Int Yeah. The U haul one is also quite a big part of the stereotype as well. And I know like from my past experiences as well. Like, I don't know maybe as lesbians we just fall in love quick. I don't know like you said maybe it is because you've there's not many of us. So, it's like, you're really cool. We need to stick together.

Rae Yeah and also like this sort of delay of you know, lots of people can't or don't date in school or like even up until they're like mid late 20s just because of circumstances or maybe they date men for a while. So, I think you know, the 15-year-old straight person isn't even in a position to U haul with the, you know first like puppy love, but we tend to have the means and the opportunities to, like, you know, for our first love to, to be someone where we're in a place to, to be able to do these things. So, I think there is a sort of, like delayed, I don't want to say delayed adolescence, because that sounds very, like pathologizing. But like this delay of like, you know, first relationships, even the first couple of relationships can be so, so intense. And when you do that, when you're older, then you do have the possibility to do all these things that you might, that like, sort of like romantic notions that you might have as a teenager. So, like, oh, we're going to get married immediately, because I love you so much. And yeah, yeah, there's something about like, learning to be in relationships as well, I think.

Int 100% I love your images, they are great. So, moving down to your next image, the sandals with a sock. Could you just talk, pardon?

Rae Sensible footwear

Int Yeah, definitely. Could you just talk me through why you chose this image, please?

Rae Yes, I think that in itself, again, has become the sort of stereotype for, like a saying of, you know, she sort of like tongue in cheek way of, you know, they're, they're part of this community, and you know she, she prefers to sensible shoes. And, yeah, something again, about, you know, why? Why do that sort of inconvenient, painful part of femininity that might be like heels or like, the discomfort of, you know, wearing, wearing shoes that are there to be like, aesthetically pleasing, when you can just wear something that actually makes you feel comfortable. Yeah, which, again, lots of like, links between, like, I think, sensory experiences in terms of like, neuro divergence, and looking at the artificiality of a lot of, a lot of roles in society. So yeah, why, why would I do something that's painful for me, just because we've decided that because I was assigned this gender at birth, I have to I have to do this. To attract a group of people that I'm not even attracted to. Yeah and like, I think once you sort of see behind the, like, the ridiculousness of it, it becomes a lot easier to just do what you want and wear the things that you want.

Int Yeah. I also love that they're wearing socks to prevent any form of blistering. Yes. Like, I'm the worst thing is I'm sitting in socks and sliders. So, I'm actually doing this look right now.

Rae It's the, it's the kind of worst thing that societies decided not to accept is socks and sandals it is a perfectly fine combination.

Int I'm doing it right now. I'm really comfortable. But my feet are still warm, what more could I want? So now moving on to your gay male stereotypes. So, the first image there with the two men together, and what made you select this image?

Rae Um, something about the I think both the group setting like I think, I find it, maybe because I'm not a gay man but I find it very difficult to imagine a stereotype of a gay man like by himself. I feel like there's something of a stereotype of, you know, we meet in groups we meet in, you know, in club settings. I think there's both a stereotype but also maybe like an actual sort of issue within communities of very strong appearance based, like politics and social politics as well. So, yeah, wanting to show off your body wanting to show off how in shape you are. Both as a status symbol and as a way to get sexual partners. Yeah, very, very white as well, very masculine, but

in a way that is clearly open to attracting other men rather than attracting women. Yeah, I think this is like club and dance setting is just a place where people do actually just meet each other, even if it, if that's because, you know, there is, there aren't many other places to meet people.

Int Is there any other parts of the image that will kind of see, like when we were talking about the image earlier about the lesbian stereotype? Is there part of this image that kind of say to you that this is the gay stereotype? Like the things we've discussed before? they have a bit of leather on, haven't they? And,

Rae Yeah, yeah, I think I think it is the sort of like, focus on the body and sexuality. That really feels like it's not just a stereotype that other people put on to those communities, but also a stereotype that is used and addressed within those communities, like a lot of my gay male friends are often find it really difficult to deal with body image issues, because they're like I, you know, if I gained like, 10 pounds, no one would even look at me, no one would even speak to me. So, I have to, like I have to be in this shape to even be accepted as part of this community. So, I think both from within and from without it is, is a bit of a stereotype slash dynamic.

Int Yeah. My friend is actually doing their PhD on it. They're looking at, eating behaviours within gay males to yeah, it's really interesting stuff that they're doing, blows my mind. But yeah, really good stuff. So, moving down to your next image for gay male stereotypes. What made you choose this image?

Rae I think the sort of like effeminacy of this character in Cabaret. Yeah. As well as the fact that he's played by Alan Cummings, who I noticed I noticed by rather than gay, he does, yeah, he does tend to sort of like, play. Yeah, these more effeminate characters. And I think something as well about the fact that it is a performance within a performance like, you know, not just is he playing this character, but the character is playing a character in Cabaret. Yeah, and that there is a sense of I think gay male, particularly upper and middle class, gay male communities converging around theatre and performance and spectacle. Yeah and then I think the fact that it's set in in the Weimar, Weimar Republic, which was such a hotbed for innovation, around gay male sexuality, and a lot of, a lot of the stereotypes come from the Weimar Republic. Yeah, like the white face, the eyeliner, the makeup, etc. That it's almost like a self-referential. Yeah, it's like this character was meant to be the epitome of gay male sexuality. Yeah, played by an actor who often epitomises gay male sexuality, even though he himself I don't think identifies as gay.

Int Yeah, that's really interesting. I watched him when, I don't know if you saw it, him and Miriam going off in their camp camper

Rae I didn't, but I do. I do really want to watch it.

Int Oh my life. All I did was laugh, like, them pair together, they're hilarious. You'll have to watch it. Well, they're just scrolling down to the next image of the boat, what made you choose this image then?

Rae Yeah, just so Yeah, because I'm from the Netherlands. I always, like my assumption was that this is what pride parades look like. They're on boats in the water. And I didn't realise that when people talked about floats in Pride Parade. They didn't mean boats. So yeah, when there was like, Brighton pride and people were talking about having a float in the parade or London pride like how are you going to do that? There's nothing you can float on. Oh, yeah, I just thought every everywhere had boats, but they don't. So yeah, so this is sort of my idea of what a pride parade looks like in general. But then specifically, I think you know, leather, bear, S&M float is what's often like, sort of trotted out as why pride parades are corrupting or are, you know, bad, then you shouldn't go with young children because you know, all these people alluding to sex, etc. And I think because of that they've also become this, this point of reclamation almost where like, well, if, you know, if this is the point that people have an issue with, in you know, right wing media or conservative media, if this is the point that scares so many people, then we should do this more. Yeah. But then, again, I think there's also like, contention within these communities of like, well, maybe, you know, having lots of people who all look really jacked and really, you

know, good and naked, isn't all there is to this community. And yeah, it's sort of become this like, weird point of contention from so many different angles, that images like these just become sort of repeated over time, whether it's because people don't like them, or people do like them, or people have complex feelings about them. But it seems to all sort of like, seems to be like a very sort of axis around, which for these debates happen.

Int Do you think that like the game are stereotyped images we're looking at here? Do you think that it's quite sexualized as well, obviously, with a lack of clothing and things?

Rae I think so whether that's, you know, but then what value is attached to that sexuality, I think can really depend on, Yeah, on to who is employing the stereotype. So, some people say that it's, you know, it's overtly sexual, and that's a bad thing. It's overtly sexual and that's a good thing because it's enjoyable.

Int Yeah, yeah. Okay, cool. So just scrolling down again, what made you select this image, then your next image?

Rae That's from *Angels in America*, I couldn't really find a more sort of, like, exemplary picture. But I think *Angels in America* is very similar for some people within gay male communities in a way that Allison Bechdel work is to lesbian communities in the sense that, you know, there's, there'll be some people who've, like, never heard of it. And then some people were like, I've, you know, I've seen the play four times. I know every line from it. I know, you know, I've watched I've watched the miniseries, I've memorised the script. And it's sort of like this, this you know, if there's if there's a, a play about gay men post, you know, post 2000, it will be compared to *Angels in America*. Or if there's a play about Aids you know, any any gay men in a big city, it's like, okay, the reference, it's like this reference point for theatre, for AIDS narratives, for narratives about gay men in New York, gay men and nationalism, the American dream, gay men and like self-destruction, religion, I think that the yeah is just got so many themes in it, that it's, it's something that will always be connected to whatever comes after it.

Int Yeah. That's interesting. So, looking at your links to homosexuality now, just zoom that image back out. Okay, so looking at your first image I think that's pride parade again, I think what made you select this image, talk me through this one?

Rae I think that was more just sort of also like a personal link to homosexuality and like these communities in that that's acquired that I think. I used to sing in this choir, not at the moment, but used to, which in itself is quite I think, like, a gay thing to do. Like, okay, we're not just going to like gather as, for gay people, or like LGBT people in general. But we're going to you know, sing showtunes and we're going to sing pop you there in you know, eight-part harmony. There's a wild round of LGBT choirs I didn't know before I joined. But there's, you know, there's like seven in London, or in Amsterdam. And there's just like in every big city. Definitely in the UK in every big city, there's like a handful of LGBT choirs.

Int I saw one at Birmingham pride last year.

Rae I think Birmingham has got several, I think as well, like. So yeah, I think both have visibility within, because this is London pride, I think visibility of pride parades, but also being with other LGBT people and singing together and doing an activity that is very sort of performance based. And it's very, you know, look at me, but also has a lot of history behind it. And it's a way of interacting with each other that centre sexuality but isn't sexual. Yeah. Which I think is what attracts so many people to it.

Int Yeah, I'd love to do something like that. I'd love to find me in local choir.

Rae There'll be there'll be several, there'll be so many.

Int Yeah, I should look into that and look to do something like that. So, moving down to your next image. Zoom its out again, is that a book shop? Gay is the word.

Rae Yeah, is the bookshop in Bloomsbury where they, I don't know, have you seen *Pride* the film?

Int Oh, no, I haven't.

Rae Okay, well, they basically lesbians and gays support the miners, the group that the film was based on, they were based out of gays the word and the bookshop still exists. And they're just amazing. And again, I think there's something quite like inherently gay about a gay bookshop. Because, you know, there is also the stereotype of, of gayness as a very sort of intellectual, upper class academic thing that is tied to bookshops, but also people using fiction and nonfiction reading, to connect to other people and to, you know, realise that they're not the only one. And, you know, even if we can't connect to other communities, we can connect to other stories, even if we don't have a physical community there. You can, you know, there is this, this, this, there, there are these narratives throughout history that connects us to each other. There's a sort of like established gay canon of books and poetry and plays, etc. That people can recognise each other through. I think the fact that also like it's in Bloomsbury, which is, you know, where Virginia Woolf was, you know, did her writing. Yeah, it's very near the Tavistock Centre, which is the gender identity clinic thing. And it just has this combination of it's a bookshop, but it's also a community hub. And the people who work there have worked there for like, 30 plus years. So, they know, you know, if someone has a question about, about their identity, or their sexuality, they know where to refer them to. And they do, you know, events, they do, they've got like, weird or like, archivi things.

Int Sounds like a great place.

Rae It's just so good, it's so good. And then there's just, a couple of months ago, there was another gay bookshop in Shoreditch, which also has the sort of like, same function of like, this is not just a shop, it's a place where people gather and where people like meet each other, and they host events. And it really feels like the kind of people who would start a gay bookshop, are the kinds of people that also realise that it can't just be about like buying and selling things, you have to have like this connection, this community, it's not just about the individual. It's not about the transaction. It's about, you know, we're all here and we all want to help each other, and we want to like to be, you know, do fun things with each other, and do fun events with each other.

Int Yeah. I'd love to open a little LGBTQ cafe. I'd love to, where I live. It's very heterosexual. Yeah, very white, heterosexual. And, yeah, Stourbridge, which is where I live and it's, so I'm about 45 minutes from Birmingham. But yeah, it's really not up and coming here at all. And we've got nothing like that, at one point I genuinely debated if I was the only gay person here.

Rae Oh, wow.

Int I was like, oh, am I? And then I think I randomly saw a gay lad from school. And I was like, oh my god, I'm not alone anymore. Like, there's two of us now. Yeah, so I'd love to open up something like that on Stourbridge, High Street. And just yeah, like a proper like little, because I think I'm not the only gay in the village anymore. There are loads. But just to have somewhere like that. I think it's just so important like so that, like you said, to build that community, you know what I mean?

Rae Yeah. And it can become almost a sort of like, pilgrimage destination for people who are in, you know, in more isolated spaces, or people, lots of people will go there from abroad, if, in their country or in their hometown, there isn't this culture of gathering as LGBT people.

Int So it's really like, I would travel there to go there and obviously, I travel into Birmingham, for pride and things like that. It is only like an hour but, you know, I would travel to places like that, for that reason, I think.

Rae Yeah, it's really great.

Int So moving down to the nightclub, GAY, the pride flags, what made you select this image?

Rae I think because it's so like, obvious, like, it's so you know, if you see a rainbow flag it does. As much as you know, there's issues around like commercialisation, and there's a watering down of what it means. You know, if I see a place that has a gay flag, and a place that doesn't have a gay flag I'm much more likely to go into the one with the gay flag. Yeah, again, this sort of like intentional signalling to other people, like you're, you know, you're safe here, or there's people

like you here. And then the fact that it's called GAY, which is not subtle at all. And the fact again, that it is a nightclub, which a lot of the time is one of the first spaces that people feel comfortable exploring sexuality and, and, you know, a place that you can go to with friends who, yeah, and just have this an enclosed space where it's like, okay, we're normal here. And we're, yeah.

Int Yeah, it's cool. The pride flag, like you said the pride flags are massive thing. Like when I was just talking about that cafe, then I would probably, like, have a pride flag outside so that people knew it was an LGBTQ cafe. Yeah, it wouldn't be blatantly obvious. Yeah. I mean, like, just like a little subtle. Yeah, where to go kind of thing. So, I also think, you know, the pride flag is quite a big signal isn't it.

Rae There's also such a difference between a space that is like, not hostile to LGBT people and a space that is like, no, this is for these people. If someone else comes in who's like, not gay, that's fine, but it's not, like this is not for you. Yeah. And it's like, I feel like that's something that I would really just like to see more of, as, you know, there is a difference between, you know, passive tolerance. And like, no, we're going to explicitly aim this towards this community and everyone else just has to deal with it.

Int Yeah, definitely. I think yeah, that's all your images. So, I'm just going to check we're still recording. Yeah. Now I got to put mine up. So, like I said, these are the images that were selected on the first of December. And they're not my bias. I just typed in gay male stereotype and picked the first three images that came up, every day they change on Google. So, we just picked one random day and that's what we went with.

Rae Yeah.

Int So I just want your thoughts about these images, really, and how you kind of think they would represent, for instance, a gay male with these images. So, looking at the first image of the bear, what are your thoughts about this? And how do you think it would represent the gay male stereotype?

Rae I think that's almost like, again, like a more palatable, straight person's approach to gay people, that body type and that level of hairiness, is not what I would describe as a bear or what I think my friends, I think, like my gay male friends would be like, Okay, you need to be, you know, at least twice the size and a lot more hairy to be described as a bear.

Int Yeah, definitely.

Rae Like you wouldn't need to you wouldn't be able to know where the hair ends, and the body hair begins. Yeah, I think I know that you want to unlike this particular image, but I think the combination as well as like they are, well seemingly, white, I think it's a big thing, like that the stereotype of these communities and I think in my pictures as well, is that they are all white communities. Yeah and yeah, I think that the sexualization of the leather, maybe something also about the fact that it's drawn is like a singular person, whereas in my mind, like, you wouldn't dress up like that by yourself like, yes, like something that you do in a community, which I know is, you know, for the purposes of an infographic is difficult. But I think a lot of the stereotypes, presume that like, oh, this is like an identity, this is like something that a person is and like, well, I think people, the way people experience it is a lot more communal, than, and a lot more like, I fit within this stream of people rather than I personally, as a singular individual and this thing, if that makes sense.

Int Yeah, definitely. Like you wouldn't, he's not going to go to the corner shop. Like, yeah, on his own, but he would probably go to pride with a group of other people, all with the same identity.

Rae Yeah, and, and I think that's part of the sort of, like, stereotype that I think, also is not super helpful when we're talking about, like, yeah, like, furthering people's rights, or social acceptance is that is the idea that these are, you know, costumes, that individual, or like aesthetics that individual people can don or not don. And that's how deep it goes. Like, these are, like, they're communities they're like, you can't, you know, kind of like, can't be a bear by yourself. It's, it's

something that's built between people and between spaces and between, you know, histories. And the idea that, like, you know, I wear leather now. So now I'm this thing, or I, I, you know, I have a flannel shirt and that is what connects me to lesbianism and like, well, is it or is it your connection to other people?

Int Yeah, interesting. Yeah, it's really cool. Moving over then to the right, then the man with the blue hair? And what are your thoughts on this image? And how do you think this would represent the gay male stereotype?

Rae Yeah, again, it's very, like, polished very, I think there's, in the stereotypes of these communities, there's very little room for people who look flawed or look, look normal. So, like, if you yeah, if you have a muscley body then it has to be like, perfect, and it has to be very toned, and very, you know, shaved in all the right places. And if you wear makeup, then the makeup has to be flawless. And has to be like, you know, so neat, which I think is quite damaging. Because most people don't look like that. And most people who do, you know, do drag or wear, you know, maybe wear feminine makeup, or don't call it drag, but just wear feminine makeup, you know, their first attempts are not going to look like that they're going to look a bit messier. And, you know, I think the fact that it's like, half and half as well, I think speaks to quite a lot of like anxieties that people have around gay men, that like, you know, deception or, or gay men and sort of like, yeah, like straddling this continuum of like masculinity and femininity in a way that might be like uncomfortable. Yeah, and again, sort of very, very strong emphasis on individual expression rather than communal expression, I think.

Int Yeah. No, that's great. So then moving down to sorry, I'm just going to close my other teams because it keeps beeping let me move it over here. Do Not Disturb that's a problem when you've got lots of different teams' channels. That should disappear off the bottom as well. There we go. So, looking at the third image them and it says all gay men are feminine, right? And I really liked this image actually, when it popped up. I'm assuming it's for stereotypes, kind of poster that they've done. And so, what are your thoughts about this image? And how do you think it represents, well, why do you think Google kind of threw it up as the gay man stereotype?

Rae Yeah. Yeah, what you were saying I think it is part of, presuming it's part of like this the sort of dispelling of stereotypes, again, in a way that I'm not sure it's entirely productive because I think there can be a very strong sense that, if we just stay away from these stereotypes, then people will accept us, and well it's not the stereotypes that are wrong, there's nothing wrong with gay men being feminine. It's it's the way people react, and it's the fact that people think being feminine is like, a bad thing for a man to be, that causes, you know, violence. But to then attach that to, you know, to this expression itself, I don't think is super helpful, because then you just have this other very conditional acceptance, and if people stray from, you know, yeah, stray from that, then they'll still be open to the same amount of violence as, as they were before. But then again, on the other hand, I do understand why people would, you know, would use this, like, line of reasoning, especially, if, you know, you're just making some, you know, I don't know where these posters were put up, or if it's like a very, you know, a place where people don't really like, think, like, think about these things and think about them, like in depth. And I do understand that, like, very conditional acceptance is a lot better than no acceptance at all. Yeah.

Int Yeah that's cool. So, I'm just going to move down again. So, this will move down to the gay female stereotypes now. So, the first image that came up on Google was Lea DeLaria from *Orange Is the New Black*. Why do you think Google selected this as the lesbian stereotype?

Rae I think she's kind of become, become like the go to person for like, like, Butch, like, identity in the public eye, I almost put her in the images that I selected, and then I forgot, I guess. I don't really know that much about her, and I do think that sometimes her image is used by other people who don't know that much about her other than, like, she looks like that and therefore, this is the epitome of what a butch woman looks like, which again, is you know, white, Like, very short hair, like maybe bigger than average. Sort of like the antithesis of traditional femininity in many

ways. Yeah. You know, large glasses, not you know, not glasses that sort of, like melt into your face or like, it's very, you know, again, this very strong artificiality. The tattoos, the shirt. Yeah, just feels very yeah.

Int Yeah. it embodies the lesbian stereotype. Doesn't it really?

Rae Yeah and I think that she's, she's a standup comedian, which is another thing that isn't a super feminine profession. Like it's not, you're not encouraged as a young girl growing up to like, go on stage and point attention to what yourselves and say, you know, I'm so funny. Look at me. Which I think is part of yeah, that's a version of yeah, this is the opposite of what we're taught we should be. And I think I didn't realise she had like the tattoo of butch, yeah. There is, among a lot of like, straight people, I do still think that the word butch is seen as like, something that you're not really supposed to say. I remember having a conversation with people and yeah, then like, honestly, thinking that calling someone butch is like, the same as calling them a dyke, or something,

Int Yeah, yeah, I've heard that,

Rae Like, inherently, inherently negative. So, I think seeing someone like, reclaim that and be like, oh, actually, this is like, a very positive identity for me and I gladly identify with it. Again, so counter to what we're taught we should be because there is sort of things like oh, if you, you know, if you're going to come out as a lesbian, at least, you know, at least don't cut your hair off, or at least don't look masculine, at least, you know, conform to all of these other things. And I think she just really like, upends that.

