Sapienza Università di Roma

Dipartimento di Psicologia dei Processi di Sviluppo e Socializzazione

Dottorato in Psicologia Sociale, dello Sviluppo e della Ricerca Educativa

XXXI Ciclo

Tesi di Dottorato

Explicit and implicit attitudes toward gay and lesbian scenarios and traditional gender roles: sexual orientation, sexual stigma and perceived masculinity/femininity

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a.a. 2017/2018

A mia madre e mio padre,

A tutte le persone che mi hanno supportato

nel corso di questi tre anni di dottorato.

Grazie

Summary

Introduction

The last Special Eurobarometer 437 about Discrimination in the European Union (Eurobarometer, 2015) showed that the majority of respondents expressed tolerant or supportive views about some statements regarding gay, lesbian or bisexual (LGB) people. Results indicated that 71% of EU citizens agree that LGB people should have the same rights as heterosexual people, whereas 67% agree that there is nothing wrong in a sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex.

However, findings also showed that such percentages differed a lot among the EU Member States. Such an example, several countries of Eastern Europe showed percentages of agree below 30% (i.e., Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia), whereas other countries of Northern and Western Europe indicated percentage that exceed 80% (i.e., Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Netherland, Spain, Sweden). The statistics confirmed quite the same pattern of results when respondents were asked how comfortable they would feel with gay and lesbian couples showing affection in public and how comfortable they would be if an LGB person were appointed to the highest elected political position in their country, or if one of their work colleagues, sons or daughters were LGB.

Italy obtained the second highest score among all the EU countries for the perception of discriminations' spread on the basis of sexual orientation. Indeed, as a Mediterranean country, stereotypical gender roles are more prominent than in other Western regions (Pacilli, Taurino, Jost, & van der Toorn, 2011; Tager & Good, 2005) and traditional gender ideology is closely related to the concept of machismo, which could be intended as an over-conformity to the traditional male gender role and an expression of sexism (Pistella, Tanzilli, Ioverno, Lingiardi, & Baiocco, 2018).

If we extend our gaze outside European context (ILGA, 2017), we will see that 72 countries consider homosexuality as a crime and have penalties from prison for several years (i.e. Algeria, Egypt, India, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia), to death (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen). Almost all of these countries are located in Africa and Asia and have religious-based laws alongside the civil code, while Europe, America and Australia overcame such penalties against homosexuality or gender non-conforming behaviors several decades ago. Thus, most of the studies that will be examined as theoretical review of this doctoral dissertation will refer to these specific cultural contexts.

According to the annual report of human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people in Europe (ILGA-Europe, 2017), Italy was ranked just 34th in a total sample of 49 European countries. Italian recognition of civil rights for sexual minority people is progressing very slowly due to the political and clerical influences too. In fact, Italy had to wait for 2016 for a law on same-sex unions, considered as a different legal institute from marriage anyway. Even the presence of high levels of catholic religiosity, both as beliefs and concrete commitment, constitutes a unique aspect in Italy respect to other Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, Greek or Portugal. For all these reasons, Italy constitutes a very peculiar context for studying negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians in relation to sexual stigma and traditional gender roles.

Sexual prejudice and negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian people

The prejudice against LGB people has been labeled with several names such as 'homophobia' (Weinberg, 1972), 'heterosexism' (Levitt & Klassen, 1974), 'homosexism' (Lehne, 1976) or 'homonegativism' (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980). Each of these terms presents some limitations in describing negative attitudes towards LGB people. On one hand, homophobia, the term most commonly used, reflects a theoretical assumption for which the hostility toward an LGB person is characterized as a phobia and it would depend on an irrational fear toward non-heterosexual people. On the other hand, the terms 'heterosexism' and 'homosexism' would focus too much on the societal context, rather than on the individual level of people's negative attitudes. They would indicate an ideological system in which homosexuality is inferior to heterosexuality, just like women would be inferior to men for sexism.

