Sexual Identity Development among Transgender Youth

Abstract
This study explores intersections between sexual identity and gender identity development among transgender young adults. The aim is to contribute to analyses about the interplay between sexual and gender identities. Findings revealed complex patterns of sexual attraction consistency and reexamination of sexual orientation labels and sexual attractions in the context of gender transition.

Background & Theory
- Dichotomous models of gender and sexual orientation fail to accommodate for a complexity of experiences (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008).
- Transitioning gender may require an examination and reexamination of sexual orientation (Diamond, Pardo, & Butterworth, 2011).

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989)
Highlights multiplicity across identity dimensions:
- Identities are not achieved, they are constructed and reconstructed.
- Intersections between sexual and gender identity give rise to novel forms of subjective experience.

Methods
Sample (N = 90)
18 to 30 (M = 21.58; SD = 2.9)

Gender Identity
- Transmen: 31%
- Transwomen: 32%
- Non-Binary: 37%

Sexual Orientation
- Bisexual: 14%
- Asexual: 5%
- Queer: 21%
- Pansexual or Fluid: 8%
- Mostly Heterosexual: 18%
-Undefined: 9%

Procedures
1-3 Hour Interviews
Thematic Analysis (NVivo QSR-11)

Findings
CATEGORIES
EXEMPLARY
THMES

Attraction Consistency (n = 38)
- I became more aware of [sexuality]... It was an aspect of becoming more comfortable with myself. Becoming more comfortable with myself, so I could be more comfortable with things like sexuality.”
  (Jae, White, 29, Bisexual, M-F)

Sexual Attraction Changes (n = 51)
- I went with heterosexual just cause that's how I was raised, that's what was expected... Recently I've opened up more to the idea of having sex with a man, but not a heterosexual thing. I can have queer sex with a guy.”
  (Emily, White, 22, Gay or Lesbian, Third gender)

Self-Labeling Changes (n = 57)
- I started calling myself bisexual. I never really identified with that. It was just something I could say so that people would know who I was interested in and that only lasted until I found queer. So yeah the label changes.”
  (*, White, 23, Queer, Third gender)

Implications
1. Links between sexuality and gender identity are diverse and complex
2. Trans youth negotiate sexual orientation with regard to both attraction and gender identity

THEME
- Accepting Attraction Changes
- No Attraction Changes
- Broaden Sexual Attraction
- Cross Gender Attraction
- Trans Only Attraction

No Label
- “I just like people. Personalities are more striking than gender.”
  (Jane, Other, 24, No label/Pansexual/Fluid, Third gender)

Congruent Label
- “I wish I was a gay guy or even just a lesbian, but, unfortunately, I have such an interesting history with guys... Yeah. It seems to just be biologically set-up”
  (New, White, 26, Mostly Hetero/Straight, Female)

Genderless Label
- I started calling myself bisexual. I never really identified with that. It was just something I could say so that people would know who I was interested in and that only lasted until I found queer. So yeah the label changes.”
  (*, White, 23, Queer, Third gender)

undefined