Int Yeah. I remember your mom saying stuff like that to me when I came out. Oh, don't start looking like a boy now. Like, what?

Rae Yeah, it's just so restrictive. And it's so like, there's again like something so, like, inherent to the hair specifically that it's always really fascinated me that people pretend that like, a woman's worth is in how long your hair is. Again, growing up in the Netherlands that, the, saying to someone oh, your hair is so long is like, kind of like inherently giving them a compliment. Oh, like it's a good thing. Like they are you didn't do anything? You just let it grow?

Int Yeah. That's so interesting. Like to the level of like, telling them that they're really pretty kind of thing like a compliment.

Rae Yeah, it's very, like, you know, the, there is a certain level of admiration for the girl in your in your class who's got the longest hair because she's the most feminine and therefore the most beautiful. It's very weird.

Int Wow. Yeah. It is Yeah. So, then I suppose to cut all your hair off is like,

Rae Oh, yeah. When I cut off all my hair, there were a lot of people being like, that's interesting. Like, you can say that you think it's ugly. Like, I know that you think it's ugly. But I want to do this.

Int Yeah. And if you like it, that's all that matters anyway.

Rae And then it turned out that I just looked like my mom and I, that was not a good, it was not a good look for me.

Int So you're like grow my hair again?

Rae Yeah.

Int So just moving down again, there's the second image that came up was the girl with the blue hair. And what kind of screams the lesbian stereotype to you there? And why do you think Google would have kind of okay with that image?

Rae I wouldn't have necessarily thought that it would be a lesbian stereotype specifically. Yeah. But yeah, obviously, the rainbows are very strong marker. Do, someone pointed out the other day actually, that like when we were growing up, things for children were all like rainbow coloured. And now, that's kind of not the case anymore. Because it's become so strongly tied to LGBT communities that it almost feels inappropriate to make things for children in a rainbow colour,

because it's like you're indoctrinating them with like, political and sexual like ideas, which is really fascinating how quickly that that changed. Yeah, it's just,

Int Yeah. No matter what colour it is, it's a toy.

Rae I know. I know. It's like, yeah, and even if you are teaching them that being gay is fine. Like, that's, that's good, surely. Yeah, I think the blue hair, maybe more so for, like, women and non-binary people, rather than men has almost become this really like, like, negative thing to and a very generational thing to chastise people with. Like, you know, how, like, a lot of like, transphobic people on the internet will be like, I'm, I'm not going to talk to you because, like, I'm not going to discuss with you because you're like, you know, blue hair and pronouns and bio. And, yeah, feels like it's, it's, like, the equivalent of calling someone like, you know, a right-wing commentator calling someone a snowflake. Like, if you've got blue hair, then you're part of like, this set of people that's like, young, and, you know, gay or otherwise, you know, gender non-conforming or LGBT, etc. You know, probably a vegan, probably, you know, does some sort of Arts and Humanities subject at the university, probably gets really offended about everything. Yeah. Which is, it's always blue hair. It's never like pink hair, or purple hair. It's always blue hair that's like, Oh, God, you're one of those

Int It is crazy. Then moving down to the next image. I'm assuming this must be off a dating website and it's a bit cringy, so what are your thoughts about this image?

Rae I feel like this is lesbianism almost as if as how it's often portrayed, like for straight people, so like, yeah, like very, very white, very seemingly like, middle class aesthetics very, like, middle America, almost like live, laugh, love kind of thing. You know, one blonde one brunette one's got shorter hair, one's got longer hair. Um, and you can kind of just see this in like a like it's two side characters in a hallmark film, very non sexualized, they're not even kissing like very, very in taste. And it just feels like this is like the, and but still, you know, even though one of them's got shorter than the other very feminine still, like neither of them could be like described as like a butch woman. Yeah, I would say. So, it seems like this is almost like the acceptable face of lesbianism like this is. This is the limit to which we'll will tolerate it. And after that, it's you know, it's too gross, is too sexual, too child unfriendly, it's too out there. Also, yet like none of them, neither of them have got like, anything visibly like marking them as gays like yeah, like no tattoo's no like, no dyed hair, no piercings, it is like very respectable. Yeah.

Int That's really interesting. I'm loving this stuff you are saying about like, the whole like, there's a line isn't there where you kind of respect, you can be a respectable gay person. But then if you cross this line, you kind of go in out there too far, which, yeah, it's really interesting what you're saying there, really perked my interest that has, really good. So, my homosexual stereotypes that came up first one, was RuPaul, kind of expecting RuPaul to come up if I'm honest. Yeah. And so, what are your thoughts about this image? And how do you think it represents homosexuality?

Rae Yeah, again, I think that RuPaul's, almost like the acceptable and commercial face of LGBT communities as a whole, but specifically drag culture, like, if you look at early research into a lot of drag culture, it's like, even like early seasons of RuPaul's drag race, I've not really watched that much of it, but I've seen like snippets of it. And there's a lot of emphasis, in earlier years, and in early explorations of drag culture of like, you know, the alternative family structures, a lot of these places are places where people, you know, try and fail and try and fail and try again, with the encouragement of people who've been there for longer with people who become like family to them, or like, like caregivers, because they, you know, they can't be in their home families or their families of birth, there's a lot of like, you know, again, non-respectable things going on, like sex work, or drugs, etc. But these worlds are tied to each other. Yeah. And they you know, interact with you know, there's a lot of homelessness, there's a lot of like, being nomadic there's a lot of precarity. And none of that is visible in, in RuPaul's drag race as it as it is, for a lot of like straight people. It's just like, catch phrases like, decoration, like everyone looks amazing, even if they've been in drag for, you know, even if they've just started drag and

this, it puts his really horrible expectation on young performers to be so good when they start out and like, well, they started out with people making things out of nothing, like having no budget, and now it's just become sort of like a playground for people who are, you know, who do have supportive families, and you do have a lot of money and a lot of access to like, yeah. And I think it's become it's become a stereotype because people don't want to see these things about drag communities. People don't want to know that like a lot of people can only do performances if they do sex work on the side, because performances don't bring in any money and sex work does. And people don't want to see that. You know, the, the snappy and like, sassy comebacks for the, the way that people interact with an audience comes from being in places where you just get like, straight things thrown at you if you're not funny enough, and like comes from people doing this, you know, months and months and months and not really being very good at it. Yeah. But then because you do it so often you become good at it. Yeah. Yeah. I feel like it ties into a lot of like, yeah, expectations of particularly gay men, but LGBT communities in general, to immediately be perfect and look, look amazing, be amazing. But also, in a way that's not realistic and doesn't treat them as like 3d human beings. It's just sort of like you're there for decoration, you're there to provide the comeback and you'd like a supporting character in your own life, you're there to provide the main character with like, life advice and like, interesting insights, but you're not a human being. Yeah, I've got lots of opinions on RuPaul drag race.

Int I'm loving it. Absolutely loving it. Really interesting. So, moving down to the next image for homosexual stereotypes. It's little NAS. I'm assuming from some show, maybe I'm not sure which show it was on. But yeah, what are your thoughts about this image? And how do you think it would represent homosexual stereotypes?

Rae I think it's difficult because I think that that's the image itself is a stereotype. But I think the context is that, in that performance, he was like, playing with stereotypes, or like, I think that's what a lot of little Nas X does, is, you know, taking these fears that people have about him being like a young, gay man, a young black man from like, the southern states. And yeah, especially with the moral panics going on in the US at the moment, this idea that he's like, you know, corrupting young people or that he's like, an industry plant trying to get people to accept gay black men. And then it feels like he just takes that and like, amps it up to 11. I don't, I remember as well, like there was I think it was this performance maybe, where people were outraged that he and so hid that behind the fact that he didn't say anything about safe sex, even though you know, he was just kissing someone. And yeah, like, oh, you have to, you know, if you're going to do that on stage, then you know, you have to take into account that like, gay black men are in so much higher risk for the AIDS and HIV infection. And then in his next video, he had like a really explicit shot of him, just before he was about to hook up with someone like, taking out a condom, and it kind of you want, you want that for me. You pretend that that's what you're worried about. Fine. I'll give it to you. Yeah. Now you can't complain about that anymore. Now, you have to admit the fact that you were just being homophobic.

Int Yeah, that's what I love about him just really, like, not doesn't care, that's not the right word. But I suppose yeah, in a sense, like, he's like, this is me and you should be able to watch it like it's not, you know what I mean? I'm going to act this way and it's tough basically.

Rae Or you think that I that I'm like, a satanic worshiper then okay, I'll give, I'll give the devil a lap dance.

Int Yeah.

Rae Yeah. Stuff like that.

Int Yeah, he's, he's cool.

Rae And yeah as well like the, I think they're still thing about like, yeah none of his backup dancers ever look anything but like, perfect and polished. Yeah, but I think there is also thing about him. Here, specifically, just being very, like, tender in a way that I think you don't get to see that much within gay male sexualities in general, but specifically black gay, black gay male sexualities,

like you can't. Yeah, again, like you can be there for decoration, but you can't actually have any desire on stage. And now he is showing that. I just, I just think he's great.

Int Yeah, I think he's wonderful. He's quite iconic. Really, isn't he and in the community, really, what the things that he's doing definitely. So, scrolling down to the final image, a man walking down the street with his pride flag. What are your thoughts about this image? Why do you think Google selected this?

Rae I'm not sure. It again just sort of looks very sort of like I don't know where that is but it kind of looks like a like it could be American. Yeah, I don't know why this would be a stereotype specifically, but I guess again, the sort of, you know, the presence of the pride flag and then the idea of, you know, wearing it as a cape and being so like overtly. Yeah, occupied with it. But it does surprise me that it's like just one person by themselves. Yeah I don't know, I can't really read this image. It just looks like they changed some of the like colour grading of it to make the pride flag pop out more and have the background be greyer than it perhaps naturally was. I don't know maybe something about the pride flag as a as a beacon of hope. I guess.

Int Maybe yeah. Yeah, that's good, that's fine, absolutely fine. Just kind of stop sharing the screen, bear with me. Ok that should have stopped sharing now. Lovely. So, there's just the last few questions now, really and these are about your personal experiences of stereotyping if that's okay, if you don't mind? And so, the first question will be, have you ever felt the need, I mean, we did touch on it briefly where you said you cut your hair short, did you ever feel the need to conform to the homosexual stereotypes that we've discussed? When you first kind of came out gay?

Rae Yeah, I think it was less of a feeling in me. You know, I don't think there was any anyone else pushing me to that. I think it was more of that sense of like, I want to, like I want other people to know this about me. Yeah. And no one's going to read me that way unless I actively change my exterior. Yeah. But that was that felt very strongly something that I wanted to assert, rather than someone telling me like, oh, if you don't do this, like, you don't look gay enough or something like that.

Int Yeah.

Rae I do think that there is an issue with people not recognising people of colour as gay.

Int Yeah.

Rae And yeah, feeling like I have to maybe, like maybe overcompensate for that by dressing more masculine than I normally would do or like, like having more visible markers, like a Venus symbol or like a like, like, you know, like the chequered shirt. Because, you know, if I don't do that, then no one's going to recognise that about me. Because they just, you know, they see the, the brown skin and they see the Asian eyes, and they're just like, Okay, you're straight. Yeah, but you know, I can't. I don't Yeah, I've not really figured out how to go about that. Yeah. And that's, that's very much about dress. And I think I do try to bring stuff around gender and sexuality up quite early in conversation, just because I want people to know these things about me. But that's also quite easy because I'm also like doing research on gender and sexuality.

Int It's all we talk about, literally my daughter, sometimes she's just like, Mom, can we talk about something else? And like, definitely not

Rae How old is she?

Int She's 13

Rae Oh, wow.

Int 13 going on? 21? Yeah, she's very old headed. And yeah, she's wonderful. She's proper a little feminist. Yeah, she's, she's really cool. But I think it's because we, like you were saying before about education, I think it's because we speak about all these things. So I have these conversations with her all the time and because obviously speaking about my work, but then we have other conversations that probably other people of her age group don't, and she'll talk to her friends about it at school and a friends are like you and your mom talk about that? and she is like

well, yeah, she wants to, so I know what I'm doing, and so I'm protecting myself and all those kinds of things. So yeah, I think when you were talking about the education stuff earlier that was making me like, oh, yeah, I do that.

Rae Such a thing about like, recognising young people as people's like, it doesn't like it doesn't matter if you don't agree with what they're doing, like, young people are going to do this. So, they might as well know what they're doing and be safe. Yeah, and it just it just feels really dishonest to pretend that like, I know, it feels like seeing them as like a 2d character or like not a real person by denying that aspect of like, young people's lives like know that they're going to, or they might do even if they're not going to their friends might and they might want to help their friends. So, like, come on.

Int Yeah, exactly, and even like at school now, like I know, they don't talk about homosexual sex at all, like even when my daughter comes back, because they're doing it at the moment, all she's learned about is putting a condom on and periods. Yeah. And I'm like, which I was quite impressed because they had the boys in on the period chat and the girls in on the condom chat. So, I was like, okay, this is better than what I had, like we're getting somewhere. And they do. They've done a lot around like LGBTQ issues and they've, because my daughter identifies as she/they she's not quite sure yet. And they've made her a little pin badge with it on which I think that's really cute like that she has that on her blazer, you know, I mean, so that other children know how to, what my pronouns are, which I think that was quite a big step. I was I was quite impressed with him for that. I was like, yeah, that's, that's good.

Rae That's really good.

Int And but at the same sense, there's still so like, sex ed is still so rigid and it like, you have sex to have a baby. Otherwise, you might die.

Rae Yeah.

Int Just too scary. Don't do that. Like, yeah, it's a bit much. But yeah, kind of going on from that as well. Like, just thinking about, like, with talking about education, things like that. Do you think those are the kinds of things that we need to do to bring forward acceptance of homosexuality? And are those the things that we definitely need to kind of instil?

Rae I mean, it would definitely be a good thing to do. And I would definitely help. Yeah, I think a lot of it is just kind of, like, maybe this is just sort of, like a personal gripe, but looking, Yeah, like at the communal and structural aspects of LGBT communities, rather than as individuals donning of identities or aesthetics. I think that's, yeah, it feels like a real problem, to me that that's not something that's explored in education, or in a lot of media wider. So, like, a lot of media will portray, like, you know, like, one gay person by themselves and like, not, no one I know, like, everyone that I was friends with, in school, we all came out one after the other, we found each other before we even knew that we were all gay. And just the reality of you know, a lot of these stereotypes, and a lot of these issues come from communal dynamics or societal dynamics, I think a lot of the time is ignored. So that, that we get like, you know, very individualistic views of what people's issues are, and how to solve them. And very individualistic approaches to identity where it's like, you know, I identify as this thing, and therefore I am this thing. And this is, like, a static thing that has or hasn't always existed and like, what, but that's not, that's not how language works. That's not how identification works. This is not how groups work, like, and that's fine. Which also then taps into, you know, aspects of colonialism and aspects of like, yeah, I guess intersectionality of like, well, there is just, you know, there are words that we use nowadays, that just didn't as concepts didn't exist 100 years ago, and that's fine. That doesn't mean that they're not real, but that then that they can be useful to people. But this idea of like, I have to hold on to like, this thing. And I have to like, like, mould myself, almost to fit within this, within this way of living, feels very stifling, and feels like something that is just open for like, you know, exploitation by like, you know, capitalism and exploitation of like, yeah, just reasserting the same dynamics that, that cause, you know, traditional

homophobia and transphobia, lesbophobia, etc. But just in like, in new language, and in a shinier coat. Yeah. It doesn't really do anything like subvert the origins of it.

Int That's great. And just kind of moving back again, to like, your personal experience of stereotyping again. Has there ever been a time where you've thought that maybe you had to resist the gay stereotype? And obviously, you mentioned about like, people automatically look at you and go, oh, you must be straight?

Rae Yeah.

Int Is there ever a time where you've kind of actively resisted it? So maybe, I don't know. I know personally, I've kind of moved away from it for job interviews and things like that. So, have you ever had to do anything like that at all?

Rae Um, I kind of like, resist such, like, naming myself or like labelling myself explicitly with certain family members. Yeah, just because I don't, you know, I'm not particularly, with my, I'm not particularly close with my father's side of the family. So, I'm just like you don't, it's more like you don't get to have this information about me, than it is that I'm scared of their reaction because I don't really care but I'm sorry, I don't want to spend time explaining this to you. And I don't want to, you know, I don't care. And then, this is quite like a, like a sad, intense story. But my partner passed away at the beginning of the year.

Int I'm so sorry to hear that

Rae And, yeah, and her family are Serbian, and her mother's already, you know, at some point, when they went back to Serbia, was like, oh, I don't want you talking to anyone about this. Because I don't, I don't want anyone to, like treat you badly. And I don't want, you know, Serbia in her words, you know, people in Serbia don't understand these things. And they might, you know, they might be horrible to you, in a way that I don't want for you, which then caused a bit of like a well of like, well, that's not your choice to make and that's, you know, it was all fine in the end, and she decided to, like come out to like, the younger generation, and not the older and it just didn't really come up with the older generation. But then at, yeah, at her funeral, or in the preparations for the funeral, I did, I was a bit like, am I, you know, if I am introduced as her girlfriend, will that make people have, retrospectively have a bad image of her? And then, you know, do I want people to have a true image of her even if they might dislike her for it? And then, you know, what do I do with her legacy? Yeah, is it my place to ruin her legacy towards the family members or do I want something that's like truthful? But are like, or am I going to just be like, oh, I'm like, a good friend. Yeah, and then preserve that element of her towards other people. In the end, it was all fine because her mom was just like, I don't, I don't care. Just introduce yourself as a girlfriend and she kind of made that decision for me, which I was really, I did, I would have found it very difficult if I was introduced like a friend. Yeah. But that was a moment of like, I honestly, like don't know if this is if I if I present myself as a girlfriend, if that's a good thing to do.

Rae That's crazy, isn't it? When you think about things like that, and obviously, then that would go, feed into like, if you were going to present as a friend, how would I dress for that day? How would I present myself like, all those kinds of things Because you don't want anyone to think you know what I mean?

Rae It was a bit like, do I have to like, wear a black dress? I haven't worn dress in like three years, I really, really would feel uncomfortable, but also like, are people going to think that I'm being like disrespectful. But then it was all fine in the end, and there were lots of women, you know, women wearing trousers, and it was all fine.

Int That's good. So, how do you think you're, I know, obviously, you're not quite sure about your identity yet, as you mentioned, but do you feel like it has changed over time due to these stereotypes? Like you were saying, you, you know, at times you have at times you haven't? Like, do you think the stereotypes have influenced any of your identity changes at all?

Rae I think they did at the beginning, I think I'm quite happy now, like, in terms of sexuality, like calling myself a lesbian. And then in terms of gender just being like, well, I don't really care, like, I know that people will read me as a woman and, you know, I'm not unhappy with that even if I don't think it's like super fitting like I won't, I won't challenge people on that because, I won't, also because I don't have a sort of like anything. Yeah, I don't have a better word. Yeah. to describe it. Um, I do you think that at the beginning, there was a sense of like, oh, and maybe still sometimes, especially with the word lesbian that like, you know, there, there will always be people who presume that like primarily like a porn category, but it feels much more than the word gay or the word queer. It feels very much like, if I say this, I'm telling you something about my sex life. Yeah. Which I'm not. But it feels like that is how people will interpret it. Yeah. Similarly, you know, talking to, to young people, will people think that I'm like a predator if I use the word lesbian rather than gay. So, I do think that there's still sort of like this hesitation, before I use the actual word, that there is with lesbian that there is not with gay. Yeah.

Int I think I get that hesitation with what I call my wife. So, I'm talking to other people, depending on the context is whether I say wife or partner, and because partners a bit like, you know, but even actually, that doesn't really apply because at martial arts are used wife, since I've started there about four years ago. And one of the men still ask me how my husband is,

Rae Oh, Jesus.

Int And I keep saying, I mean, she's called Joe. So, I'll get that, like, that's fine. But I mean, I have used wife repeatedly for four years, and you are still saying husband. And in the end, I literally say to him, I'm gay, like, I'm a lesbian. I'm married to a woman. And he was like, really? You know when you're just like, you're just not, you don't obviously listen to me at all, but yeah, I get that. Yeah. It's what words to use. I mean, language is a huge part of it, isn't it? Like what I should call somebody? And how should? How that would interpret how they would think about me?