Herek (1984) suggested that '*sexual prejudice*' is a preferable term to refer to negative attitudes toward a person because of her or his sexual orientation. It would not imply assumptions about the motivations underlying negative attitudes and it would not suggest a greater focus on social rather than individual level. Just like other kinds of prejudice, such as sexist or racist ones, sexual prejudice is an attitude, it is directed at members of a social group, and it is negative, implying hostility and dislike (Herek, 2000). In addition, a peculiarity of 'sexual prejudice" is that it refers to all negative attitudes based on sexual orientation, behaviors or attraction, whether the member is really gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Such definition is coherent with contemporary conception of attitudes in social psychology that defines them as an evaluative response to an object, which can be an object, a person, or an abstract idea (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018). Based on such definition it is not relevant that a person is able or not to explain or justify the reasons of her or his attitudes. Sexual prejudice rejects the irrational nature of "homophobia", not only because a person may be able to support their negative attitudes with logical reasons

that are coherent with his or her cultural values, but also because attitudes can be the means to achieve personal goals (Kruglanski & Orehek, 2009). More specifically, such a goal could consist in satisfying a psychological need. This reflects the functional perspective of attitudes, according to which attitudes are psychologically functional (Herek 1987).

In his review about sexual prejudice, Herek (2013) deepened three possible functions of sexual prejudice. The first one is named "*social expressive*" or "*social adjustment*" function. Based on such function, sexual prejudice would help people to satisfy affiliative needs, by reinforcing their bonds with reference groups. The second function is called "*value expressive*", according to which sexual prejudice is a means of remaining faithful to the moral, ethical, religious or political principles that are considered fundamental for the self-concept. The last one is the "*defensive*" function, that sees sexual prejudice as a strategy to cope the perceived threat eliciting anxiety and other negative feelings.

Because of individuals' psychological needs depend on dispositional, environmental and cultural factors, also attitudes toward LGB individuals are influenced by all these characteristics (Herek, 2013). Studies investigating negative attitudes against LGB people and their correlates have really grown in the last decades (Herek, 2004; Hichy, Coen, & Di Marco, 2015; Lingiardi, Falanga, & D'Augelli, 2005; Mellinger & Levant, 2014; Steffens & Wagner, 2004; Reese, Steffens, & Jonas, 2014; Seger, Banerji, Park, Smith, & Mackie, 2017; Shackelford & Besser, 2007; Walch, Orlosky, Sinkkanen, & Stevens, 2010; Worthen, Lingiardi, & Caristo, 2017). Research found that several variables are linked to sexual prejudice, and they can be both individual and social characteristics.

Within individual variables, there are both socio-demographic and personality characteristics (Chi & Hawk, 2016; Herek 2002; Lingiardi et al., 2016; Pacilli et al., 2011). One of the most studied correlates of negative attitudes against LGB people is

gender (Cohen, Hall, & Tuttle, 2009; Herek, 2002; 2004; Lingiardi et al., 2016; Parrott, Adams, & Zeichner, 2002; Santona & Tognasso, 2018). Regarding participants' gender, literature showed that men report more sexual prejudice than women. Moreover, studies reported that sexual prejudice is also related to gender of the target. Specifically, gay men are more likely to be subjected to negative attitudes, compared to lesbian women (Ahrold & Meston 2010; Breen & Karpinski, 2013; Cohen et al., 2009; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Louderbeck & Whitley, 1997; Mange & Lepastourel, 2013).

Also, age seems to be positively correlated to sexual prejudice (Baiocco et al., 2013; Steffens & Wagner, 2004). In particular, older people would have more sexual prejudice than younger people. Moreover, previous literature showed that people with lower educational level reported more negative attitudes against LGB people, than people with higher educational level (Chi & Hawk, 2016; Ohlander, Batalova, & Treas; 2005; Shackelfors & Besser, 2007).

Several studies indicated that religious involvement (Hichy et al., 2015; Jäckle & Wenzelburger, 2014; Piumatti, 2017) and political orientation (Haddock & Zanna, 1998; Walch et al., 2010; Whitley, 2009) are other two correlates, strongly related to sexual prejudice. Specifically, people with high levels of sexual prejudice are more likely to report greater religious involvement (Linneman, 2004; Reese et al., 2014; Štulhofer & Rimac, 2009) and more conservative rather than liberal and progressive political orientation (Haddock & Zanna, 1998; Whitley & Aegisdttir, 2000; Worthen et al., 2017).

A growing literature is also focusing on personality characteristics related to sexual stigma, such as social dominance orientation (Whitley, 1999; Whitley & Lee, 2000), right-wing authoritarianism (Cramer, Miller, Amacker, & Burks, 2013; Lingiardi et al., 2016; Pacilli et al., 2011; Wilkinson, 2004), and being closed to experience (Barron, Struckman-Johnson, Quevillon, & Banka, 2008; Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004; Hirai, Winkel, & Popan, 2014).