Rae Yeah. And I think it's, like, relationships between women, it's almost more difficult to assert that because the language becomes so like, watered down. Like if a man talks about his husband or his boyfriend. Like, you definitely know that he's talking about his partner. But I've heard straight women refer to like, their best friend as their wife, or like, I'm just going out today with you know, me and my girlfriend. Yeah, like, it's, one of those things where it's like, no, but like, when I say this, I mean, this particular thing. And it just feels like any, you know, any word that people use to describe relationships between women will become either sexualised or completely watered down, like, there's no way to just be like, I am in a relationship with this person.

Int I had that when I came out to my Nan, and I said, like, I've got a girlfriend Nan, and she said I've got lots of girlfriends. And I was like, not like my girlfriend. Pretty sure of that Nan bless her, she's 92, she's a darling. But when I first came out to her, she was like, what do you mean? I've got lots of girlfriends. I was like, different kind of girlfriend. But yeah, I get what you mean, it's very watered down, isn't it? And for girls, it's and even a lot of girls hold hands with each other. A lot of girls are affectionate with each other, we go to the toilet together. All those things are part of being a girl. But then it means that when you're actually attracted to women, and you're with a woman, you have to really kind of explain it like no, no, no, no, this is my girlfriend like,

Rae Yeah

Int And then it becomes sexual again, doesn't it?

Rae Yeah. Because like the amount of like, yeah, men who were like, again, like when I was with my girlfriend, my, like, we had people like, you know, shouting us not not like negatively shout but like, like, in a very way that's like, oh, you clearly haven't seen two women be intimate with like, outside of the context of porn, like you really think that this is for you. Yeah and yeah, again, this sort of like idea like, what is accessible what is like, like, what is the audience for this and like, well, there isn't an audience the audience is I want to, you know, I want to be able to hold hands and kiss my girlfriend in public without that being seen as a sexual act or like an act

that is meant for the enjoyment of men. And yeah, it's just, it's really obviously like, are you like, you can't imagine that, that women, gay women have like an inner life of themselves. Like you don't see me as like a human. You see me as like a prop that exists for your pleasure. And that just makes me really, really angry. Yeah. And also, because like, I know that both me and my girlfriend look like super young. So, I'm like, you know, we've both got quite like baby face. I'm like, Are you? Are you doing this to like, underage lesbian couples like are you going up to them with you like, you know, you 50-year-old man, like

Int Horrible. And another bit with that as well, like, older women instead of men. Me and Joe get quite a lot like holding hands walking into a shopping centre. You see that Like, kind of look at us both, and then realise we're both women. So, it's like the, like, have you never seen lesbians before? I don't. I really blows my mind. And we just laugh like, obviously never seen a lesbian before. Yeah, I mean, but like because I think it's because my wife was quite masculine. She looks just like Lea DeLaria. So, we do a joke. Like, we put their pictures together. And I'm like, oh, and they're the same person. Like she looks just like her. So, I don't know whether at first I think maybe Joe is a man. And then double take because she's quite got quite a large chest and realise. Oh, it's two women but then even then I'm like, why? Why you double taking and like? Yeah, I mean, like

Rae I used to do that quite a lot. But more for like me to me to. I want to say that. I want to say that to you. But that's weird. Yeah. Go up to like, random, like same sex couples. Like by the way I am gay

Int No, honestly, we went away for a bank holiday. And we're in the caravan. And there was a couple like, probably two caravans opposite us blatantly a lesbian couple straightaway we were like, lesbians here, there's lesbians do we have to go over and like introduce ourselves. Like, they fully fitted the lesbian stereotype as well. And we were like, they need to see us they need to know like, we're here to and then I saw them in the toilet, and it was just you know, like that, but actually, I can't look at you now because I'm really embarrassed so I just stood there yeah its weird but yeah. I think that is everything to be honest. There. We went off on a bit of a tangent at the end there, but that's absolutely fine. And I'll just stop that recording now.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Sarah

Int Right then. So, during this interview, like I said, we will discuss images that relate to homosexual stereotyping. And thank you for supplying some really great images as well. And I've also brought along some similar images, images for us to discuss. And the images that I've chosen are selected by Google. So, they haven't got my researcher bias in there. But I will go more into that when we share my images.

Sarah Yeah.

Int Your cameras actually froze. So, I don't know whether you want to pop it off or, It's up to you. You can leave it on or pop it off.

Sarah Oh, I'll leave it on unless it my internet might be unstable. But yeah, we'll see.

Int Okie dokie. Do you have any questions before we begin at all?

Sarah No don't think so.

Int Lovely. And are you sitting somewhere comfortably, where you feel you can speak safely and freely?

Sarah Yeah. 100%.

Int Lovely. I'll make a start then. So firstly, I'd like to know about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be a gay stereotype?

Sarah Oh, that's a good question. I think my ideas around gay stereotyping has; I wouldn't necessarily say changed but my mind is opened quite a lot. So, I also researched sexuality and I'm also in a PhD. That's why this was of interest to me. I was like, Oh, amazing, interesting research. So

yeah, so I've been researching sexuality since my undergrad. So that's been like, for four or five years now, however long it is. So yeah, my idea of like sexuality before I came to uni, where it is now is massively different. And I think, as you were saying, like the progression towards like acceptance, and like, the conversations that you have, are much more open now. And obviously, the more I accepted my own sexuality, also opened up the world, like the LGBT world to me, because I think a lot of people aren't necessarily aware, or they're only aware of the stereotypes that fit like a feminine, you know flamboyant man, and butch lesbian, like, they're kind of two things that I think people kind of go to. And the more I kind of immerse myself in this world makes me realise that these stereotypes realistically aren't accurate at all, and that there's such diversity within the LGBT community. But outside of that people are so stuck in the old, like, traditional stereotypes of gay men and lesbian women, that it's hard for them to understand that these aren't the two only ways that people can be. And I think, like I research of in sport, so there's like a really clear stereotype around sports women, or lesbians within sport and things like that. So, I think, like, what I tried to do with my images is to kind of go with the stereotypes that society has, but also kind of go against that and show like the diversity within the images that represent. So, I hope that kind of makes

Int Really interesting. Definitely. And how do you feel that they are applied to gay people now? Do you think maybe it could still be in a malicious way? Or do you think maybe people just do it without even realising like, we just do it automatically?

Sarah Yeah, I think, I think it can be done in both ways. I think sometimes, when it comes down to society and the norms, because it's, like, kind of taken for granted knowledge that, you know, these things are normal. So, it's normal to presume someone to look like a certain way, if they're gay, it kind of becomes a lot of people's like, second nature, like they just say in conversation might not necessarily mean anything negative. But I also think that a lot of stereotyping is done in a negative way. And it's either to like, make the person feel bad, or project someone in a negative way or, you know, put them off, for example, from participating in sport, because they're going to be viewed in a certain way. So, I think it massively depends on the context. But unfortunately, a lot of times people do use it in a negative way. And I think language is a key part in that and it takes people time to think and realise, oh, actually, this, this is coming across negative or I'm using this word in a negative way. And it's not until they reflect on that they realise, oh, actually, I probably shouldn't be saying that. But some people because they're so used to saying things that were more accepted or more politically correct, however many years ago that we've come forward now to realise actually, we shouldn't be saying these things. A lot of the older generation I think a key thing for me is the generational divide. And as much as people You're like, oh, yeah, but there's accepting people, you know, that are born in the 60s and 70s. Of course, there are. But I think as you look, as time goes on, I'm hoping that the younger generation are more open and inclusive. And that will kind of stir away from these kinds of negative stereotypes and hopefully be more open, inclusive, and be more aware of how we keep perpetuating these specially within like our everyday like actions and, and conversations.

Int I hope so too. Like I can see like a difference because that my daughter's 13. And like, I feel like they talk about it more at school like, yeah, I just hope that with her generation, it can kind of move even more forward. And then like, obviously, generations after my daughter hopefully they'll move forward as well. So, I totally agree with what you're saying. They're like, fingers crossed.

Sarah Yeah. I think also, like, when you speak to people of older generations, obviously, it completely depends on the individual, some people might be completely stuck in their way. And they're like, no, this is the way that I was taught, this is the way I think, and that's kind of how I'm sticking with it. And they're really stubborn. Whereas a lot of people are like, okay, I don't actually know much about this kind of tell me more. So, this is really key, I think. So, the more I know that my family really like, oh, tell me like what you know, and, and asked me questions about stuff,

which I think is great. And I'm always willing to answer questions, because then I'm progressing their knowledge. Whereas if you don't ask or you're not engaged and wanting to kind of know more to be inclusive, you're just staying in this little world. And you're not gaining that to then be able to progress. So, I think some people are quite stubborn in that, that they're not willing to accept change and progression of society, but I'm just like, tough move with the times.

Int We have got to move. Okay, so when you think about a gay male, what do you think of then? So, what kind of, you know, the thinking about the stereotype? What kind of characteristics physical features, and personality likes and dislikes? What kind of things would spring to mind for a gay male?

Sarah Yeah, so like, my very first thought would be someone like I say, like feminine or effeminate, kind of flamboyant. Drag Race always sticks in my mind because like, stereotypically, a lot of men that go on there are gay, and enjoy, you know, partaking in drag. I'm trying to think, but then also kind of going against that is that, like I say about diversity. That would be my first thing. But then when I actually thought about it, I would then consider Oh, actually, when you look, for example, pride, and you look, all the men that are there, there's so many different types of gay men, like, you know, there's stereotypes of like, twink and bear and all of these things. Like there's so much diversity within that. So that would be my kind of first thought but then when I take a step back and realise, you know, so that's almost like, my first thought is almost like societal stereotype and then my second thought would be, oh, actually, there are different stereotypes that they have with gay men. So that's kind of my first one, but then kind of taking a step back. Like I say, there is such a combination and now I don't think you can necessarily look at someone and presume they're gay, if they don't fit the stereotype. So, I think it is quite interesting. But yeah, that's definitely kind of my first stereotypical. Yeah.

Int Great. And how about a lesbian woman? What kind of things would spring to mind there?

Sarah Yeah, my go to would be like butch, sporty, usually some sort of sort of team sport. So, football, rugby, something like that. Trying to think of, ah tattoos, like is one of the key things like piercings, that kind of thing I think it's kind of associated with, with lesbians. Like the whole, like Butch or femme kind of like, not divide but essentially, it's kind of seen as like a spectrum I think often with, especially within lesbians. short hairstyles, undercuts are kind of like the stereotype, I think around lesbian women. But then, like I say, stepping away from that, like, there's a lot of femme lesbians that you wouldn't necessarily look at and think that they were gay. So, I just think there's like, divides again, and like diversity within the population. But I guess, as soon as people think about lesbians, it's kind of the straight, like, masculine aspect. And that's what I think is really interesting. When it comes to gay men. They're looked at as feminine when it comes to gay women, they looked at masculine, and that's obviously how they cross over like the gender boundaries that we have, like assigned to us. So, I do think it's quite interesting to consider that as well.

Int Yeah, definitely. And also, like, obviously, we're talking a little bit about acceptance before and how we could move it forward and things like that. So current research does suggest that homosexuality is now more accepted than it ever has been. What is your current view on this? Do you think, Yeah, we are more accepting or maybe we have a bit more way to go or, yeah, what do you, how do you feel about that?

Sarah I agree, to some extent, with the fact that if you look back at like history. Of course, like we can see there has been progression. Like the fact that obviously, section 28 was a thing, and it's now not. And we're allowed to discuss homosexuality in education and schools and things like that. So that, to me, is an evidence of progression. But what I think happens is that people get caught up in such minor progress. And then like, ah, things are so much better for gay people. Yeah, they are better, but they're not necessarily good. Like, there's so many examples in the past two years of people being like, beaten up and attacked for being gay, wherever that's in London, Liverpool, you know, all across the UK. And we're supposedly a progressive or

inclusive, kind of country in comparison to others, especially with regards homosexuality. But even so, there's still a lot of attacks there's still homophobic abuse there's still, you know, name calling, there's still not a lot of people that are out either in the workplace, or to friends, to family, and there's obviously reasons as to why. So, I do agree with that, and I don't think that that kind of stat or fact is wrong. But I think sometimes they focus on the tiny changes. Whereas, actually, we haven't actually made as much progress as we can or should be or want to look to. So, I do 100%, appreciate that it is more positive than it was but there's definitely still a long way to go, hence why I'm passionate about it, hence why you're doing this research, because if it was good, we wouldn't need to do this would we

Int No exactly. Exactly. There was even hate crimes recently in Birmingham, in Gay Village, you know, and you just think I really thought we were past this,

Sarah You know, and that's supposed to be a safe space, and this is what worries me, the fact that we have these designated areas for the LGBT community to create a safe space, because not all places are. And even within those safe spaces, people are coming in and attacking and I just think, if you don't like gay people, that's your opinion, don't go? Like why would you choose to actively go to a place where you know, is going to have that, like LGBT community, unless you're going and deliberately to then cause trouble and therefore, go away, like, you're not welcome here. Like, you don't need to come to that space. So just go somewhere else. Like, it just really baffles my brain. I just don't understand. Like, it's so unnecessary. And I think also it's quite scary when you realise how close to home it is. Like, you'll think, oh, yeah, I've read this, this and this, and it's, you know, not near and it's not until you realise it's something like either in your city or down the road, or wherever you think, oh, God, actually, it's just far closer to home than what I thought it was.

Int Yeah, definitely. What I'm going to do now is I'm just going to pop up your images. I'll just share my screen; I won't be able to see the screen when I have got them up. So, you need to stop then just give me a shout. So hopefully, this will work. Can you see your images?

Sarah I can

Int Okay, great, good start looking at these images, then we'll go through each image and just have a little chat about each one individually as to why you chose it and things. So, looking at the first one with the three gentlemen together.

Sarah Yeah.

Int Will you just talk me through why you chose this as a representation of a gay male.

Sarah Yes, I will, so what I was trying to do with my images is kind of get like I was saying about the diversity of like, that represents within like gay and lesbian populations. So here, one of the things, it made me laugh when I was Googling, to be honest, because I thought if anyone looks at my search history, they'll go like What the hell, so I was, like, twink gay, bear gay, like, like leather, like PVC. Because I know, obviously, there's all sorts of like kinks and stuff within the community. So, this kind of was one of the things that I thought about because one of my first kind of like, I wouldn't say experiences, but like, kind of like exposure to like the LGBT community. I went to Birmingham Gay Village, because I'm not far from there. And I didn't realise and neither did my friend who I went with that there was like, some sort of event going on. And basically, was those men that were dressed up in like leather, and all sorts of stuff. I was really like, I was like, oh, okay, like, it just, I just wasn't used to it. I wasn't expecting it. Now that neither of us knew that we were just going for a drink. And I think it was just kind of like my realisation to being like, okay, like, you see stuff on like, you know, like stereotypes and stuff on films and stuff, but hadn't necessarily been exposed to that. So, what then come to mind when I think about this was my first like, experience of like, seeing like a gay population was essentially men that looked kinda like this. Mostly dressing like leather or kind of like in groups. And I think like this also kind of goes against the stereotype, I would say in the fact that these

men look masculine and like hairy and they're not kind of fitting the stereotype of a gay man. So, I just thought it was interesting to kind of throw that in. So yeah,

Int I think like you were saying, like, there's this standard stereotype that gay men should be feminine. But actually, when you go into the community, there's a lot more diversity in the community than people realise. I think about pride. Like, every time I go to pride, I'm like, wow, like all the different people and how everybody dresses so differently, like, just amazing. And it really

Sarah Is so amazing. It's so inclusive as well. So, when I went to my first Pride, I didn't get to go to many prides before especially because of COVID. So, I went to Manchester pride as my first one and massively opened my eyes. Because obviously, it's such a massive pride. But like the diversity and like how accepting everyone's and how lovely everyone was to each other. I just thought, oh my god, imagine if this was just a massive version. I imagine if this was just normal, like everyday life, like, it's just so much more positive. Everyone felt so happy. Like, I was panicking being like, oh, like, I need to get an outfit. Like, I don't want people to judge me. But like, I literally could have worn anything. So, like, Yeah, you look amazing. Like, they're just so good. I mean, like, it was just such a nice environment to be in. And I think that that doesn't really happen outside of that, how different the environments are for gay people and that expression of themselves as well.

Int Yeah, definitely. I'll just scroll down to your second image, which is Gareth Thomas, isn't it? Would you just explain you me what made you choose that image?

Sarah Yeah, of course. So, I was trying to think, especially because my research is in sports, trying to think of like key people within sport that I would know, for being gay and Gareth Thomas is one of the key ones. And I think this was kind of pivotal, I think, within sport, and especially like, within society, making people realise that actually, you think that, you know, like, the stereotype of gay men is, you know, like feminine and not kind of going against that. And this is essentially, like, the complete opposite it's a gay man playing sport, being good at sport, you know, being masculine. But I also think it kind of demonstrates like, the potential toxic environments, a lot of gay men are in, and they're not comfortable to coming out. So, I might be wrong, but I'm pretty sure he only came out when he kind of left rugby. And I think that's a really key part, especially within like sports literature that people only feel comfortable when they're kind of away from that setting. And I think it's a massive shame, because there keeps being conversations about like, was an openly gay male footballers. And I'm like, if you look at the environment that they're in, like, if you look at the example of Justin Fashanu, back in the day, like he ended up like killing himself, because he was just literally like attacked left, right and centre by the media by like football, and it wasn't an environment where that was able to happen, and then people are going to be scared. So, I think this, for me is like a really key example that it is possible and obviously the responses to that some obviously would have been negative would have been like, you know, like the classic or we showed a changing room with him, which really gets me up. But you know, you get that kind of like response, but then it also kind of shows the environment and therefore why people have to wait, or don't feel comfortable coming out in these kinds of settings. So, I think for me, it was just a key one to kind of highlight that There are a lot of non-heterosexual individuals within environments that aren't open and inclusive and how you have to kind of navigate that. And it's just a really key part to show that even years after like when he come out, like he would get, he went out and he got attacked in Cardiff. And so, I think it just shows that there's like ongoing, like, negativity, I guess towards non heterosexual people.

Int And probably as well if there were more people who were out and proud within rugby and football and things like that. It probably helps younger men come out gay.

Sarah Yeah, it normalises it massively. I think one thing that I think is really interesting, if you look at like women's elite sport, there's so many more out players. So, like women's football, it

essentially has lots of like role models for like people being out and open about their sexuality, which is brilliant. And I think it demonstrates also a difference between climates in men's sports and women's sports. And that's a really key one, like, when you have a look at like research and even speaking to men and women, women are a lot more open and inclusive or open minded anyway. Not always. But with regards to homosexuality, I think that's really key. And I think like you were saying, the more people we have normalising it, the better it will be for people in that setting, but also like providing a role model for younger people. I think slowly but surely through sport, and obviously other popular culture like music. There are some really good role models within that. But it's still really hard in broader society. So, I think Yeah, still a lot more to tackle definitely. Yeah.

Int Just scroll down a bit more. We got Elton John next. Yeah, what made you choose this image then?

Sarah Okay, so I think Elton John is a legend, to be honest, I think. I think he's a really key person that springs to my mind when I think of a gay man. Essentially kind of fits the stereotype in some aspects and the fact that he is or was flamboyant. You know, he kind of embraced that. I think influential as well like, you know, in his time of music, you have to obviously like there's like Freddie Mercury and other amazing gay people, I should have put him on thinking about that. But there was a lot of key people I think, especially like back in the day when you consider them and their rise in music and the challenges they would have had to face. And just considering how they overcome that and also how they become like a pivotal like key feature or like icon within like the LGBT community. Because it is really key like you say it, like normalises it or makes people feel like happy or like they can listen to their music and relate. And there's so many key things. I think music and popular culture is a really key influential factor. So, he just kind of sprung to my mind when I thought about a gay man really

Int Yeah, definitely. And like, obviously, like Elton John, George Michael, as well out here. Like, they were all big people. And I'm imagining as well, they should really struggled because obviously we weren't as accepting then, as we currently are now, so I can imagine it was quite scary for him to be honest

Sarah 100%. Like, yeah, I think when you look at Queen as well, like, if you look obviously how like Freddie Mercury was like with a woman and then eventually, like, embraced his own sexuality. And he had like a massive, like, backlash and that, but then people started to come around and realise. And it wasn't until that he was poorly that people started being like, oh, actually, you know, we need to take this seriously. Because I think there was there's obviously so much stigma around like gay men back in the day to do with like the AIDS outbreak and things like that. And I think that, like Freddie Mercury was a key person in that, that it kind of shocked to realise how serious it was. And also make people realise that, you know, they're, these people are humans, and as much as they are like an icon as much as they do fit the stereotypes of gay people. Like, if they're poorly, you know, that's sad. And I think, you know, there were so many people during that time that were, you know, just dying left, right and centre, which was awful. And people still remain to stigmatise them, even though they're going through all of that. So yeah, I just think yeah, those key figures around that time, I just think, very, very influential, especially on the music scene now as well. 100%

Int Definitely, definitely. Scrolling down to your next image, and what made you choose this image then?

Sarah Okay, so I wanted an image of a drag queen, I was looking for different ones. And I was like Davina DeCampo, might as well just get that. So, I was trying to just get a generalised kind of drag queen, but then I was like, oh, I don't know what to choose. So essentially just looking at drag. So obviously, in a lot of like LGBT, like bars and clubs is often drag queens. I think a lot of drag queens, like I say, are gay men to kind of just associate in that, like, with their like, like overemphasised makeup and the really high heels and the outfits, like I think is amazing.

Absolutely love drag. Like, it's so clever. And I just think it's like so funny, like the humour they bring to it and the talent, I just think it's amazing. I think that's a really key thing that springs to mind. Because there are very, very few that I'm aware of straight men that take part in drag. And obviously, I know that those drag kings as well. But I think one of the key things that kind of sticks in my brain is, of drag culture, is gay men, just kind of how they kind of bring their personality to that, because it's so such good entertainment, and I think is amazing for them to be able to express that. Yeah, definitely.

Int Definitely. And Oli Alexander is your next image, that's a wicked image.

Sarah So, I was trying to look through photos, I was like, you know what, this literally just helps me with a couple of things I was like. So, I think Oli's really influential, I think he was one of the first I think he uses he pronouns. So, I might be wrong. But he who's one of first, LGBT music artists I'd seen in person performing, and I saw him at a festival, and he was wearing a skirt and it was just one of the things that kind of stuck in my mind to think, do you know what you're going against the norms of like, and the stereotypes of gender, and I just absolutely loved it. And there was a lot of conversation about it. And obviously, when you look now how he was in, like he has created music with Elton John now is in like, it's a sin and things like that, and how he's had like such an influence on the LGBT community and music scene. Essentially, really, for me, he's like, the younger version of Elton John or like, potentially could be in the fact that he's like this figure. And he obviously like fights for equal rights and things like that. And also, it kind of ties in the whole like, leather kink type thing with this image, and just how he kind of pushes the boundaries of like, what's like normal or accepted. And I really rate that, because he's just going for what he wants to do and just being himself. And, and also, in a way, he kind of fits like the twink stereotype. You know, he's a small kind of feminine type man. And things like that. So yeah, and I think also, this image kind of reminds me of how a lot of gay men are associated with like nudity, or like, be like, quite often sexualized. And whether that's right or wrong, as in, like, correct or not, I think that a lot of homosexual individuals, whether that's men and women, or other genders are very sexualized. So, they just kind of treated like, more of like objects and like, just like a really hyper sexualized individual, and like predatory sometimes, and that really frustrates me. So, I thought this image would probably represent that as well.

Int Yes. Great, really interesting. So, we'll move on to your lesbian female images now. So, we've got Lea DeLaria on the left-hand side, what made you choose that image?

Sarah I think so one of the key things for me, like one of the first things I watched, I guess, would be like, LGBT type TV series was, *Orange is the New Black*. And I think, in that she essentially portrays a stereotypical lesbian or what people presume lesbians to be like she's, butch, she's got tattoos, she's got short hair, you know, she's seen to like, go for other women. And do you know I mean, like, it kind of fits the stereotype of what I think a lot of people presume lesbians to either look like or be like, yeah. So obviously, there are characters in that kind of series. And obviously, I've got a picture of Piper and Alex later on. But I think she just kind of, for me depicts what people, if people could draw an image of a lesbian that's essentially what a draw.

Int Definitely, yeah. And what parts of your image do you think fit the stereotype? Is it like, you know, hair, clothing, like all those kinds of things?

Sarah Yeah, her hair obviously being short. There's a lot of stereotypes around women having short hair being lesbians, or vice versa. Tattoos, especially on like arms, I feel like or like sleeves or whatever is kind of associated with that. The vest that I think is a really key thing, like tank tops, that type of thing. Sports, bras, all of those things are kind of associated with lesbianism. So, I just think her overall image and also like another thing, there's a lot of stereotypes around like butch lesbians, like not wearing makeup and obviously, I know in this they're in prison, so you kind of don't really have the opportunity to but I think she kind of depicts what people would associate appearance wise with a lesbian.

Int Yeah, definitely, and then moving the question to image on the right, I'm not quite sure who that is to be honest. Tell me all about her.

Sarah So, her name is Kami Scott. So, she is a YouTuber. And she is quite well known in like the YouTube community for being a lesbian. But for me what she kind of stuck in my brain because when I watched her, it made me realise that to be gay, you don't have to fit this like Butch stereotype. So, she essentially is really femme. Like, she has like loads of ongoing debates about being like feminine and like overly femme. And like, like fitting in, and like her experience of that in like the lesbian community. And I just thought it's really interesting because it kind of shows again, like the diversity and the lack of like generalisation that you can make towards this, this type of sexuality, like you can't presume that everyone's gonna look the same. So, it's really interesting to kind of demonstrate, like, the two different opposite sides of the spectrum, I guess. So yeah, and I think also, like the whole community of like lesbian YouTubers, I should have put Rose and Rosie on here. I love Rose and Rosie I've met them, and everything. So, I just think like the like the pop culture like YouTube culture, I think for me anyway, I don't know about other people, but I know they are quite popular, like, is really good in like normalising or having discussions about sexuality, which you wouldn't necessarily get, for example, like in a school, and like it can be very informative or like amusing and entertainment. So, I feel like that kind of world is really good for that. So, the education side as well as obviously going against the grain of the stereotypes of lesbians as well.

Int Yeah, definitely. Do you think maybe these stereotypes are a little bit generational as well? Because obviously you look at like Lea DeLaria and people of her era. So, people are in you know, like 30s 40s 50s. They all similarly look like that lesbian stereotype whereas the younger lesbians who are coming through have seemed very different, like just looking at these two images now is making me think like, there's quite an age difference between them. And I'm wondering if that has an impact, you know, like, is there a new generation coming through where you don't have to look, Butch to be lesbian

Sarah I think that's a really interesting one. I think, like, even in my own experience, just kind of going off that when I first like, accepted my sexuality, and it moves me now when I look back, like I all of a sudden dressed more masculine. Like, yeah, I didn't know like, I just feel like, I don't know whether I did it purposefully, or I felt more comfortable being able to do it or what, but like, I really like, kind of dove into like, the masculine side. So, like, I'm like, I'm a mixture to be fair, like just depends what day you catch me, but I really was, like, willing to and like embrace, like, the masculine part of that. And it wasn't until I look back now that I'm like, ooh some stuff that I wouldn't necessarily wear now, or like I would, you know, I'm happy to embrace like, my feminine side, but I think that's like kind of the thing some people would even try and like portray, because they want people to know they're gay, but also looking at like, generation wise. Like we say, the Butch kind of stereotype, I think kind of fits for a lot more older, of the older generation, there are still some individuals that essentially kind of fit that still. So, I guess, I think we're coming into hopefully more like diversity and people willing to embrace however they want to look or dress or appear. Without, you know, feeling like, oh, I need to justify how gay I am. That makes sense.

Int Yeah, I do the exact same as you. And like, now I feel like, depending on what day is like, today, I'm looking a bit more masculine. I've got a tracksuit on. Whereas some days, I'll wear a dress, sometimes I'll have a red lip, you know, like, I mix it up all the time, whereas my wife looks just like Lea DeLaria literally, same hair. I did a TikTok about it. I'll put like a picture of Lea DeLaria and then a picture my wife and I'm like, oh, my God, they look so alike. And like, she fits that stereotype perfectly, but she's 48. So that is like seeing those two images together, I hadn't thought about it before, And I just thought, oh, maybe that there is a new, new stereotypes coming through that aren't you have to be masculine. You know what I mean? I think people are starting to understand that you can present yourself in a feminine manner, and still be gay, and

it's still okay. I think a lot of people, you know, want to kind of prove their sexuality in some aspects. And if you, you know, show yourself in a feminine way people are, oh, you don't look at them. Like, we don't have to look gay to be gay. Like, what's looking gay and looking gay is essentially the stereotype of what they expect a gay person to look like. And that just kind of, I think just demonstrates this perfectly. Yeah, definitely. Scrolling down to the football player, and what made you choose this image then?

Sarah So, I think like I was saying, a lot of sports women are associated with being lesbians. And I can't remember the name of this player, it's going to really bug me, but I'm pretty sure I'm pretty sure she's gay. And on the documentary, I was watching, she was talking about being gay. But I think even just the sports women in general, especially within football, and how much they are associated with being lesbian. So, like I say, the masculine features of like being strong, being fast, contact sports, that kind of thing. Here, obviously, she hasn't got makeup on, she has got hair tied back. So that kind of thing. Whereas, for example, a lot of girls I played football with, they wanted to, like, make sure they were hyper feminine. So, people knew they weren't gay, and they weren't one of one of them. So, they would wear makeup or like roll their shorts up extra high, or like, should I mean, try, and emphasise their femininity to kind of separate themselves away from the lesbians in football. But yeah, I think sport is massively associated to lesbians and the lesbian image, I think. Yeah, definitely.

Int Then the undercut image.

Sarah So, I was just going to say, when I was looking at this, I was like, what do I even type in? I was I'm going to type in undercut. Because I was like, I wanted to go in and show that this for me is like, what, especially now like before, like, I swear, I mean, I'm probably talking out my ass here, but I swear, like how many years ago like undercuts weren't like a massive thing. Either way now, I feel like they were Did you say no, they

Int They weren't. No one had one.

Sarah I mean, don't get me wrong, someone somewhere would have had one. Like now I feel like it's such like a known thing or is a very much associated thing with being gay. So, whether that's having short hair and then having like an undercut or having long hair and having an undercut but there's a lot of people and like I think you know, TikTok is like a key example, like you were saying, where you kind of see the like stereotypes of lesbians. And it just makes me think whenever I see someone with an undercut, I shouldn't, but I can mostly presume that they're gay, not the issue, but essentially fits with the stereotype. Now, there's an association between the two. And essentially, they've got tattoos also wearing a tracksuit, they're like showing a masculine kind of appearance. So that's why I chose that image.

Int Yeah, definitely. And then we've got the orange is the new black images you were talking about earlier. And so, talk me through this one as well, please.

Sarah So, Alex and Piper, I think for me, personally, Alex and Piper are really key because they were like, one of the first few demonstrations of like a lesbian couple that I'd seen. Because like I said, Orange is the New Black was one was like the first kind of things I'd watched. And I think, in a way, like they kind of push the boundaries of what people would, I think, expect from like a lesbian woman or lesbian couple, in the fact that neither of them are overly Butch, especially when they're not in their prison clothes. Yeah, so kind of going against the grain of like, you either usually, a lot of people presume there's going to be like, one masculine individual and one feminine, and that's how they're together because one's almost like a man, which is just a load of shit. But like, these two kinds of go against that, and I think for me, it also like, orange is the new black, I think was really key in the fact that it made people open their eyes to, like knowledge, sexuality, and, in a way, kind of like I'm hoping destigmatised it a bit. And Orange is the New Black I think it's really key in the fact that I was going to include a picture of what's the woman's name, Ruby Rose? Yeah. Because when I mean, everyone was making a fuss about her personally, but everyone was like, oh, my God, like loads of straight people, I knew it'd be

like, oh, my God, like I'd turn gay for her which is just the most ridiculous term to use. But, like, do you know what I mean, I think people started to, like, realise that, you know, there are a lot of like, attractive women, and they don't necessarily fit into one specific, like stereotype of being gay. And just kind of the fluidity of sexuality. I think that was really key in that series. So, for me, even though obviously, they do kind of fit a stereotype, they're also kind of pushing the boundaries of that. So yeah, for me, personally, it was quite interesting, I think, to kind of see that and open my eyes a bit to what to expect

Int It's nice to see other versions of lesbian relationships on TV, because I think media is very, they use these stereotypes quite a lot. I think in the media of the whole, like you said, One Butch, one feminine lesbian, so it's really nice to see different versions. I think that's really good. Yeah.

Sarah And I think also, like, there would have been a lot of straight people that would have watched it. And I think sometimes within films and stuff, they kind of have like a token gay person, don't they are a token gay relationship. And they portray it in like, the most ridiculous way, and although obviously, this is like not real life, I think it kind of made people realise that, you know, they kind of like almost like wanted them to be together or like wanted them to be happy and just normalise non heterosexual relationships. Whereas usually the focus is solely on like some man and woman that are going to live a fairytale life. And this is kind of a bit more like opening your eyes to like normalising that. So that's why I really liked it.

Int Yeah, definitely. So, looking through your images that link to homosexuality for you. Looking at your first image, which I'm guessing is a pride event, what made you choose this image, then?

Sarah Yeah, so I'm pretty sure I might be wrong, because I just typed in pride, but I'm pretty sure this is Manchester pride, or it's some sort of pride anyway. But essentially, pride, I think, is a massive thing that comes to my mind when I think of homosexuality, thinking about the different pride events, thinking about the parades thinking about, you know, the massive like party and celebrations that people have. And also, in a way, it kind of also demonstrates to me, the necessity of pride, and how the fact that we have to have pride, obviously shows that there is inequality. One thing that really, really bugs me is when people like why is there not straight pride. Honestly, that honest grinds my gears, but I just think it kind of shows that, you know, same as like any kind of event that is for minority groups, it kind of shows how necessary it is. And also, it's really nice that people are proud to kind of embrace their identity. So, it's kind of like bittersweet, I think in the fact that it's a really nice event for people and you know, you get people coming together and it's really nice and people embracing it and it's, you know, it's good. But I also think it kind of shows the necessity because when obviously you look at the history of pride and why it happened and why it was necessary. It kind of still shows that there isn't necessarily an equality or that there wasn't equality and how we're kind of going forward with that.

Int I suppose it kind of just suggests what we were talking about earlier about that we have still got a way to go. Because if we did, if we're fully accepted, we wouldn't need these events, would we? I suppose.

Sarah No. 100%? I completely agree. So yeah, I think it's just interesting to consider that.

Int So next one is your RuPaul's drag race UK? Of course.

Sarah Yeah, the UK one is definitely superior.

Int Definitely, definitely. And so, what made you choose that image then?

Sarah So, I think, like I said, like, drag, for me is massively associated to like the LGBT community, and kind of what it presents what it represents. And I mean, the UK one for me, like says, superior and like, just like the conversations that are had within the show, and the different demonstrations and like embracing of sexuality, I think is really key. I think also, like the different judges and stuff I have on there, obviously, like, gay icons, or like supportive allies of the LGBT community. And I think, I don't know, for me, it's just something that automatically kind of connects and that's, I know, a lot of people that really enjoy it and essentially, a lot of people that I know,

enjoy are part of the LGBT community. And I don't necessarily know why it's more, it could be more liked by gay people, but maybe it's because it's kind of embracing and inclusive, in comparison to other kind of TV type things. And there are obviously a lot of references and jokes with regards to like being gay or being part of the LGBT community. So, I guess it kind of normalises that, which isn't often. Yeah, and you don't often get that on TV, especially not on like BBC and stuff. So, I think is a really good thing, bringing it to the UK. Even though the money spent on it, compared to the US one is low that's the BBC for you, the BBC ruin everything, honestly.

Int They get like \$5,000 and they get a pin badge.

Sarah I'd be so pissed off.

Int My daughter is obsessed with RuPaul drag race. And she absolutely loves Baga chips. Like she is I think Baga's biggest fan and they're on Instagram and actually spoke to my daughter, like on the video call. I thought Grace was gonna cry, she was like Oh my god, I said hello to her and spoke to her for ages, and she was hysterical. She still hasn't stop talking about it since, It's about a year ago.

Sarah Oh, that's so lovely, though, isn't it? Like, especially for like a younger generation. Like, it just opens her eyes. So much like I didn't have any of that when I was growing up, or if there was, I wasn't exposed to it anyway. And I think that that's a really key part in the fact that the media now has a lot more accessible and inclusive, kind of like TV shows or films, which I didn't have when I was growing up and a lot of people wouldn't have had when they were growing up. So, I think it's really key to have that in like popular media because it normalises it again, and I think that's a really key part.

Int Yeah, definitely. And then the hand

Sarah I had to include this, because like when I was trying to think of like symbols and logos and things, I just thought it's a really key thing. Like if I made that movement, someone they would know what I'm talking about. And if I'm completely honest with you, I don't actually really know where it comes from. There's probably some sort of history to it, and I couldn't tell you what it is. But another thing that I think also is kind of made it like really vivid within the LGBT communities is TikTok. Like if you look at that trend, where it was like the little ting, like do you know what I mean, everyone just like everyone Yeah, like is such like a movement that people know whether it's in relation to TikTok, like, do it to my mom, and she'd know what it meant. Yeah. Like people, however longer ago, are using it. So just think it's kind of like a key symbol and the sad part is that I don't have a history. I probably should actually know that. But yeah, I just think it's like a key symbol that that people would recognise and that means

Int Been around a long time as well. My mom would know what that is, as well.

Sarah That's what I'm saying. So, it's clearly stemming from something, but I just think the fact that people now still know what it is when it was probably started however long ago, just kind of shows that it is like a clear link to gay people so

Int Wicked, and then we've got the pride flag.

Sarah Yeah, so I guess, you know, the LGBT community the first thing when it comes to like logos or flags or anything like that is obviously the pride flag. The only thing is here, I didn't include the new flag that has a trans part on and that wasn't purposeful. I'm not a turf. I just that was just one of the first ones that kind of come to Google. And I just think any kind of flag. So, I was also going to get a demonstration of all the different flags because there's so many, but I just thought I'd just put one in but yeah, like all the flags are aligned to sexuality obviously like lesbian flag, bisexual flag, trans flag, all of these, all the different flags, I think, are really key marker, some people aren't necessarily aware of them. And to be fair, I'd probably still like if someone quizzed me on all of them, I'd probably get some of them wrong. But I think the reason I chose this is because people would recognise this. Like, straightaway, even if they're not part of the community, they would know what that represents. And I think that's because it obviously

has a long standing with the LGBT community. And also, I think aligning to this is one of the conversations I've had quite a few times during COVID. Obviously, the NHS kind of embraced the rainbow flag, or rainbow, whatever they had. And there was like an ongoing kind of debate about how people felt about them adopting that kind of flag, I just thought it's really interesting to consider because obviously, the LGBT community that is kind of their flag, and it is kind of what represents them. So, I did kind of understand that it was now being used for something else. And being able to distinguish between the two was near on impossible and I think is kind of important, if you've got a pin badge, or whatever that has that logo on how am I supposed to know if that's because you're an ally, or that you just, you know, you're supporting the NHS. So, I think that's kind of another key thing. So not necessarily linked to your research, but I just thought it was quite interesting on like that ownership and consideration of what a flag or logo represents. And I guess that's kind of like sacred to the LGBT community because it's been kind of theirs for so long.

Int I saw some research on it on Twitter recently, they were looking for participants actually, I did apply, and but they were overwhelmed and actually couldn't interview everybody. But it was about the whole NHS, like using the rainbow and how that has affected gay people. Really interesting. So yeah, I definitely agree there.

Sarah Yeah, I think it's interesting to consider what obviously it means to people and how that can then change or like then be used for something else. So yeah, it's definitely an interesting piece of research.

Int Definitely. And then I think this is your final one yep, your final image is the nightclub GAY, or just gay as people call it, and what made you choose this image.

Sarah So essentially, I just wanted a picture of like a gay bar or gay club, because I think that that's massively associated with gay people like going out clubbing or partying. And also, like we were saying earlier, having like a safe space. So, for me, these types of places are supposed to be a safe space, whether they are or not, they're supposed to be. They usually like really like pop music, really cheesy music, like have a good time chat to everyone. Everyone kind of gets on. And I think it's a really different environment to a straight bar, straight club. But yeah, I just think that for me, like the nightlife is a key part of like the LGBT community. But then also, in a way, for me, I think it kind of is a bit of a tricky one, because I've had like ongoing conversations with people about gatekeeping, like gay clubs, and how you can go about ensuring it's a safe place for gay people without restricting straight people also, and then people to not I mean, so like, we don't want to be like, there's no straight people allowed because then essentially, you're discriminating and we're going the opposite of what would have happened to gay people however long ago, but kind of keeping it to be a safe space by not necessarily having it dominated by straight people. So, it's a really hard one because another thing as well that I've experienced by going to gay clubs is almost having to prove that I'm gay. And I'm like, I'm not being funny. How would you prove it? Like, just because and this goes back to like the stereotype just because I look feminine, doesn't mean that I'm straight. And there's been so many like bouncers on the door all like me. And I'm like, what do you want me to do? Like grab some random woman and kiss her like it's just, it's just it for me. I'm just a bit like, hold on. Like, we wouldn't want this to happen in another setting. So why are we then encouraging that here because the whole point is that we're supposed to be going away from that. So, I think there's a bit of a tricky one really because like I say, we do want to kind of keep these safe spaces have being safe it's been safe but then how to do that without discriminating against people. So, it's just a bit of a tricky one really, but yeah nightlife I think is a massive thing when I think about so GAY, heaven, sidewalk Yeah, Birmingham, London, you know, and I think Another thing that I thought was really interesting, I haven't discussion on my sister actually, that obviously Manchester has like a Gay Village. Birmingham has a Gay Village. And then I was like London's the biggest city in the UK, and they don't have a Gay Village. They have Soho, but it's not a Gay

Village. They've got like GA Y, heaven, and like some other places, but they're like dotted about they're not like Birmingham or Manchester. So, it was really interesting. Not that it's relevant, but it's just something that I thought about the other day.