Social dominance orientation indicates people's propensity to consider their ingroup membership as superior over outgroup, perceived as having lower social status (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Studies found that people reporting high social dominance orientation are more likely to have high sexual prejudice (Whitley, 1999; Whitley & Aegisdttir, 2000; Whitley & Lee, 2000).

Individuals with high right-wing authoritarianism tend to adhere to traditional values and norms, to refer to established authority and to be aggressive against out-groups when authorities permit this (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levison, & Sanford, 1950). Literature indicated that people with high right-wing authoritarianism are more likely to have negative attitudes towards LGB people (Wilkinson, 2004).

Based on Big five model (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Perugini, 1993), openness to experience refers to the openness to novelties, different values and cultures and its central aspects are originality, curiosity, nonconformity, intellect, and wide cultural interests. Several studies found that people with low openness to experience are more likely to have high sexual prejudice (Miller, Wagner, & Hunt, 2012; Shackelford & Besser, 2007).

Based on "contact hypothesis" (Allport, 1954), an additional predictor of sexual prejudice is the lack of personal knowledge of LGB persons (Lytle, Dyar, Levy, & London, 2017; Smith, Axelton, & Saucier, 2009). A growing literature consolidated that people with lower or no personal contacts with LGB individuals are more likely to hold negative attitudes against them (Seger et al., 2017; Walch et al., 2010).

Masculinity and femininity: the violation of traditional gender roles

Another relevant factor implicated in the negative attitudes toward LGB people is the violation of traditional gender roles about masculinity and femininity (Barron et al., 2008; Cohen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 2007; Keiller, 2010; Kilianski, 2003; Parrott, 2009; Parrott et al., 2008; Sánchez and Vilain 2012; Taywaditep 2002). Gender roles indicate

people's adherence to a set of societal gender norms dictating what emotions, thoughts and behaviors can be considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for men and for women (Cohen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 2007, O'Neil, 1981).

According to the model of masculinity and femininity by Bem (1974; 1981), these constructs are conceptualized as two independent dimensions stemming from internalized standards of desirability about gender norms. Being a bifactor model, individuals can be characterized as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated as a function of their stereotypical masculine and feminine traits. Masculine people are characterized by high levels of masculine traits and low levels of feminine traits, whereas feminine individuals are characterized by opposite patterns of these two dimensions. The condition of androgyny is defined by high levels in both the dimensions, whereas undifferentiated people report low scores both in masculinity and femininity.

Alternatively, other theorists prefer to consider masculinity and femininity as two extreme poles of a single continuum (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). This bipolar vision implies that the more a person is considered masculine, the less he or she is considered feminine. Likewise, the more an individual shows stereotypical feminine traits, the less he or she is perceived as masculine.

The violation of traditional gender role might help to explain the greater sexual prejudice of men, compared to women and it could be a possible reason for the more negative attitudes toward gay men, rather than lesbians (Herek, 2000). Such a violation is based on the cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity, which produce different expectations for men and women. In other words, traditional gender norms expect people to assume roles and characteristics considered typical of their biological sex: men should be masculine and women should be feminine (Grossman & Anthony 2006; Martin & Ruble 2010; Zosuls, Miller, Ruble, Martin, & Fabes, 2011).

Previous studies found that people hold more negative attitudes toward LGB people not-adhering to traditional gender roles (Carr, 2007; Cohen et al., 2009; D'Augelli,

Grossman, & Starks, 2006; Glick et al., 2007; Rubio & Green, 2009; Skidmore, Linsenmeier, & Bailey, 2006; Steffens, Jonas, & Denger, 2015). These findings were verified both for gay and bisexual men showing more feminine characteristics and for lesbian and bisexual women showing more masculine characteristics. In addition, previous literature indicated that feminine men are often assumed to be gay, while gay men are more likely to be perceived as possessing characteristics traditionally associated with straight women (Cox, Devine, Bischmann, & Hyde; 2016; Lehavot & Lambert, 2007; Madon, 1997; Miller & Lewallen, 2015; Taylor, 1983). In the same way, masculine women are often assumed to be lesbian, whereas lesbians are more likely to be seen similar to straight men (Eliason, Donelan, & Randall, 1992; Geiger, Harwood, & Hummert, 2006).

These findings are the same both for heterosexual men and heterosexual women, indicating that they hold similar stereotypes about gay men and lesbians, (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009a; 2009b; Fasoli, Mazzurega, & Sulpizio, 2017; Hunt, Piccoli, Gonsalkorale, & Carnaghi, 2015; Lamar, & Kite, 1998; Salvati, Piumatti, Giacomantonio, & Baiocco, Under Review; Schope & Eliason, 2004). All these studies seem to suggest that heterosexual men and women still endorse the stereotypical idea that homosexuality is always associated with the violation of traditional gender role: all gay men are feminine, and all lesbians are masculine (Brambilla, Carnaghi, & Ravenna, 2011a, 2011b; Clarke & Arnold, 2017; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Whitley, 2009).

The gender inversion hypothesis (Kite & Deaux, 1987), seems to explain well the evidence that gay men and lesbians tend to be stereotyped congruently with the opposite gender. Moreover, it offers additional support for the bipolar model of gender (Deaux & Lewis, 1984), where masculinity and femininity are assumed to be in opposition. Based on the gender inversion hypothesis, gay men and lesbians are more likely to be perceived more similar to other-sex heterosexual individuals, than to same-sex heterosexual people.

However, the fact that past literature found strong evidence of gender differences about negative attitudes toward LGB people (both in actors and in the individuals subjected to attitudes) needs more explanations. Herek (2000, 2002) suggested that gender norms are more rigidly prescribed for men than women. In addition, Bauermeister et al. (2010) suggested that men would experience greater loss of social position if they express same-sex attraction, whereas women deviating from traditional female roles would be subjected to fewer social penalties.

Men would face stronger social pressure to demonstrate and defend their masculinity, by asserting heterosexuality and derogating homosexuality (Hunt, Fasoli, Carnaghi, & Cadinu, 2016). Thus, negative attitudes to gay men could constitute the attempt to reinforce the social status as a heterosexual male and to confirm the social repudiation of femininity (Kilianski, 2003). In other words, such attitudes would be a product of the development and the construction of a masculine identity. They might alleviate men's discomfort when violations of the male gender roles occur, because these negative attitudes would reinforce the distinction between male and female gender roles and would establish more precise boundaries, by defining a specific concept of heterosexual masculinity identity.

Several studies supported this explanation, founding that the importance of masculine norms to self-representation and the belief that masculinity is a source of self-esteem were related to sexual prejudice (Govorun, Fuegen, & Payne, 2006; Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny, 2009). Other studies (Fasoli et al., 2016; Hunt et al., 2016; Parrott et al., 2008; Theodore & Basow, 2008; Willer, Rogalin, Conlon, & Wojnowicz, 2013) showed that men who are more exposed to stress related to masculine gender role, reported more anger in situations inherent behaviors violating traditional male roles. Specifically, gay men showing stereotypical feminine characteristics are more likely than stereotypical masculine gay men to be targets of negative attitudes, because they violate two types of gender norms: the norm that men should like women and not other men

(gender norm regarding sexuality) and the norm that men should be masculine and not feminine (gender norm regarding personality traits). Because of homosexuality still has a stigmatized status, heterosexual men might experience anxiety at the thought of being mixed up with gay man, and they might externalize it in hostility against LGB people (Fasoli et al., 2016; Herek, 1986; 2000; Hunt et al., 2016).

Regarding female gender, all women are still in an inferior power position in modern society, where sexism is still very widespread (Glick & Fiske, 2001), thus women's possible violations of traditional gender roles could be considered less problematic than men. For this reason, women's identity might be less threatened by violations of traditional female roles and, consequently, they might be less likely to view homosexuality as a threat to their female identity. Sexism is a cultural phenomenon that reflects and maintains a hierarchy of status and power where masculinity is considered superior and more positive than femininity (Brown, 2010; Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Thus, in sexist societies, when women violate traditional gender roles, they would display characteristics associated with more highly-valued masculinity, while men violating traditional gender roles would show characteristics associated with less valued femininity. On one hand, this might help to explain the different pattern of results for men and women, regarding negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. On the other hand, literature showed that masculine lesbians are at greatest risk of victimizations because they would threat the traditional gender order and heterosexual men, in particular (Boonzaier & Zway, 2015).

Gay men and lesbians' negative attitudes: Traditional gender roles and internalized sexual stigma

Even sexual minorities, as well as heterosexual people, may hold negative attitudes toward homosexuality and other LGB individuals. Internalized sexual stigma refers to sexual minorities' internalization of negative societal ideology about homosexuality

(Lingiardi, Baiocco, & Nardelli, 2012). It includes self-referred negative feelings, attitudes, and representations of LGB people (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Herek, 2000; Mayfield, 2001; Szymanski & Henrichs-Beck, 2014). However, the literature about sexual minorities' attitudes toward other LGB individuals is very limited.