Int Yeah, definitely. Like so there's, you know, the big, you know, the main place in the UK. Really? Maybe we should make one.

Sarah Yeah, in London.

Int Definitely. Just going to check. We're still recording. Yep. Right. So, what I'm going to share now is the images that I've selected. So how I did this on the first of December, all I put in was gay male stereotype, gay, lesbian, stereo, gay, female stereotype, and homosexual stereotype. And I selected the first three images that came up. So obviously, they're not my interpretation or bias. And if you went on Google today, they'd be totally different. And so, looking at the first image of the bear, I just wanted your thoughts about the image really, and how you think maybe it would represent sexuality. Obviously, you had a very similar image of, you know, the muscular, hairy man, so yeah, what do you think about this image?

Sarah I think like you were saying earlier, I think it is one of the many stereotypes of gay men. I think a lot of people in the LGBT community are likely to be more familiar with it than those that aren't. But like you say, if it's coming up as a key stereotype, then people surely are going to know about it. I guess in a way, like we were saying earlier, it kind of sexualizes gay men in the fact that this is the first thing that's come up. Because to me, as much as this isn't necessarily sexual, like, you know, the leather, and like the clothing and things like that is kind of for me, it would like align to like kink, or like some sort of fetish. And therefore, that being the first thing that comes up is sexualizing gay men. So yeah, I just think it's quite interesting that that would be one of the first things but

Int When you were saying earlier, that's what sprung to my mind. Because I was thinking, no way, the first image that came up was that and when you were talking about sexualization, with Olly Alexander, my mind was doing the exact same thought process that yours obviously just did.

Sarah Yeah. 100%

Int Yeah, it's a shame really, that comes to mind and moving across to the right then the person with the blue hair. Why do you think google threw this image at me as the gay male stereotype?

Sarah I think in a way, it's kind of links to drag or like the femininity of gay men, like linking obviously, to make up and like expressions, got nail varnish on, just like the consideration of how some gay men like to embrace their femininity, or take part in drag or wear makeup and how also that's kind of normalised in the LGBT community. Whereas, for example, if a straight man was to have makeup on like that, I think it'd be a lot more like stigmatised or shock. So, I think men wear makeup is associated to being gay. So, I think that's kind of where the link lies for me anyway. Yeah,

Int Definitely. And then scrolling down, we've got Gareth Thomas

Sarah It's always like my research area,

Int That when I was looking at your images, I was like, she seen my images? And I, well, this one must have been, I'm assuming the stereotypes that, you know, trying to get rid of the whole stereotype thing. And obviously, it suggests that all gay men are feminine. And then obviously a picture of Gareth Thomas, which is far from that. And so, what are your thoughts about this image?

Sarah I think it's good in the fact that he's questioning and also, it's, it's essentially, you know, querying the stereotype itself, all gay men are feminine, right. And I think just emphasises that there is a lot of diversity within, you know, gay populations, and that stereotypes aren't accurate in a lot of cases. And there are a lot of people that kind of break the boundaries of what people see that people have to fit into, like categories. So yeah, I agree with it. People, you know, small minded if you're thinking that people are going to assume to fit into a stereotype don't get me wrong a lot of people do fit into a stereotype, but we don't necessarily need to stereotype people.

We shouldn't be stereotyping people because there's so much more than just one stereotype that fits everyone. So yeah

Int And then just scrolling down to the gay female So

Sarah This is brilliant.

Int Oh, we've got Lea DeLaria and honestly, when I looked at your images, I was like, wow. So obviously we spoke about Lea DeLaria before in your images. And is there anything in this image that that just really shows up? That gay stereotype?

Sarah Yeah, I mean the tattoo on her arm, it says butch I hadn't noticed that if I'm honest, and especially in the photo that I've got. But that's really key in the fact that he has got a stereotype but it's literally using the word that people would use to describe her or just to describe gay females. So yeah, essentially, she fits it doesn't it? Doesn't she? She's like, the short hair, you know, she fits that kind of idealised view of gay women. I guess. So. Yeah, it doesn't shock me. That was one of the images that came up to be honest.

Int Yeah, definitely. Do you think there's anything around the stereotype, Just kind of going off on one here and just thinking about Lea DeLaria, about size and things as well? Like, do you think maybe an old fact that the old fashion lesbian stereotypes such as this one, do you think maybe that women were expected to be a bit chubbier? If without sounding terrible? You know, I

Sarah Mean, yeah, no, I think that's really interesting. And something that I guess I hadn't necessarily considered, but amazing. Yeah, I think that's a good point to make. Because I guess when you see, like, stereotypical lesbians, they do kind of fit that body shape, or sometimes that body shape. So, I think it is really interesting to consider actually, on how, because body is obviously a really key part in the fact that, you know, it's how people kind of portray themselves or how they present themselves. And I think that, like I was saying earlier about gay men about like, twinkies been, like, thin and like, or like, a little bit muscley. So, I think the body shape and size, I think, is really key in the stereotype actually, of gay men and women, but I just hadn't necessarily thought about it. So yeah, that's a really good point, actually.

Int Maybe like that opposites again, like that. Obviously, not trying to look slim, you know, that is more of a masculine. If you get what I mean, and then obviously, trying to look slim is more of a feminine attribute.

Sarah This is very true. Yeah. Because that if you look at like, the ideal body shape for a woman, which, like society's ideal is like, slim, but like big boobs, big bum, whatever, obviously, it changed over time, I feel like in the 90s to now it's completely different, I guess, like, like slim kind of feminine women, and then going against that would be someone that you know, so for example, like someone that's like bigger, like, it's not, it's not willing to kind of conform, conform. And the same I guess goes for men, men are kind of expected to be like, masculine and muscley. And so, to then be a smaller, thinner man, or the other way, you know, it kind of goes against us. So yeah, that's a really key point. Actually, that's another interesting piece of research you could do with that.

Int So, the second image blue hair again, and what why do you think maybe Google selected this image for lesbian stereotype?

Sarah That's interesting? I've never seen this image in my life. I guess the colours like the rainbow colours, the short hair, they're the things I kind of associate with being gay. Not quite sure about the lollipop to be honest, but I guess because there rainbow. Yeah, I wasn't necessarily expecting an image like that, to be honest. But I guess it fits in the fact that it fits with the colours and the short hair. I'm just intrigued. Whether it was like some form of advertisement or what I'm not actually quite sure. But yeah, it's quite interesting to consider actually.

Int Yeah. And then the last image for the lesbian females. And this is another one that came up, I'm assuming possibly a dating website image, something like that. And yeah, so what, you know, what kind of things bring to mind with this image?

Sarah Well, first of all, the first thing I noticed was the potential age difference between them. Which I think is hilarious, because there's such presumed thing with lesbian couples is that there's always one that's older and one that's younger, and obviously, some people do fit that stereotype that's fine. But I just think it's amusing because essentially, that is a stereotype that's designed to lesbian women I guess, in a way like they've when you look at the two different women ones would be kind of more feminine and one's more masculine, which kind of goes with the stereotype that we were saying earlier with regards like dating or relationships. So yeah, it kind of fits that. I'm trying to think of what else are kind of notice in the photo. It's a bit of an odd photo to be honest, because I mean, imagine how you'd feel taking that wouldn't it be so comfortable, like put your nose bit closer.

Int I'll be like hang on stop, hang on, honestly, like

Sarah Oh, Hilarious. But yeah, I think it's interesting. Like we were saying that they've used like one more masculine. But neither of them I would say are overly like, Butch, if that makes sense. Obviously, I'm not short hair, but like, they haven't got her in like a vest or like a football top or something. So, I think it's quite interesting. And they would have been a conscious decision as to who they chose and why. Yeah. So yeah, just the kind of like media portrayal of lesbians and also again, I know this photo isn't overly sexual, but like, seeing them, like in an intimate way, is kind of what I think is associated to lesbians, like lesbians are so sexualized. I think when you think about it, like, when when I speak to a lot of people, like you speak about gay men being together, they're like, oh, no, you speak about women and they're like, oh, yeah, cuz it's like sexualized. That's it. It's like a fantasy type thing. And I just think it's really wrong because women aren't with women for other people's pleasure. They are with women; they want to be a woman. So, I guess in a way that kind of emphasises the like, I guess how, like, potentially sexualized or like how women together kind of are viewed.

Int Yeah, definitely. So, moving down to the homosexual stereotype images.

Sarah This is absolutely brilliant. Me and Google are on the same wavelength. Yeah.

Int And so obviously, we spoke about RuPaul in your images. So, I think I might just kind of go past because obviously, there's not really much here that's out there, really. And so, scrolling down to the next one, we've got little Nas. Okay. He seems to be quite open come in LGBTQ representative, kind of within the media. And obviously, I think this was from like, an award show. Yeah, I remember how I remember seeing it on the news like that it was such a big thing that he kissed a man on stage and all that kind of stuff. And so, what kind of springs to mind with this image when thinking about homosexuality?

Sarah I think, essentially, I guess it's quite interesting to consider little NAS because I think originally, people wouldn't have had him like pinned as like a, like overly flamboyant, like, when I've never really heard him too much. And then when I started seeing more and more of his stuff, I was like, oh, actually, fair play because like him, Olly Alexander, like really key in normalising, you know, femininity, and normalising gay people. And I think one of the key things for me here is, there's a lot of straight men that listen to his music that a lot, of not that they should or shouldn't, but there's a lot of people I think sometimes it would be like, oh, no, I'm not gonna listen to that. But his music is popular across the board and him being not that he should be brave but him being brave enough to do this at an award show. Either shows that we have come a little bit of a way in the fact that, you know, like, he's able to do that but then also the backlash that was had or said by a lot of people shows that we haven't necessarily come that far. And also, the bravery of him to be willing to openly embrace his sexuality in an industry where you get absolutely hammered for anything. So yeah, I guess it's kind of like shows a lot of different kinds of sides. And again, if you look at, like, what they're wearing, or the lack of what they're wearing, I guess kind of goes again with like, the stereotype of gay men, and like sexualizing nakedness, you know, Jazzy blingy clothing that they do have on. So yeah, kind of goes in two ways I think for me.

Int Yeah, I think I'd like you said, like, we shouldn't have to be brave kind of thing. But I don't think I could do that. I think I'd be brave enough you know, too.

Sarah I don't think I'd want everyone on TV to see me kiss someone, I'd be embarrassed

Int Yes. Definitely. And then the final image, which is the pride flag, I'm not quite sure about the background in the image. It was just obviously the third image that came up there. And so, what kinds of things spring to mind with this image? Obviously, I'm assuming the pride flag is why it threw it. Yeah. But is there anything else that kind of springs to mind there?

Sarah Yeah, I think obviously the Pride flag like we were saying earlier about like the importance of the flag and what it means to the LGBT community but by the looks of this image again, it looks like they're kind of resisting and like going against the grain because I mean, I can't really see the background but it looks like there's some sort of something going on. So, to walk along and embrace like your identity, in a setting where there doesn't seem to be anyone else kind of doing that is again, pride and it is again you know, power and resistance to like the norms of society. So, I think it's really brave, to be honest. And like we were saying, the pride flag represents a lot for a lot of people. And I think it's nice that there is like a visual, like symbol, visual like logo that people can kind of connect and relate to. Like I say, you can be anywhere around the world and you'll see that, and you'll know what it means, like I was in Italy on holiday a couple of years ago, and I saw a pride flag and it had a word written on it, and it was in Italian, obviously, but I knew from seeing that there was a pride flag. So, I think it's kind of like a globally known logo. And I think it's nice because it can unite people, even if they can't even speak the same language. So

Int Yeah, definitely. Yeah. And that's all of those images. So, I'll just stop sharing my screen. I've just got a couple more questions. So, did you feel that there were any differences between our images? And or do you feel like, obviously, they were very similar, and it showed those similar stereotypes that keep coming through?

Sarah I think obviously, like, we know, there have been some similarities. And I guess it's in the fact that I'm aware of the stereotypes and Google is obviously aware of the stereotypes because you know, it's society. So, I obviously have some images that fit with that but then I also think I have other images, because I know the diversity and the resistance against the stereotype. So, I think it's quite interesting, because in my collection, obviously, I know the stereotypes, but then also know, like, the different populations within the stereotypes of gay men and gay with gay women. And also, the things that I think is significant to me. So obviously, my influence on my images is going to happen. But I think also it kind of shows that how strong the stereotypes are in the fact that I literally chose an image of the same person that Google chose. And that I didn't type in gay stereotype. I literally was deliberately typing in these people, because then who are thinking of, so I guess it confirms that these stereotypes are strong enough for me to literally pick out a person that represents this stereotype. So, I think it just emphasises how well maintained it is within society, and it's perpetuated everywhere. It's perpetuated through media, hence why we chose the same actress, and through sport, all things like that. So, it's constantly, we're constantly reminded in society of these different stereotypes of gay men and women. Really Yeah, definitely.

Int Last few questions, and I just wanted to touch on your personal experiences of stereotyping if that's okay. So, like we mentioned briefly about like, well, you know, we discovered our sexuality and thought, oh, I need to dress really masculine. And so just kind of going off that if you ever felt the need to conform to these stereotypes that we've discussed, and kind of why really? Yeah,

Sarah I think it's a really good point, actually. So, there have been times so for example, now, when I think about going to a gay club, I'm like, oh, shit, I should probably consider what I'm wearing because before when I went, like I got a question when I went in, and then when I went to the bar, they wouldn't come and serve me. So, one of my mates then went up to the bar, and they

served her because she was wearing jeans and a top and I was wearing a dress. So, I was like, for God's sake, like, I think she stood with my girlfriend at the time, and I was like, this is ridiculous, and I was like, I it's not coincidental because literally, as soon as she went to the bar, they were in a circle, but I was standing there for like, 15 20 minutes no one come over to me. So, in those kinds of circumstances, I do sometimes consider like, oh, maybe I should present myself in X, Y, Z. But overall, like, I'm a massive, I'm massively against, like societal norms and stereotypes, and I just think they're there, but I don't, however I choose to present myself isn't necessarily fit in or I'm expressing who I am. Being who I want to be. Some days I'll be more feminine, some days will be more masculine, I'm doing what is for me. So yes, sometimes I will kind of conform to a stereotype of like being gay, but that isn't necessarily purposeful. And then I think it's quite interesting because, like I say to some of my friends and stuff, like for example, when I graduated from my masters, I chose to wear a suit whereas my first year I wore a dress. And I remember specifically saying to my mom like I don't want to wear a suit for my graduation because I'm gonna look really gay. Not that it's a bad thing. But the association of those clothes and sexuality is a really key thing. And I guess sometimes I am conscious of whether I look gay, and obviously, looking gay is only fitting into the stereotype because there's no actual way to look gay. So, I guess I am kind of conscious of, but I don't necessarily conform to it not, not anymore. I'm, I'm well past that. Yeah.

Int I think first maybe you did though, like, like, when you first discovered your sexuality, did you think like, oh, I need to look masculine to fit in with the LGBT community or to, I don't know, maybe signal to other gay people you are gay?

Sarah I think so. So, I think also, so not just that, but I think it gave me the opportunity to embrace that because if I've been straight and dress in a certain way people would have made the presumption. Whereas because it was already confirmed, I could then kind of embrace that part of me. So, I guess so to some extent, but then also, like, even when I think back to playing football and stuff, even though everyone knew my sexuality, I still was quite girly, I still, you know, wore makeup or still, you know, when we went out and about wore whatever, which wasn't the norm in that kind of environment. But I think it's because I'm always kind of one of those people that just thinks I'm just gonna do what I want. I'm not really a fitting in person, because I just think life's too short to try and fit in do you know I mean, but I completely understand that so many people do, because they're ever trying to pass as heterosexual, they're trying to fit in. So, they don't get excluded from the LGBT community. Like it's a massive navigation thing, especially when I think you think about bisexuality as well, and how they're kind of contested in both kind of heterosexual environments and non-heterosexual environments and like, the kind of connotations around that as well. So yeah, it's a messy, it's messy place.

Int I think maybe like, I think I mean, even personally, as well, it's a bit of a journey, isn't it really, like you start, You know, I need to look masculine, each of these things, but then actually, as you kind of navigate through you think, Oh, well, I don't need to do these things and maybe kind of adapt a version, like so I know like, for me, like, like you were saying some days are masculine and feminine. Some days are where, you know, my friend's wedding, not long ago, I had like a really nice 50 style, dress like red lipstick and everything but then from my graduation, I've got a suit. Yeah. And so like, Yeah, I think there's like, you adapt your own version, in a way, I think,

Sarah Yeah. 100%. I think kind of like you say a journey is a really key part in the fact that your thoughts change, and your ideas change, and your exposure to different thing changes as well because when you're first kind of realising, I think it's all about acceptance and that's a journey in itself, let alone the journey of your sexuality and how it kind of plays out. And I think also, for me, a really key part was that the first time I was in a relationship with a girl, I was adamant, like, Yeah, I'm gay. This is how I present myself and blah, blah, and it's not until time goes on that I'm like, you know, what sexuality is actually really fluid. I'm happy to just use the term non

heterosexual because I know for sure I'm not straight, but I'm not really bothered about like putting a label on it. And I think, kind of the more I've read, obviously, in literature, and the more I've kind of discovered myself and discovered like the community, the more you kind of learn, and the more you navigate that, so some people might be really feminine at the start and then embrace like a masculine kind of appearance. And some people like you say, might kind of switch to and from and I think it's about having an understanding of yourself in the world. Yeah. And just kind of going with that, because obviously, sometimes, you know, there's a lot of people, unfortunately, that aren't in a safe enough space to be able to express themselves. They want to, but I luckily enough am I will therefore present myself how I want to. So, there's no consistency, like honestly, today, I'm sat here and like trackies no makeup, like on the weekend I was out, you know, I had makeup on, like fully like going out and dress and whatever. Like you can catch me on any two days, and I won't look the same. And that's just me. Like, I'm happy that there's no consistency in that like some days to work I'll be wearing like shorts and trainers and whatever and other days I'll turn up but like looking all smart. Like there's no consistency, which is nice. Because no one's identity, I don't think is necessarily like stuck that much. So yeah, I think it's just an interesting one to think about actually. Yeah,

Int Definitely. Is there ever been a time where you felt like you've got, we did touch on it briefly, I suppose, like resisting the stereotype, so maybe to appear heterosexual like, I know we spoke about maybe like in workplaces or when you were in the club and kind of having to prove your homosexual in a sense. So, do you think there's ever been a time where you've had to kind of resist that stereotype to maybe protect yourself as well?

Sarah I'm trying to think so the thing is because I work with in sport, there's often quite an assumption around sexuality anyway, and especially now researching sexuality, everyone's like, you just kind of put two and two together. But I guess before that I'm trying to think when I was a teenager, like I've always been a sporty person, so I guess a lot of people would have presumed or rightly or wrongly presumed, and I'm trying to think of when I would have like gone out of my way to

Int There may not be a time

Sarah Like there probably has been like, especially when I was younger, because I didn't obviously have the knowledge I have now. I wasn't necessarily aware of my sexuality. So, I probably like would have like, either denied it or like, you know, presented myself in a certain way because I wanted to fit in. I think that's a really key part, like we were saying about journeys that I think often a lot of people when they're younger, or they're not quite certain of their identity. Yeah, it is kind of like a journey, and you are navigating that. So, I think a lot of the times a lot of younger people might be more likely to try and fit in, because I think sometimes you get quite consumed with societal norms, like look at Instagram, and how much influence it has on us. Whereas I think when you get older, you start to think you know what, this is so irrelevant, because I'm just who I am and that's it. But that takes time, it takes maturity, it takes understanding the world a little bit more, and kind of realising the bigger picture.

Int I think, for me, it wasn't till I hit my 30s really, that I could kind of say, you know, actually, I don't need to fit in with all these, I suppose heterosexual norms, really, and like, and really kind of experiment and this what I'm trying to tell my daughter like that you're saying about Instagram that I want to look like this mom, like this mom, I'm like, they're not real pictures. They're not real life, like they're photoshopped.