Previous studies reported that most of gay men are more likely to prefer stereotypical masculine partners (Sànchez & Vilain, 2012; Skidmore et al., 2006) and desire for masculine self-presentation. This has been explained by internalize sexual stigma and adherence to traditional gender ideology (Taywaditep, 2002). Specifically, gay men's anti-femininity could be a consequence of traditional gender ideology comprising sexism and homonegativity. Unfortunately, this theme in lesbian women seems to be still unexplored in literature. Herek (1986) suggested that gay men's negative attitude toward gender not conforming sexual minorities could be motivated by a need to secure the acceptance and esteem. They would satisfy such a need by aligning oneself with an esteemed reference group and affirming their sense of self by rejecting effeminacy as part of their identity (Bailey et al., 1997).

Eagly & Karau (2002), proposed the role congruity theory, according to which at the base of prejudice there is the perceived incongruity between characteristics of social groups members and the requirements of the social roles that they occupy. When an individual belonging to a stereotyped group shows an incongruent social role, this incongruity lowers the evaluation of this member as an actual or potential occupant of the role (Eagly, 2004; Heilman, 1983). Based on this theory, negative attitudes toward feminine gay men derived from the incongruity that people perceive between the female characteristics and the requirements of masculine gender roles. Conversely, negative attitudes toward masculine lesbians might be explained by the incongruity between masculine characteristics and the requirements of feminine gender roles.

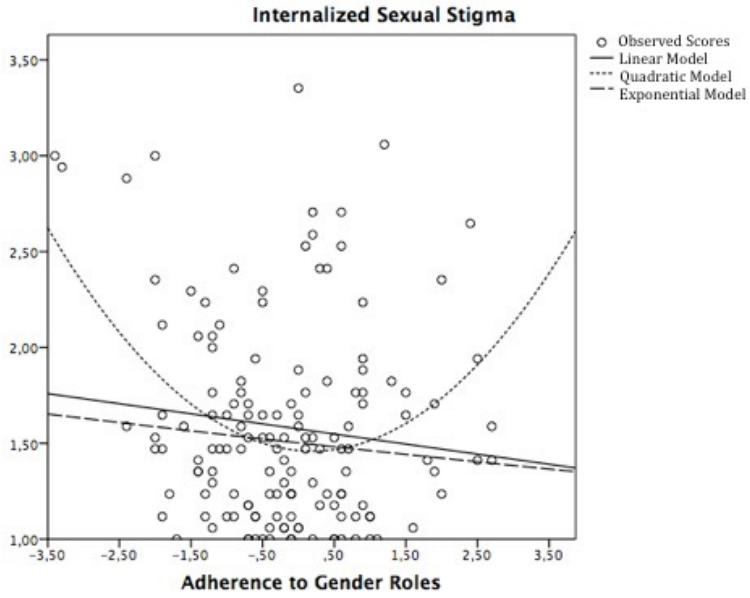
The role congruity theory seems to suggest that the incongruence of gender roles might be more relevant that just sexual orientation in predicting negative attitudes towards

LGB people (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gay men and lesbians might have negative attitudes toward feminine gay men and masculine lesbians because they may not want to be perceived respectively as less masculine and as less feminine than heterosexual men and women (Hunt et al., 2016). Gay men and lesbians, exactly like heterosexual men and women, might see feminine gay men and masculine lesbians as incongruent, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation and this could more easily lead to negative attitudes toward them (Cohen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 2007).

Several studies in the US with gay men underlined the importance of masculinity and worry about adherence to traditional masculine roles and the evidence that these two constructs were correlated to internalized sexual stigma (Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009; Szymanski & Carr, 2008). Thus, several authors have suggested that anti-femininity might reflect internalized negative feelings about being gay (Lingiardi et al., 2012; Sànchez & Vilain, 2012). However, previous studies found discordant results about this theme. Livingston & Boyd, (2010), reported no significant correlation between gay and lesbian people's masculinity/femininity and their internalized sexual stigma, whereas Warriner, Nagoshi, & Nagooshi (2013) found a positive correlation between gay men's self-perceived masculinity and internalized sexual stigma and no significant correlation in lesbians.

Salvati, Pistella, & Baiocco (2018) suggested that a quadratic relation between internalized sexual stigma and adherence to traditional gender roles might better explain this relation, rather than a linear relation (see Fig. 1). Specifically, they found that both self-perceived very masculine and very feminine LGB people were more likely to have higher internalized sexual stigma, than LGB people self-perceiving with a medium level of stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics, with no gender differences.