Sarah Yeah, we literally only see the highlight of people's lives on social media. So, it's complete fake betrayal anyway, and there's so many people really, sadly, those so miserable and depressed, but they protect, portray themselves as happy. And I'm just like, what sort of life are we actually living? Where we think it's necessary to make ourselves seem happy all the time? It's not something normal anyway, who would want to be happy all the time? Because that's fake in itself. Like, it's such an odd. Yeah, it's it's such an odd world to live in. Because then if you get

people that have been honest, and being like, you know, I'm actually struggling, they're like, attention seeker, like, you can't bloody win here. There's no way of winning. And that's what I think society is literally a battle. It's an ongoing battle. And I think sometimes you do, once you get older, you start to kind of take yourself away from it. You know, what you think do you know what there's big, there's more important things in my life there's more things to worry about, than having to navigate these little things. And unfortunately, some people still get massively sucked into it. So, I think, like we say, is all about the journey, and how much you know about yourself and how kind of sure you are in yourself as well. Or even if we're not overly Sure, but willing to just be like, actually, this is me, I'm kind of going along with it and I don't have to fit in. Yeah, enough to be in these little groups and categories because I'm not about that anyway. Yeah, definitely.

Int Yeah. And then my final question is about acceptance. So, we were talking about, we did briefly touch on this again earlier, about youth and things. But how did you think we could bring forward the acceptance of homosexuality? What do you think we could do to make it even, to kind of bridge that gap?

Sarah Yeah, I think I think there's a lot of different ways of attacking it or angles to kind of go at it. I think education is a massive thing. And that's not even just education within education, education as a whole within society. So, attacking all angles, education, within sport, education within, you know, pop culture, education, within music, education within schools, like there's so many different angles that you can attack it. Like even adverts, films, anything you see, like we're exposed to so much media on a constant basis, whether you're on Twitter, Instagram, watching a film, watching telly, there's so many ways that people can be influenced. And that is a massive target audience that you can hit all at once, and I think we are slowly making improvements towards that. But Bloody hell, when I think about it, if you go into like an LGBT section of a film list, they're all absolutely shit films, then just two gay people in it, they're going to be romantically intertwined. And I just think there's no for or storyline behind this, like there would be for a film that's based on heterosexual people. Yeah, so even that in itself, I just think people are I don't want to watch that or watching just think, well, I've actually bothered watching this, like, I've watched it, because I want to watch something that kind of represents me, but this is absolute crap film. So, I think, you know, like, media is a massive thing and education. So, like, and also, through education, we have to have research and therefore the likes of your research or my research, we have to have this to have an understanding of people's experience to then go somewhere with it. And it's not until you know what their experiences are and then seeing what it's like to then be able to work out what needs to be changed. So, it's really important to have an understanding of that to be able to make a change because otherwise we're just guessing anyway or presuming that everyone's experiences are the same and therefore this one solution is going to make everyone's life better, and that isn't the case either. Another thing for me is like people starting to slowly realise the importance of intersectionality on people's experiences and one thing I'm really passionate about, like, we can't presume that all gay people have the same experience, you can't presume all lesbians have the same experience, we can't presume that all bisexual people have the same experience like our gender, our race, religion, everything, even sexuality, like everything has a part to play in that. So, I think the more we have the consideration of that, within research, within education is another key factor. And I guess kind of like role models as well, like I'm saying earlier, like, we've got obviously like the likes of Elton John and Freddie Mercury and their time, and now we're starting to have our little NAS and Olly Alexander and the drag queens and things like that, Rose, and Rosie. But I think that's all well and good, because it's in like the limelight but I think like school settings, having a teacher that's able to be out, gives students the opportunity to realise, oh, actually, this happens in everyday life. Yeah, like, having a university lecture that's out, you know, having a sports coach that's able to be open about their sexuality, like all these different people that you come across in your life,

having them to be to be to be in an environment, they're comfortable enough to be open about it. Not that they have to be because you know, it's their life. But I think this the separation of professional life, and private life is something I'm really interested in, hence, why I'm researching it, and how people navigate that, and how obviously, there's so many workplaces where people aren't comfortable about being out, and how that has an impact on them, their productivity and other people that are in that setting. So, I think, obviously, we need change to happen to make people feel comfortable in these settings to then make further change. So, I feel like sometimes it's a bit of a vicious circle because there's so many different things that we need to work on to be able to get it all to work. But like even diversity and inclusion training courses and stuff in workplaces, some of it is a load of crap, for like an hour's course, and then they've got a certificate and I'm like, you actually don't know anything, if I sat down and spoke to you about any of these topics, you can answer a couple of questions, because that's what the training is but actually educating people, like sit people down and actually have a discussion about what their, you know, initial perspectives are, what the actual reality of life is, and then how they can kind of take that forward because there's so many people that don't actually know about, like gender diversity and sexual diversity and all these important factors even like about racism, a lot of people don't aren't aware of different languages, like I think language is such a key part. Because we aren't necessarily pulled up upon it or made aware of what we should be using. People then don't know and if you don't know, how can you then change or improve. So, I think education kind of filters down into a lot of this in so many different aspects but there's just so much to bloody do and I think people's willingness and open mindedness is a really key factor, because if they're not willing or open minded, and you're talking to a brick wall, aren't you. There's only so many people you can get through to, so yeah, just kind of people continuing the work that they're doing, I guess, and more people kind of embracing it, but it's not an easy job and unfortunately, it won't happen overnight, either. So, it's kind of a continual, like train to get through to chipping away. Yeah, you've got to, and like I was saying, like the the research that you're doing is is a factor in that, you know, you're going to create knowledge, you're going to share your knowledge, you're going to go away and do something and all of that is great, because you're evidencing the stuff that we experience. So

Int Yeah. Awesome. I will end the recording there bear with me a minute let me just stop the recording.

LGBTQ+ Participant: Sean

Int So, first, I want to say thank you for agreeing to take part in my research. And obviously, you know, I'm Laura, and I'm in the second year of my PhD now. And this is the second study of my research. You are being asked to take part in an online semi structured interview about the application of gay stereotypes to homosexual individuals and if a shift in acceptance is affected this. Just to remind you, the interview with video and audio recorded, however, only the audio will be used for analysis. And that is definitely recording now. Yep. Yep. During this interview, we'll discuss images that we think relate to homosexual stereotyping. So, thank you for supplying images for me. And also, I've got images as well that will be looking at the images that I've selected are pretty much from Google, so they're not my bias. So, I just put in gay male, lesbian, female, and then homosexual stereotype and pick the first three, basically. So didn't want to put my interpretation in there.

Sean Yeah.

Int You know. And so, do you have any questions before we begin?

Sean No, I don't think so, I am happy.

Int Perfect. So firstly, I'd like to know a little bit about your views on gay stereotypes. So, what would you consider to be gay stereotypes?

Sean Do you mean sort of what a stereotype is?

Int Yeah, so what do you think a gay stereotype is? Does it differ from a normal stereotype or?

Sean Yeah, so I think that I guess through media, social media, films, TV programmes, I think what it is to be gay has been defined by those things, like the sort of representation of gay people within those, I guess. elements or yeah, things. So, I think that's kind of what we as a society hold to be kind of the view or image of what the gay stereotypically what a gay person is.

Int Yeah. Media has a massive impact on stereotypes.

Sean Yeah, absolutely. I was listening to a podcast the other day, which I thought was really interesting. It was actually from Lenny Henry. He was talking about talking about race, obviously, him being black. And he was also talking about comedians and how even now, there is less kind of over stereotypes kind of being portrayed through black individuals who are like delivering comedy, but he was saying in the same way as a black person who kind of doesn't address their identity within their comedic routine. You are kind of just, you're not really addressing the elephant in the room in the same way that if they are sort of easily identifiable by I guess Yeah, to the heteronormative society, you know, if someone's stereotypically gay walked out there and didn't address that they were didn't make jokes about them being gay, or didn't kind of address their gayness or their identity through their comedy, then there would be a sort of an, you know, ignoring like the elephant in the room, if that makes sense. Just thought that was interesting, kind of to Oh, yeah, that's kind of I don't know, that's kind of true, isn't it? I think it's weird, isn't it? Because you wouldn't really think about that, but actually, yeah. Yeah.

Int So, what I think of like, what are your perceptions? On the ways gay stereotypes are applied at this current time? Do you think we still do it a lot? Or do you think maybe we do it in a homophobic way? Or do you think there's a mixture or

Sean I think it's definitely more covert kind of like to just what I was just saying, I think it's less overt it's I don't know, I think society has kind of become more accepting generally. Sorry, of gay people. But I think there is still some kind of unconscious like uncomfortability or you know, present like presentation of gay people as being I don't know maybe sort of camp like gay men as being a bit like camp or more feminine or and that you know, I guess for lesbian individuals just Yeah, I guess that presentation of being more masculine that kind of contrast between identities almost, I think that's kind of did quite a lot through like stereo stereotypical representations of gay people. Yeah. So

Int Going off that then what do you think fits in? If you think about a gay male, and what kind of stereotypical thoughts would come to mind, like, even thinking about maybe even job roles and things like that kind of just more than their appearance in a way?

Sean Yes. So, again, it's hard, isn't it to like, talk about it. Like, I have to feel like I'm sorry. But yeah, talking about stereotypes aren't just like, perception is, um, but like, stereotypically, what I would imagine is yes, somebody who is kind of a little bit camp in terms of job roles, thinking about, like nurses, maybe? I don't know, like, trolley dollies. That's a derogatory term. Or, you know, yeah, like flight attendants or? Hairdressers Yeah.

Int Yeah. What about like? Do you think that would affect maybe their personality or their emotions as well? Or do you think it is just kind of physical things?

Sean I think there is a kind of perception of gay men to be a bit more sensitive, maybe to be a little bit more in touch with their emotions, which again, I think links to the stereotypical kind of hegemonic idea of masculinity and femininity. And I think that's kind of the feminine attributes of a you know, showing emotion as being kind of Yeah, through gay men. potentially, bisexual men, queer men, I think. Yeah, emotionally, what was the other thing you said? personality traits? Yeah. Yeah. personality traits. That again, more than

Int Anything you can think of, you know, I mean, like, Yeah,

Sean I suppose like personal history, it's almost like being a bit like extrovert or kind of being a bit flamboyant. For example, I would attribute the kind of personality trait of a gay person

stereotypically. But again, that comes back to thinking of is it like *How I Met Your Mother*? Or like, I didn't know I suppose traditionally, like those characters are a bit more flippant? Aren't they? A bit more kind of sassy? Or was the other one forgot it now but yeah, just representations of gay people within like, sort of soaps or within, you know, *Hollyoaks* or whatever it is, I think generally, they just tend to be the character that is quite flamboyant, quite outgoing. Maybe making the jokes like flippant remarks and stuff. So, I guess that's where that comes from, I guess. Yeah.

Int Yeah. And thinking about lesbian women? What kinds of things do you think of for the stereotype for lesbian women?

Sean Stereotype of a lesbian woman, and I think, maybe a little more masculine, it's hard for me because I also, I don't know, I feel like I know, quite a few lesbians, I actually think that there is a sort of a lack of representation of lesbian women. That's what I think. I think there was, like, I'm trying to think of it as the stereotypical lesbian woman. And I'm sort of almost coming to my own experiences of being around like lesbian women, which isn't necessarily a stereotype. And actually, think about why that is, I think there was maybe not as much of of that within kind of like media or programmes and things like that is of gay man. Which is interesting, I think. But yeah, stereotypically Yeah, maybe be a little more masculine, a little more. I don't know. People think of like, Butch, don't they? Kind of that Orange is the New Black kind of representation of Yeah,

Int Yeah, sure. Men's Clothing and those kinds of things.

Sean Yeah, I guess it sounds awful. Doesn't it? Sounds awful to say that but I guess Yeah, kind of maybe more masculine clothes and things like that maybe wearing like a snapback or like an undercut. Yeah. More of a kind of masculine haircut or elements masculinity yeah. Those are the things I would think of.

Int Do you think there's anything there with emotions There at all or personality traits? or do you think that's not really represented?

Sean I kind of think maybe it isn't represented, honestly. I guess when I think of masculinity, I guess that's kind of where I'm more attributing those elements of maybe being a bit more masculine when they talk or yeah, being a bit more closed, not as open, not in touch with their emotions as more. I don't know if that's necessarily represented as well. I think that's more just me attributing masculine attributes to that, I guess.

Int Yeah, no, that makes sense. And when have you seen these stereotypes applied in real life? Obviously, you've mentioned the media quite a lot. That's quite a lot. We see it in the media. But are there any times where you've, you know, maybe it's been applied to you, or you've maybe applied it to someone else, kind of without realising, meeting Someone that maybe was a bit flamboyant, and you've instantly thought they must be gay, like those kinds of things? Yeah, so when have you seen these stereotypes kind of applied in real life?

Sean I think there's always an assumption because I used to be a hairdresser myself. So, there was always an assumption, I think, from clients that I was gay. Whether that's because that's how I came across to them. Maybe also, I don't know if that was just because I was a hairdresser or, because of, I think, as a part of that job, you have to be quite, I wouldn't say flamboyant, but you have to be confident don't you in that job as you know, you're a hairdresser, but just being you know, how, you know, how are you doing? All right, you have to put on that sort of act, don't you, get an element of sort of showmanship. That may be which could be attributed to a gay stereotype. But yeah, I guess maybe we do make assumptions based on appearances. And I think, yeah, I probably, I'm guilty of that as well.

Int No, I do it as well. Like, it's automatic. I did it today. I was in the pub, and there was a girl, with short hair. Chino trousers, and she was talking to my aunt. And when she walked up, I was like, she lesbian? My aunt was like, yeah, why? And I was like, don't know just got a vibe. Like it, it was it was her clothing, like 100%. Like, that's what, she was kind of looking at me thinking the

same thing. Do you know what i mean? Like, we're both like, you? Yeah. So, whether you do it to see, I don't know, maybe ingroup and outgroup kind of stuff as well. Maybe we do it for that reason?

Sean Yeah, maybe? I think it's definitely I don't know, like if I was in a room full of people that I didn't know, before. And I think maybe I could have a sense because of these things. I don't know, the way someone's dressed or the way that maybe that they are also I think, I think it is a social thing. I think it's definitely sort of identifying it, that person kind of, you know, shares your identity or social identity. And I think I didn't know there was sort of a safety in that, I think, which being an in group and stuff like that.

Int Definitely, that makes sense. Definitely. And so obviously, current research just suggests that we did mention it briefly that homosexuality is now more accepted than ever. And so, what are your views on this? Do you feel like, we are a lot more accepting of homosexuals now? Or?

Sean I think in some aspects, yeah. I think now, there's a lot more awareness, I think that is the key is that there's a lot more awareness now than there ever has been. There's lots of, you know, representation of gay people in more places than there's ever been. So, I think that brings with it more acceptance in some regards. Also, a lot of non-acceptance, I think, from people who, you know, yeah because of the society that we live in, or backgrounds or whatever it is, feel uncomfortable, or yeah, kind of rejected us almost, which is kind of sad. I think there is a lot of sorts of, yeah, moving towards acceptance, generally, I think definitely like generally. Generally speaking, we're a lot more accepted than we were definitely.

Int I think maybe we've still got a way to go as well.

Sean Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, yeah, I think I don't know, like, yeah, being gay, you have experiences don't you that you, kind of I mean, even I was talking about it the other day, just with a gay friend. They're gay man. And we were just talking about using like men's bathrooms. And we both had similar uncomfortability. Like, I would never walk into a public bathroom and use a urinal. Like he wouldn't either. And we were kind of just talking about like, wow that's something that we wouldn't really have thought of before. But it kind of just links to, I guess, like, if I was in restaurant say, if somebody would have seen me, I didn't know either with my boyfriend or just seen what I was wearing had a kind of inkling that I was gay and they felt uncomfortable with me being gay, then going to a bathroom and I don't know if you're at a urinal you're going to get your parts out aren't going to use it. So, there's a sort of like, it makes me feel uncomfortable that I might make somebody else feel uncomfortable, if that makes sense.

Int Yeah. How interesting.

Sean Huh, but something that I've never really, Yeah, it's almost like a privilege thing, isn't it? It's like a heterosexual privilege to just walk into a bathroom and not have to think about that. But that's something that I think about, I would only ever use a cubicle. And if that's not free, then I will either wait there awkwardly like an idiot, or I will just like walk out and yeah, carry on with my day. It's weird, isn't it I think there are things there's kind of unconscious things that I think we're moving towards acceptance, aren't we, but I do think there is a lot of a lot of things that we have to kind of keep building awareness of.

Int And then kind of still doing those things to protect yourself, I suppose. And also, because you're thinking I don't want to make anyone else feel uncomfortable. Yeah, it's a tricky one isn't really.

Sean Yeah, I mean, yeah, it's definitely kind of a not wanting to make anyone feel uncomfortable. But then also, there is an element of danger in that isn't that there is, and I think, you know, there was an element of I don't know, if I was not looking. I didn't know upward sorry. I'm looking at both now. So, then I don't know how that is perceived by somebody who feels really uncomfortable me being gay, there is a danger in you feeling uncomfortable? Some people might think, oh, God, that was really uncomfortable and just walk out then somebody else that would like, push me, or attack me? Or be like, What the fuck are you looking at? Or its full of danger, an element of danger in that interaction isn't there? And that is something that comes into

consideration when I don't want to, why would I even put myself in a position where that's an option for me to be in danger. I would rather just go to the cubicle. Oh, yeah.

Int Well, yeah, interesting. Okay, so I'm going to pop up your images now. So, I'll just share the screen. So, bear with me a sec. You might see yourself briefly.

Sean Oh, that's fine, I'll try not to be too scared.

Int Right. Can you see your images

Sean I can

Int Lovely! So, I won't be able to see you now because I'm doing it all on the online version. And so, if you need to stop or anything just give me a shout. So, looking at your first image, then so this is obviously image for the gay male stereotype. Would you just talk me through this image such as why you chose it as your representation for gay male?

Sean Sure. almost embarrassing, isn't it? To say that this is what I chose. But again, it's just it's a stereotype, isn't it? Yeah. Keep

Int Reminding yourself. It's just a stereotype.

Sean Yes. So, I mean, I guess I've seen this person on Big Brother. It's Frankie, What's his name? Frankie. Frankie Grande. That's it. So yeah. It's obviously a sort of not his and it goes back to what we're talking about, like personality and stuff like that, and emotion. Even in his pose there, he's got his hands out and smiling. He looks energetic and sort of a little flamboyant. I suppose like appearance wise, his hair, he's got like dyed pink hair. He's got very sort of pruned eyebrows. He's quite slim. Yeah. And just very sort of groomed, the way that I would describe it. Almost groomed to the point of stereotypically, being feminine. I would imagine that somebody who is straight or yeah, I would imagine would attribute feminine femininity to this person's identity. Yeah, I guess those are the main things.

Int Do you think Because this has popped up quite a lot And I hadn't even thought about it myself. But coloured hair seems to have cropped up quite a lot in my interviews, especially like brightly coloured hair. And obviously, this guy has got pink hair. Do you think that plays into the Gay stereotype at all?

Sean I mean, I think I think it does. Absolutely, yeah, no, I do. I do think it does. I think obviously from being a hairdresser as well, we'd have people, straight men would come in, and they would only really want to colour their hair, if they were uncomfortable with having like grey hair, and it would only really be to a natural, natural colour. And I'm not speaking very sort of like, generally, but just, that's what it would be. But I think there is a lot more freedom with expressing yourself, I think, with being gay, and I think that links to a sort of letting go of that masculinity, I think, also a way that, you know, as a masculine male, heterosexual man, the way that society kind of, I guess, would want you to be maybe you would feel uncomfortable having pink hair because you're, again, I'm sort of postulating or whatever but I think yeah, I guess that's sort of what that links to but yeah, I mean, I would probably feed into that. Yeah. Because I've just identified this guy with having pink hair has been gay so Yeah,

Int That makes sense. Do you think as well, obviously you mentioned is slim build, do you think build plays into it as well

Sean Just trying to think that through. I think I mean; I know this links to like my research. So, I'm just not to just talk about my research. But I think, like, from a stereotypical standpoint, I think about the representation that is presented to us of gay men as being slim. That's what I think anyway. Yeah. Just thinking of Yeah, people, are in general, slim, or just kind of body conscious is what I would. Yeah. Yeah. So

Int Which I suppose again, does link back to that? femininity, I suppose really, doesn't it?

Sean Yeah, absolutely.

Int Yeah. So, scrolling down to your lesbian stereotype image, and just talk me through this again. So, what parts of the images made you think of a lesbian female and why you chose it?

Sean Yeah, I mean, I think maybe this relates to earlier when I was saying I was kind of struggling to see or like, think of a representation like a stereotypical representation. So maybe this feeds in a little bit more to just my own kind of what it is but I don't know I feel like I kind of feel like a lot of people that I know that a lesbian are couples and are very sort of how do I describe it? Very just together, I suppose very together and very sort of in touch with each other. Very, like loving. Have like pets are very kind of focused on I don't know. Yeah. Like their relationship and having like pets and like cats and stuff like that well not cats specifically, but just pets and just that kind of unit together. So, I guess maybe even a little bit more that way. But I mean, yeah, I suppose like, especially that I think there's a lady there with shorter hair. Like that. And I guess she's got like a hoodie on? I guess she's got a bracelet on that looks a little bit more masculine to me. Yeah. Maybe? Yeah. From that way, there was a bit more of a kind of masculine element appearance.

Int Do you think maybe, also, the fact that obviously, the ones more masculine, and the ones more feminine? Do you think that plays into the stereotype at all of lesbian women?

Sean Yes, definitely. Definitely. In relationships, I think. I mean, I think, I don't know even just watching like Family Guy, or where they're sort of like they're using stereotypes, aren't they in a kind of joking offensive way. So, it's kind of offensive, but like as a joke, if that makes sense. And there was always or, you know, even like Orange is the New Black really, or just thinking back to just thinking of like, yeah, programmes where there were lesbians, but I think, yeah, there was always there tends to be more in a relationship You know, one individual is more masculine, and then one is more feminine kind of think that's definitely a stereotype. Yeah, that's presented as one that's kind of a wifey I don't know if that makes sense.

Int It makes sense. It just mirrors a heterosexual relationship basically, doesn't it?

Sean Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I think I think even of gay men, I think, I don't know. I can definitely think of individuals where there's, there's always like a more stockier one and there's a more slightly feminine one. Yeah. Which I guess in some ways does mean like a kind of heterosexual relationships.

Int Yeah. Which I suppose it's, it's that representation again, it's what we see? All the time? So maybe that's why we mirror it a bit.

Sean Why wouldn't we sort of, yeah, kind of idealised this thing that's pushed, pushed from birth, we don't have any representation of anything else, I suppose. Yeah, I guess, in lots of ways, why wouldn't we aspire to have that or yeah

Int Definitely scroll down to homosexuality images? Obviously, we've got RuPaul. So, what made you pick that image then?

Sean I guess because of, I was thinking more just about representation. I don't think I don't know. I guess there's nothing kind of gayer than a load of drag queens, lip-syncing for their life! And I guess that for me is like one of the main kind of outlets or programmes that has given you a representation of gay people that isn't it, then I guess, I mean, yeah, we're going to get into it, I guess. But there's a lot of problems with the representation on that show also. But that being said, from what we did have, I think that's the best, so far, kind of one of the best representations of us as a community that there has been, instead of just a, you know, a kind of a sitcom, where there's a sassy gay guy that's kind of coming in, and just as a bit, you know, makes a few jokes and is a bit, you know, louder than life. I think that's kind of, yeah, it gives you a kind of insight, doesn't it of gay culture, what it means to be gay, they kind of discuss real issues that are experienced within like the community, even kind of, you know, like trans issues, and non-binary individuals and as I said, there were issues with representation, I think, on the show anyway, but I think that's kind of even the show itself is growing. As a society is growing. I think it's kind of growing, but again, not perfect, but yeah.

Int Do you think this kind of fits in with the stereotype as well? Because I know like, a lot of people say like, oh, if you watch RuPaul or then you must be gay kind of thing. Do you think that this

whole, like RuPaul drag race does kind of fill in with the stereotype as well? Not just the sense that obviously, I mean, the way they look and things, but do you think that kind of fits in with a stereotype?

Sean Yeah, of just like watching that programme. Yeah, definitely. I think even just among other gay people, like among other gay men, I mean, that's one of like, the first things do you watch RuPaul's drag race, who's your favourite queen? Like, who's your favourite person on the show? And I think there are almost like some people who are so I mean, like, I don't know, like, homo, like, internalised homophobia, like some gay men will be so averse from watching RuPaul drag race because it's too feminine, or it's too kind of to gay, if that makes sense. And I think that's kind of them, like navigating their own gayness isn't it really? To that, but yeah, yeah, I think that fits into it somewhat. I mean, obviously, it's a show about not all, you know, there aren't all gay men. As I said, there's like some representation of like, women and non-binary or about trans individuals, but likely is mostly like gay men, isn't it? Or earlier seasons that are generally, you know, as themselves when they're not in drag? They generally, traditionally are quite feminine, aren't they? So, I guess that's the, you know, that's the kind of stuff we're feeding into that stereotype, isn't it?

Int Yeah, I remember like talking about it at uni. And that if you were talking to another gay person, and they were like, no I don't watch RuPaul, it was like, what do you mean? You are gay you must watch RuPaul! Yeah.

Sean Yeah, that's kind of, I don't know, just one of the first real shows. I'm trying to think of another one another show. That's kind of mainstream enough to be you know, well known that's, apart from kind of, like, Queer as Folk expose that addressed the kind of gay culture and stuff, but I think that's such a huge show. I don't think even Queer as Folk was really as big. Didn't get as big as what RuPaul drag race has as a show.

Int Every country like every country has got RuPaul drag race now think.

Sean Yeah, Canada, Australia.

Int And the UK versus the world.

Sean Have you watched that? Sorry. I know we are in an interview.

Int I have, so yeah, it's everywhere. It's massive. Yeah, scrolling down to your next image. Could you talk me through what made you choose this image?

Sean Yeah, so I guess this is more to me a more kind of to me, like RuPaul's drag race is, is and was a sort of sort of sensationalised gay people, gay culture to heterosexual people. I think as much as we love it as gay people because it's something I think actually. It's sort of almost not necessarily just for us, is it? In a way it's very much for us but also, it's so flamboyant. And so, kind of perpetuating stereotypes in lots of ways that it actually is. Also, mainly just for straight people to get to know us and to like us almost. I think that's yeah, what is whereas I think queer eye addresses, first of all, yeah, they are gay, aren't they like the gay men? I think Jonathan's nonbinary. But they are more of a sort of real programme. It's more of a kind of, I mean, there's obviously an element of like, yeah, they're kind of acting a bit, aren't they? Or they're sort of playing into stereotypes in some way. But they also make over people who are straight or who are, you know, struggling maybe, from different cultures. But it's not just a kind of, it's more real. It's what I'm trying to say. It's more real and more genuine, more of a genuine representation of homosexuality, I think.

Int And I think as well, you get just looking at that picture, because I've never watched, never actually watched it. And I feel like there's more representation of gay men in that picture. Like, not just your standard feminine gay man. Do you know what I mean?

Sean Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I don't know, I suppose like, we all have, like, masculine and feminine elements to us, whether we're like gay or heterosexual and whether you want to acknowledge that or not, I think. But yeah, I mean, I don't know, I think I can't remember actually, when Jonathan came out as non-binary, but I know that it wasn't, I don't think in season one. But he

was always seen as somebody who was the sort of like feminine or more feminine, had more of a feminine energy. Whereas you compare that to, like, Antony, the middle guy, so he's, I don't really see much. You know, like, yeah, I don't really see much femininity in him and his appearance when he I mean, I know, wearing suits there, aren't they? But even in the show, like what they wear and like, I guess, his sort of just energy or demeanour or whatever it is that is I don't get a huge amount of feminine energy from him; I don't really get the same vibe from him that I do with the what's his name? Frankie, Frankie Grande. Like, does that. Does that make sense? I suppose. Kind of a more less stereotypical, it's more of a kind of real representation of gay people.

Int Yeah, interesting. Yeah. So, I'll just pop up my images now. So, like I said, these images, were just on the first of December, I wrote in gay male stereotype and picked the first three. And the same for lesbian stereotype, etc. So, looking at the first image on the left, which is the bear image. What's your thoughts about this image? And like, why do you think Google would select that as the gay stereotype?

Sean I think there is a well obviously he's half naked, isn't he? And he's wearing chaps. And he's got very revealing underwear on, a harness and leather boots and a leather hat and stuff. So, I think I think there is a sort of stereotype but also some truthness to sort of promiscuity, promiscuousness there is within the community. And I think that's why that kind of is shown there. I mean, yeah, you know, at gay pride and stuff like that, which is not just for gay people. Well, is for gay people. Obviously. It's a parade to show our pride I guess, to the rest of the community as well. yeah, we get in that parade. I think again, there's always kind of a section or a few people who are I don't know, yeah, very dressed in like leather. Or, you know, maybe they're you know, into some sort of, like fetish or fetish wear, so I guess there is a, there was an element of that definitely within our community. A representation of that.

Int Do you think less clothing also plays into the stereotype obviously you mentioned about him not having a lot of clothing on? Do you think maybe that could play into this gay stereotype or

Sean In what way sorry, I don't know if I am just

Int You know, like, what's the best way to put it but you know, obviously as you said and he's got hardly any clothing on Yeah, do you think that that's something that could feed into the gay stereotype of men not wearing very much clothing you know, crop tops, hot pants

Sean With you now, yeah, all right. Yeah, I definitely do I think yeah, I mean, yeah, it's funny because like Jonathan always wears obviously yeah, so he's not a gay man. He's a non-binary individual but yeah, he always wears he always wears like crop tops and stuff. So I guess I don't know Yeah, that element of like queerness or whatever, but I think even like watching The Simpsons, or I don't know I suppose that's what I think of also watching like, like Family Guy whenever they have like a gay man like gay man on there or a group of gay men, they're always very much in like skin tight T shirts and hot pants or Yeah, definitely kind of if that's more of a sexual thing maybe more largely like yeah, the stereotype is that we're perceived as being more sexualized or you know also probably in combination linked more feminine I guess. Yeah, femininity wearing tighter clothing maybe or hot pants

Int Yeah, no interesting. And then moving over to the image on the right the blue hair and what are your thoughts about this image? Why do you think Google put this out as the gay stereotype

Sean Well I mean I guess I don't know to me that almost looks like I mean he's got half of his face has got makeup on like between that almost like Drag makeup like he's got half of this like drag makeup but yeah, either way whether it's drag or not yeah, he's got he's wearing makeup he's got nail polish on hasn't he, again he's showing skin again, which is interesting. It's like he's maybe got dungarees on something like that without a t shirt on underneath. But even the kind of the side of his face that hasn't got makeup on. His eyebrows are very pruned. Very kind of skin looks very I mean, like Yeah, I would say look beautiful skin is beautiful. But also, by that I just mean

well-groomed or well. moisturised, clear. Which I guess again is linked to femininity or being gay, I guess, isn't it that sort of yeah that groomed look

Int Yeah, definitely. So, I'll just move down to the third image, which I actually found super interesting. So, I'm guessing it must have been a poster about gay stereotypes. So, when this one came out, Oh, interesting. And obviously it says all gay men are feminine. And it's shown an image of Gareth Thomas, who is far from feminine. And so, what are your thoughts about this image?

Sean It's interesting. I mean, it's obviously a more real representation probably. I guess it's that difference, isn't it between stereotypes and more genuineness of who gay people are not just gay, you know, the idea of a gay person perpetuated, or you know presented by like the media and all this Yeah, society that presents that idea of a man as being feminine and wearing makeup and groomed and or you know, showing lots of skin all that stuff. This is to me a more. I don't know, Yeah, just I guess more real aspect of the game gay man, I guess linking more almost to what I was talking about with, with RuPaul drag race versus the Fab Five. It's kind of that. The top the top part is RuPaul. And the bottom part is the Fab Five or you know, a gay man. Absolutely. What does a gay man look like? Well, not necessarily a, you know, well-groomed man. It also could be somebody who plays rugby. And he's masculine, somebody who's a wrestler, somebody who's masculine.

Int Do you think maybe being in the community, we see that there is just more than one stereotype. So, in the sense that if you're not part of the community, it's that very rigid, gay men must be feminine, and lesbian women must be masculine. But actually, being in the community, we see these different stereotypes because you kept saying, I think this is a bit more of a better representation. And do you think we see different versions?

Sean Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I definitely think we do. I remember, like when I was first, like, coming out, I think, sort of went through a phase where I was. I mean, like, I grew up in Bromsgrove It's like quite a smallish town and stuff. I didn't, I didn't know. Yeah, not to get into like the struggles of gay people but I think you sort of cushion yourself a bit don't you sort of monitor yourself, like maybe don't accept yourself in some ways. And then through that process of accepting yourself and sort of coming out and all of that stuff. And I went through a phase of being like quite feminine, wearing like, low cut, even like women's Tops. So, wear like women's tops, and I don't know, what else did I do, you know, used to like to pluck my eyebrows within an inch of their lives and sort of yeah, or lots of like jewellery and stuff. So, I don't know wanting to sort of express myself because I just sort of repressed or kept down But I think to me, that was about sort of like the Yeah, in a way, almost like playing into that idea of like being gay or I don't know, sort of perception of how like Okay, so I'm going to be this now Because that's what society wants me to be almost. Yeah. But I think even sort of recently went, you know, I think had people tell me I don't know, like, I'm sure you would have had similar things where people say to you Oh, you didn't look gay. Yeah, but you didn't look gay, you don't seem gay. Yeah and it's very much like, not sure what, how to take that, really? And like, I'm not sure. You're sort of almost making the assumption that that's a good thing for me.

Int Yeah. Yeah. No, I get that when I had my long curly hair. And if I used to say like, oh, me and my wife or if I mentioned wife, people would go oh you're gay? I'm like, okay, like, I didn't think I had to tell you, straight away. You don't look gay, With your long hair. Oh, soon as I have it short again now, I don't get the response anymore.

Sean Yeah

Int Like if I mentioned it at work if I'm teaching and I say like, my wife or whatever. No one goes. woah I didn't know that. Like, yeah, just because I got short hair it's okay, again, which is weird.

Sean Yeah, is weird. It's like this sort of I don't know. Yeah, that make assumptions. Don't they, based on your Yeah, based on your identity. But I think yeah, first being like in the community, and sort of, I don't know, I think we sort of know that. We know that don't we, like, you know, I

mean, I feel like we have to I don't know how to describe it. We don't have to explain that there are gay men that are rugby players and that are masculine, who you wouldn't know, because we like we already sort of like know that don't we? We sort of that being gay. And I think you can sort of say that to somebody, but then I think some people get it, some people don't do that. And I think that's the bit that we're sort of moving away to we're moving forward towards like acceptance or we or acceptance within society. But it is a sort of thing as a gay person. I think you are aware of that, aren't you think? Yeah. You're aware that actually, yeah,

Int There's more to it than just that standard Stereotype.

Sean Yeah.

Int So, scrolling down to gay female stereotype. We did briefly mention. Orange is the New Black. Yeah, so this was the first image that came up, which is obviously Lea Delaria from Orange is the New Black. Why do you think, what parts of this image do you think would be the reason why Google would say it was the lesbian stereotype?

Sean I mean, as a shaved, got she's got a shave section hasn't she of hair and its short as well? tattoos, maybe that somehow links to masculinity, also somehow traditionally within society? Obviously. I know that doesn't but yeah, maybe that's what is perceived as being more masculine. And I mean, yeah, she's got Butch written, I think on her arm. I don't know. I mentioned that earlier Didn't I think there was a bit of a perception of lesbians being more Butch or more masculine or being like presenting in a more masculine way. Clothes also a quite I mean, I can't really see what she's wearing too much. But I think she's got a shirt on hasn't she sort of, I don't know, more masculine or more sort of male fitting, I guess. Yeah.

Int Yeah. Do you think maybe, obviously, I know, we spoke about it with the men. But do you think body shape plays into the female stereotype? Or

Sean Maybe in I think, yes. Yeah. Stereotype. Yeah. In the form of a stereotype then? Yeah, maybe. I don't know, I guess playing into masculinity, isn't it as being sort of a more masculine frame? I mean, or what's defined by society as a more masculine frame for a female, I guess, maybe, is what's seen as more associated with being a lesbian. I mean, sort of like, my boss, my boss has lots of friends. Sorry, my old boss not my boss now I don't work there anymore, but yeah, the salon, he has lots of lots of lesbian friends and even used to describe them. And they used to describe themselves as like lipstick lesbians because they would be feminine. Yeah, they'd have long hair that have long curly hair, they would care about sort of, I don't know, getting their nails done or sort of those, like traditional things that are associated with being like feminine or girly girls, but there would be, you know, like to have them in a relationship and that's what he would call them, and they'd call themselves, yeah, we're the lip. You know, we're the lipstick, lipstick lesbians, which is quite interesting that they have to define as as being a lipstick lesbian because they don't want kind of almost the association of being butch or you know, that we're, we're lipstick lesbians it's kind of a different thing. Yeah, a different idea set for themselves, I guess.

Int Again, kind of feeding into that. There are more stereotypes within the community. Yeah, that kind of we know of. Yeah, I mean, then others don't Yeah, I mean

Sean Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I mean, yeah.

Int What were you going to say sorry

Sean Oh, no, I was just going to say like, I suppose we I think we even as within the community I think we have categories don't we for ourselves, so I guess like a lipstick lesbian or a butch lesbian or you know like a bear for a man, we spoke about bears earlier didn't we and sort of like a twink being a more feminine gay man. And I suppose it's like; we almost have stereotypes for ourselves

Int Stereotypes within a stereotype. So, moving down to the next image that came up the girl with the blue hair, blue hair seems to be a theme. And why do you think Google selected this as the lesbian stereotype? What parts of the image?

Sean I mean, it's a very colourful image, I think obviously, a t shirt is displaying, to me it's like yeah, the LGBTQ+ flag, isn't it or you know, alludes to that with like, the colours and stuff. And short hair again, I think looks like some it's probably like shaved, like it's actually got a bit of an undercut going on. Maybe not much makeup. Maybe that's another thing. The other one also that the image doesn't have much makeup. Yeah, I mean, she's sort of covering her face a little bit isn't she with a lollipop stick.

Int Yeah. Cool. And then the third image that it gave me for lesbian stereotypes, and what are your thoughts about this image and how it Represents lesbian women?

Sean I think it's really cute. But yeah, it's a really cute image. But yeah, I guess it kind of almost links to the one that I put up a lesbian stereotype. You know, a couple that seem quite close, obviously. I guess it's just picture, isn't it? But they seem quite close. Maybe there's the lady on the left seems to know perceptually to be a little bit more masculine in her appearance, she's got sort of like shorter hair hasn't she? Seems like her t shirt is maybe just, I mean, it's just a t shirt, isn't it? But we're sort of over analysing it. But I guess would traditionally be seen as a bit more masculine clothing than the lady on the right.

Int Yeah, so maybe feeding into that whole, one being more masculine one being more feminine again.

Sean Yeah, definitely. Yeah. And I guess almost like we spoke about it earlier, don't we just about trying to sort of almost allude to or like replicate that kind of heteronormative, like narrative, isn't it really, of what kind of heterosexual couple would look like. Which is weird in itself, isn't it? Really, I think when we think almost like if we're going to think about identity within heterosexual couples do you not think, that's really interesting. Also, just I'd imagine that there would be I mean I don't think, there wouldn't be a sort of, or not traditionally, stereotypes are what I am talking about, you know, you'd have, you wouldn't traditionally have a kind of Butch, more masculine female, and a more feminine, or just I don't know, it's just not what you see is it's just not your type. So, I guess, just interesting.

Int Definitely. So then scrolling down to the homosexual stereotype images, RuPaul came up first. Obviously, we spoke about RuPaul in yours. So, I won't bother speaking about RuPaul again, you will have the same reasons as to why, you know, this is the homosexual stereotype.

Sean Yes

Int I'll scroll down to the second image that came up. This is little NAS, and I'm assuming it's from an awards ceremony or somewhere he was performing. And so, what are your thoughts about this image and why do you think it represents homosexuality?

Sean So, think I mean, yeah, personally, I really like little NAS X such as I love them like as a person, just because he is very sort of perpetuate stereotypes, I think doesn't he but, in a way, to make people uncomfortable, which I personally really like. So, he, you know, he doesn't mind sort of at a TV awards, half naked dancing and getting off with somebody else. If that makes you feel uncomfortable, then why doesn't Madonna kissing Drake at some awards things make you? I don't know. Does that make sense? But that's what I quite like about him actually. But yeah, in terms of why, obviously, us being intimate with a man, that's the first thing. He's not really wearing much. So that's another thing. And what he's wearing is quite, I guess glittery, sparkly. It's not really something that you would, or I would imagine, like, I couldn't imagine Drake really wearing this. Like, if that makes sense. It's quite feminine. Obviously revealing attire, I think he's got makeup on, I think which I guess fits with the trend that we've kind of discussed already Those more kind of feminine attributes. And it's also links to like the promiscuity aspect of the perception by society, and probably, I guess, yeah, being in the community, there is maybe some truth to it, but I guess of us being quite promiscuous. But I think there was also like, quite a negative. I mean, I'm saying like, that's true. It's like, it's different. For me to say that for somebody who's straight, I think to say that, like, does it I don't know if that's really making sense, but just the sort of negativity to that stereotype is what I'm trying to say, within, kind of

heterosexual culture of gay men being promiscuous, I think that almost links into, you know, when, I don't know sort of don't want like sexuality to be taught in schools and that sort of idea of that being sexualized and being a sexual thing. And it's not that so I think there was a sort of, there was a definitely an attribution of like, gay men, maybe more specifically, gay men, or, you know, being more promiscuous, but then also think within heterosexual community That's kind of seen as a negative thing, or you know, it's a very important, Yeah, there's a kind of negative connotation of that, obviously, that's, yeah, represented

Int I get what you mean, I also love the fact that he's just like, I don't care. Yeah, I'm going to kiss him on stage. And if you don't like it, that's your problem.

Sean Yeah, but I mean, yeah, I think one of his videos is him in a jail or something and the inmates are naked, and they're all dancing in the shower. And like, I just think like, that's like, I don't know, that makes a certain type of person, like feel uncomfortable. Doesn't it I just quite like that he's doing that

Int So, then this is the third image. A gentleman wearing his pride flag. Why do you think this was selected to represent homosexuality?

Sean I mean, yeah, it looks like maybe he's on his way to like a pride parade. I guess that's kind of what I think of with this image. But I mean, obviously, it's got the pride flag there so the gay flag so yeah, I mean, just I guess it's nice, doesn't really look like he's at Pride yet. So, he's not in a gay environment. He's not sort of walking down hurst street or, or something he's looked like he's walking through for could be a city centre with a pride flag around him. So, I guess it's kind of that. I guess representation of the image almost is like a show of difference. Isn't it? Show that he's like different maybe to the others. He's very colourful. And the rest of the world isn't perhaps as colourful. I don't know, maybe. At leads to that doesn't it in some way?

Int Yeah. Do you think the pride flag has quite a large impact on the homosexual stereotype?

Sean What? sorry

Int So, say like if, for example, if you saw someone wearing a pride flag or a pride lanyard or pin badge would that automatically link, oh, they must be gay, then. Do you think it has a big element that makes people kind of assume you're gay if you are wearing the pride flag in any form?

Sean Yeah, yeah, definitely. I mean, I think I almost did it, then. I think I almost thought that he was gay because his pride flag, which, of course he might not be might just be an ally, or just somebody who's on their way to pride to celebrate Pride, maybe. But I think yeah, I think it is the I mean, obviously represents the community, doesn't it? So, I think you kind of having that. Somewhere, it's a way for you to tell other people, in a way sort of your views on, and I don't think if you were homophobic, you would probably or you know, you, you felt in any way uncomfortable with gay people. I don't think you would have something on your person that, you know, represents pride. It's sort of Yeah, but I guess it lives to the image that you had before the I think it was in the lesbian, lesbian stereotypes with the girl that had the colourful top one, I think there is an element or isn't there and brightness and being bold and being out there and like pride and being like pride for being proud of who you are. And this is, I guess that's traditionally not really been as accepting. So, I suppose it's that element of pride and being out there and colourful, which is, yeah, the stereotype. I think that's all they're like, yeah, so look, I'm like just going on. But yeah, it's what I'm trying to say. Maybe that in some way feeds into what we're talking about the representation of a gay man, you know, it was like the most like being extroverted and being out there. Kind of, I don't know, like some straight People say like, why, why do you need a pride? Like, why do you need to? don't they and it's that kind of uncomfortability isn't it? I think that they didn't want to address that we, So I guess I'm just thinking about stereotypes that way, where it kind of feeds into that, isn't it? It's like a gay person that's on TV is always like the loud one. Or like the extroverted one Yeah, I guess the pride flag is loud, isn't it? It's kind of proud.

Int Yeah. I haven't ever thought about it like that. Like, it's so bright, isn't it? And like, loud and out there? Yes, I never thought about it like that. I'm just going to stop sharing the screen. There we go, back to normal. So, there's just a few more questions now. And yeah, just touching on your personal experiences, if that's okay. So, have you ever felt the need like you did mention it briefly that when you first came out, you felt you needed to feminise your appearance? But have you ever felt the need to conform to the homosexual stereotypes that we have discussed? Obviously, you did touch on it briefly.

Sean Sorry, Laura, you're you just kind of stopped. And then I think I missed a little bit of what you said, I'm so sorry. All right. Sorry.

Int Sorry. I'll repeat it. No problem. So, as he said, have you ever felt the need to conform to the homosexual stereotype? Obviously, you mentioned briefly that you did feminise at first. So obviously, yeah, if you could just talk me through that a little bit more like?

Sean Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. So yeah, I think well, you kind of mentioned it already. So, I think, two different like levels. So, part of it was being in Bromsgrove, like growing up in Bromsgrove. And, you know, it's like a small town. So quite sort of traditional. I mean, at school, also, there wasn't really much representation of like, gay people. Not much representation of the gay people. Anywhere was there really? I don't I think when I was younger and also, I'd like I didn't think I didn't want like, I didn't want to be gay, Yeah, I am getting quite personal. But yeah, do you know what I mean like, I didn't really accept myself, I don't think at that time, or like, for a long time. So, I think then, when I sort of, grew into that a little bit more that I got to accept the idea that it is okay, that's who you are, like, let's just get on with it sort of thing. Then yeah, I definitely did go through a phase of, I remember first go into hurst street in Birmingham, obviously, like the gay, like a kind of area of Birmingham. And seeing other people that would gay, like that was just like, to me, that was crazy. Like, literally, I remember that feeling of just like, I can't like what, like I don't know, like what. I couldn't really believe that this was here almost sort of heard. I remember hearing about it. I remember googling it. I think before it went there. And I was like, too young to go. I remember googling it like, oh my gosh, yeah, there's like a, you know, there's like a bar and stuff. Like I didn't really understand how, you know that there are other gay people that live in the world. It's really, really strange thing when you like, think about it, and talk about it. But yeah, so then I think I definitely did, as I said, kind of feminised, my appearance. And for people that had that were so accepting of themselves in this kind of gay area that were very feminine. Some, like gay men that were very feminine. Or you see lots of different people don't you mean, in gay bars and stuff, but to me, that was like a sensory overload. And oh, my God, I could do that. Do you know what I mean like, if I wanted to, like, be a bit more feminine. Yeah. Now to me That was crazy. Because as I said, I hadn't seen that at all anywhere. So, then I did fully. Yeah, kind of move into a more sort of feminine, I think, identity as a sort of, you know, wow, oh, gosh, can't believe I can do this. But I can and I am. So, I just sort of, yeah.

Int Do you feel like you did that to show people that you were gay to kind of put it out there, so you didn't have to keep telling people?

Sean In some ways, I think maybe in some ways Yeah, I mean, I was just I think even like, in the way I spoke it sounds weird. Doesn't it sound very weird when you like think about it, but I think yeah, I was quite, sort of, I think it's like a, that sort of acceptance and non-acceptance of yourself is sort of like, you, I think you struggle as a gay person, generally, to kind of find your own identity. I think that's the general theme when I speak to other gay people. Yeah, sorry. Yeah. So um, yeah, I think you've kind of struggled to find your identity a little bit. Especially with the kind of lack of representation and things like that. So, I sort of went one way of being like, quite feminine and very, like, yeah, kind of fitting the gay stereotype that goes to show the world so everyone can see. That's what I was. Because for so long, I hadn't wanted to show anybody that. And then, yeah, you kind of move through to oh Okay, actually, um, maybe that's not who I am

actually, maybe somewhere in between those things that I can sort of find myself as being, I guess.

Int Yeah, I feel like I did exactly the same thing.

Sean Did you?

Int Yeah. When I first came out really masculine shorthair boys' clothes, boxer shorts. I even went that far, you know? And then now, I feel like I'm at a place where I'm comfortable with my body. Yes, I do like to look androgynous. But some days you'll see me with a red lip.

Sean Yeah,

Int And today, I got a tracky on.

Sean Yeah.

Int I don't feel like I need to do that anymore. But I think at the start because that's all we see. And we don't have any other representation. I think that we think we have to do that. Yeah, that's what I feel like, I had do it to be a lesbian.

Sean Yeah. Yeah. It's sort of like, yeah, yeah. No, it is weird. I think it's like, yeah, it takes a while, I think for you to get to that place where actually like, no, I'm doing this because I'm comfortable doing that. And that's who I am, that's what I want to do versus this is what I feel like I should be doing or yeah,

Int Yeah. And what about resisting the homosexual stereotype? Have you ever felt the need to resist it and kind of avoid it? Maybe in the workplace or anything like that?

Sean That's interesting. Um, I think I do that all the time, in some elements in some places, honestly. So, I have a boyfriend that I've been with for a few years now. And I won't, I won't hold his hand. I mean, he won't hold mine it's not like He really wants to, and I won't, but it's like, yeah, there are certain places where we just would not exchange like public affection in any way. And again, it goes back to that. It's exactly the same thing as not, you know, in the bathroom, not using the urinal and sort of not wanting to make anyone feel uncomfortable. I guess there is a certain element also of the threat or kind of potential risk of somebody not feeling comfortable. Yeah, I think it goes back to that sort of, you know, like, the more awareness isn't there more awareness of gay people, that's great. But it's also, you know, you get more acceptance, that's great. But then you also get more people that are actually like, the more you know, not accepting actually like rejecting and feeling Yeah. That's why I think there's like, I think I saw it in the news, actually, not long ago, especially in Birmingham that it was like more, evidence of like, homophobic attacks, and stuff.

Int Yeah, I saw that. A lot of hate crimes. Yeah. You just said that, if me and Joe are holding hands, and we will pass an old couple, I'll let go of Joe's hand or are like put it behind her back. And I don't know why I do that. Like, because they're old, they're not used to it. Maybe. So, I just think, oh, I don't want to make them feel uncomfortable.

Sean Yeah, yeah. I mean, it is weird.

Int We keep saying that, because it is, these things are weird.

Sean I think that a lot, honestly. I mean, I know like, this is like research and stuff like that. But I think until you unpick these things, whether the gay people or you sort of have these conversations, you don't actually fully, you're not fully aware of these things that you do. Do you know what I mean, you're not actually fully aware of how these impact you or the things that you do, because you're just doing them, you're just like, it's normal for you to just do that. But actually, you kind of actually then, it's kind of like a yeah, weird

Int Things in my interviews where we've had the same conversations like every interview with a homosexual participant. It's been the same conversations and I'm thinking we should, we need to have these conversations more to realise why we do these things. Like we could not do them, you know, I mean,

Sean Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think we don't, Yeah, it's I think it is a protection thing, I think. I don't know, it's a kind of its kind of I think it just represents society, And I think it represents how

much further actually that we sort of have to go. I think we sort of as a society, similar, with like racism honestly, like, similar with, like racism and things like that. I think we like to get to a place where we feel like, okay, you know, that doesn't exist anymore. We like to kind of break ourselves into like, a false sense of this is all right now, or is actually, when we talk about these things, we realise, Oh, bloody hell. Yeah, we're nowhere near where we like need to be. And we need to like have these conversations to bring like, Yeah, bring awareness of them.

In Going off that, basically. And the final question, how do you think we could bring forward acceptance of homosexuality? What things do you think we could do to help make it more accepted?

Sean Bit tricky, isn't it, a tricky one? I mean, I guess that's the easy answer is to just raise more awareness of these issues, I think. Yeah, I think I mean, in some ways, I think I suppose like, yeah, there's two different people on there. Like within the heterosexual community, there's people who are trying their best to be, you know, allies and trying their best to understand and trying their best to, you know, do everything they can, which is amazing. Like, that's yeah, incredible, and all everybody asked for, isn't it really? There are also other people who are not accepting for I don't know, be it like religion, or cultural values or different things like that. And I suppose those people, I'm just saying, like, yeah, those people, they're harder. It's harder to really help these people who are just kind of set in their values to move away. But I think, even you know, people who are trying their best, I think that's the kind of, yeah, that's where you'll get more awareness or acceptance from them. It's just talking about these things that like, they don't know, do they? Know? It's hard? If you're not, you haven't lived that experience? How you, wouldn't know? Like, why would you know that? You wouldn't really expect to know that, would you? And a lot of the things like we don't know, but I didn't really know, all the things I'm doing to like to mitigate myself or whatever. Like, I was having that conversation with my friend the other day. Like, I mean, I didn't really know that until we just like, just like having a drink was like, yeah, and then it was like this whole conversation came about. So just I guess more conversation more Yeah.

Int Yeah. Even, like the holding hands thing. I had, like a funny feeling in my belly thinking. That's what I do. Like, I'm not realising that that's why I do it. Yeah, and then thinking, oh, actually, I have to, like, protect us protect other people. Whereas if we were fully accepted, I wouldn't have to do that. Yeah. I've never thought about it like that before.

Sean Yeah, I mean, there were there were certain places even, just went to like Stratford over Christmas. I don't know, there were just certain places where you can just feel it, can't you? I feel like you can just feel sort of judgement or, or something where you just Oh, actually, like, they're looking at us a bit. They're looking at us a bit. And even in London, like we held hands in London, just like around the streets and stuff. And even there, you can see some people like very, like, sort of, I don't know, you're just very aware of it, aren't you? And I suppose I don't know for me, I guess like, I don't want them to feel uncomfortable. But that's weird, isn't it? Like that's weird reaction to That I should be annoyed that I don't feel comfortable doing that Because I'm sort of maybe conditioned or whatever it is to feel like oh gosh, I don't want to upset you? I don't know. You know what I mean. Yeah, that links to why I suppose I like a little NAS so much because he is just so unapologetically me just how he is sort of a bit provocative, but you know, why wouldn't it be? Why wouldn't he be?

Int Definitely. I shall round up there. Is there anything else that you want to add any final thoughts or anything?

Sean Not that I can think of.

Int All right. I will stop the recording. Then. Just bear with me a minute. We chatted for an hour and 20 minutes.

Appendix N: Article written by Laura Gee and published in The Psychologist, BPS.

the psychologist may 2025 gender inverted stereotypes

'You don't look gay?'

Laura Gee on personal and research experiences of 'gender inverted stereotypes' and more

At a party, dressed in a 50s-style polka dot dress with my curly hair cascading down and bold red lips, I mention casually, 'my wife and I'. Someone exclaims, 'Oh wow, you don't look gay?' Standing there, I couldn't help but think that I can't be the only gay individual to have faced this reaction – people often have notions about how someone should look based on their sexual orientation. Certainly in the past when my appearance was more masculine, I never encountered such a reaction; and yet my current appearance seems to challenge stereotypes.

The surprise of others highlighted how ingrained and rigid stereotypes can be, influencing how people perceive and categorise others based on their appearance. This experience shaped both my undergraduate research and my PhD. Join me as I delve deeper into gender, sexuality, and social psychology...

Beliefs around gender inversion

As psychologists know, stereotypes are fixed, oversimplified, and biased views of groups of people. They mean it can be difficult to see individuals in such groups as distinct and unique. Gender stereotypes reflect the emphasis society places on task performance for men and on social relationships for women. They're considered more stable than stereotypes based on age or class, enduring over time due to socially consistent roles and traits associated with men and women (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2021).

When it comes to gay men and lesbian women, we see 'gender inverted stereotypes', which seem to reverse traditional gender roles (Kite & Deaux, 1987). Put simply, gay men are frequently viewed as resembling heterosexual women, whereas lesbian women are seen as more akin to heterosexual men. This phenomenon is referred to as 'Implicit Inversion Theory' (Kite & Deaux, 1987).

It's through the lens of gender inversion that I view my experience at the party: I did not exhibit

stereotypical masculine traits associated with lesbians, which led to the assumption that I was heterosexual. These stereotypes are reinforced by cultural and media portrayals that emphasise these contrasts. Early social psychology research also contributed by linking femininity in men and masculinity in women to sexuality, enabling these gender inverted stereotypes. Early psychoanalytic theories, like inversion theory (Freud, 1953), suggested gay and lesbian individuals exhibited characteristics of the opposite sex due to over-identification with their opposite-sex parent, further engraining these stereotypes despite their debunking (Kite & Deaux, 1987).

Recent evidence (PEW, 2020) indicates society has become more accepting of same-sex relationships, marriage, and gay rights than ever before. Despite increased tolerance, societal beliefs about opposite gender norms persist (Mize & Manago, 2018). Societal expectations, cultural representations, and historical theories played significant roles in the persistence of stereotypes.

Why do these stereotypes linger?

Perceptions of a person's sexual orientation influence how they are viewed and treated by others. While understanding someone's sexual orientation can assist in mate selection and strengthen group cohesion, it also impacts decisions related to hiring (Hancock et al., 2020). Sexual orientation can be inferred from indirect cues like physical appearance, body language, emotions, and vocal characteristics. Gaydar, the 'ability' to detect verbal and non-verbal behavioural cues associated with gay men and lesbian women, means people can accurately identify gay men and lesbian women at levels above chance, but this is also influenced by cultural stereotypes linked to heteronormative concepts of masculinity and femininity (Rae, 2017). However, some argue that gaydar is simply the application of stereotypes.

Stereotypes also shape how we see ourselves, and the process of self-stereotyping can steer people to align with these stereotypes, leading them to internalise stereotypical traits as part of their gender identity, a crucial aspect of self-concept. As inherently social, humans are motivated by belonging to groups, fulfilling needs for safety, survival, and reproduction. How much an individual emotionally connects with groups they belong to is social identification, which influences perceptions, emotions, and behaviours. Individuals strongly identifying with their group often define themselves by such group membership, feel a bond with the group, show commitment, and act in its

best interests. Social identification carries psychological significance and social implications; therefore, gender inverted stereotypes may be employed by gay men and lesbian women to connect with one another, find safe spaces, and seek potential romantic partners and generally thrive. Although it is not always intentional, people might subconsciously adopt gender inverted stereotypes because they align with cultural norms. Over time, these behaviours become ingrained, serving as a means of identification and a way to navigate social spaces.

Gay men and lesbian women may also exhibit stereotypical behaviours to navigate a heteronormative environment. It has been suggested that the lesbian community has established norms for physical appearance that serve two primary purposes: to provide subtle cues for communicating sexuality (and sexual preferences), and to create a group identity distinct from the dominant culture, allowing lesbians to recognise one another (Rothblum, 1994). This practice is also observed in gay male communities, where appearance is used to signal gay sexualities, distinguishing them both from heterosexual society and within the gay community itself (Schiedel & Schmidt, 2003).

The pressure to conform

When I first came out as a lesbian, I believed I had to present myself in masculine ways – cutting my hair short, wearing men's clothes, and adopting a more masculine demeanour. How else would people know I was a lesbian? However, perspective can change over time, and the longer I have identified as LGBTQ+, the more comfortable I have become gradually moving away from stereotypes. While I hold onto some aspects, I have discovered my true identity, which does not have to align with the masculine lesbian stereotype. After conversations in my PhD, many others have shared that they also no longer feel the need to conform, and feel comfortable expressing themselves as they wish.

Our discussions have also revealed a significant element of resistance, fuelled by concerns that conforming to stereotypes might unintentionally expose people's sexualities in ways they would prefer to avoid. These conversations highlight that gay and lesbian individuals may resist adopting gender

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inverted stereotypes in school, work, or job interviews to avoid potential unfair judgment and to create a sense of safety by blending in. Society often views LGBTQ+ identities as different or even deviant, leading individuals to resist stereotypes to protect their well-being. Such resistance may also be fuelled by a fear of making others uncomfortable, which may be tied to feelings of shame (Frasse & Barrientos, 2016).

Additionally, there could be a fear of conforming to gender inverted stereotypes in specific situations. Media coverage of hate crime attacks against LGBTQ+ individuals can instil fear, prompting gay and lesbian individuals to resist stereotypes to avoid harm and increase self-preservation. Stereotypes can fuel animosity towards entire social groups, and as they become embedded – often from an early age – they typically highlight which groups are considered minorities. The ongoing choice to either conform to or resist these stereotypes reflects a broader struggle with deeply ingrained societal norms and the fear of negative consequences associated with them.

Challenging stereotypes: More inclusion

The path toward LGBTQ+ acceptance has been marked by significant historical and social changes, moving from eras of severe condemnation and discrimination to a gradual general increase in acceptance and legal recognition.

Since the late 1960s, Western societies have made notable progress in attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals, and despite many challenges, the visibility of pride movements and legal milestones like marriage equality have strengthened the LGBTQ+ community. Generational differences may also play a vital role in shaping attitudes, with younger generations showing greater acceptance and openness toward LGBTQ+ individuals (Greenwood, 2020).

But despite these advances in LGBTQ+ acceptance and legal rights, deeply ingrained stereotypes about gender and sexuality persist – not only dictating how people are seen but also influencing self-perception, often steering individuals towards conforming to certain expectations. This ongoing struggle reflects the broader challenge of dismantling fixed gender norms, embracing a more nuanced understanding of identity, and promoting a more inclusive environment where individuals are free to be themselves without fear or harm.

Addressing rigid stereotypes may require a broad approach. Progress is underway, but more work is needed. We can begin by making personal efforts and engaging in self-reflection to address and confront our own biases.

As for me, like many others, I shall keep being true to myself, wearing what I like, and appreciating that I do not have to 'look' a certain way to embrace who I am.

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