Figure 1. *From Salvati et al., (2018a). Scatterplot with graphic representations of Linear, Quadratic and Exponential Models. N = 145 (70 lesbians; 75 gay men).*



Notes. Higher (positive) scores in Adherence to Gender Roles indicate more adherence to masculine roles whereas lower (negative) scores indicate more adherence to feminine roles.

On one hand, LGB people not-conforming to traditional gender roles might be more likely to internalize negative feelings toward their sexual minority identity, because they are generally more victimized and discriminated than gender role conforming LGB people (D'Augelli et al., 2006; Friedman et al., 2011; Herek, 1998; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, Card, & Russel, 2010; Taywaditep, 2002). On the other hand, LGB people might feel more pressure to emphasize their stereotypical gender traits as a coping strategy to fit in, be accepted by others, and feel safe in their social environment (Boonzaier & Zway, 2015; Hunt et al., 2016) and, as a consequence, they could tend to accept and enact heteronormative practices by adhering to traditional gender roles and rejecting gender not conforming behaviors (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2009; Parrott, 2009).

Masculinity threat and homosexuality

Previous studies about the relation of masculinity threat with the themes regarding homosexuality are grown in the last decades (Bosson, Weaver, Caswell, & Burnaford, 2012; Glick et al., 2007; Hunt et al., 2016; O'Connor, Ford, & Banos, 2017; Reese et al., 2014; Stotzer & Shih, 2012; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). All of these may be included in the theoretical frame of the *Precarious Manhood Theory* by Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver (2008). It proposed that masculinity is defined in terms of a man's conformity to traditional male gender roles. This implies that masculinity is fluid, dynamic, tenuous and susceptible to loss, rather than a fixed, innate, and biologically determined quality (Levant, 2011). Thus, men can become more and more vigilant in defending themselves from masculinity threats, by learning several ways to reaffirming their masculinity in response to the threats (Bosson & Vandello, 2011). The possible reasons why manhood is more precarious than womanhood, were investigated both by evolutionary (Buss, 1998; Geary, 1998; Symons, 1995; Wilson & Daly, 1992) and social role theories (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 1999; Wood & Eagly, 2002), but they are beyond the purpose of this doctoral dissertation.

Previous studies found that men experience stress and anxiety when they violate gender norms and they try to alleviate such anxiety by several attempts to demonstrate and restore their masculinity, both to themselves and to others (Bosson, Prewitt-Freilino, & Taylor, 2005; Kalish & Kimmel, 2010; Pleck 1995). One of these possible attempts is represented by the negative evaluations, attitudes, feelings and behaviors against femininity and gay men (Glick et al., 2007; Tally & Bettencourt, 2008). A second possible attempt to demonstrate and restore masculinity is the distancing of self from what is considered the antithesis of masculinity, such as femininity and gay men (Bosson et al., 2011; Hunt et al., 2016). This is considered an avoidance attempt (i.e. physical distancing), rather than an approach attempt (i.e. direct aggression). However, some studies have also found contradictory results (Stotzer & Shih, 2012).

Specifically, Talley & Bettencourt (2008) investigated 58 heterosexual men's interpersonal reactions toward a fictitious gay male work partner, manipulating the masculinity threat and their work partner's sexual orientation. They found that participants exposed to the threat of their masculinity were more likely to act aggressive behaviors against the gay work partner, regardless of their prejudice score about gay men.

The work by Glick et al., (2007) examined the negative affect toward gay men scenarios, following a masculinity threat, in a sample of 53 heterosexual men. Instead of scenarios' sexual orientation, they manipulated the adherence to traditional masculine and feminine roles of the scenarios. Their study verified that masculinity threat increased negative affect toward feminine, but not masculine, gay man scenario.

Another work by Bosson et al., (2012), investigated the moderating role of asserting heterosexuality on the relation between masculinity threat and negative behaviors against gay men, in two studies with 82 and 55 heterosexual male participants respectively. Findings from their first study showed that in the masculinity threat condition, participants were more likely to report negative behaviors at a gay partner, but only when their heterosexual status was salient, through asserting heterosexuality. Results from their second study indicated that men with high sexual prejudice subjected to masculinity threat sat farther from a gay confederate, than men in no-threat condition, but only if they asserted their heterosexuality.

A subsequent work by Stotzer & Shih (2012) explored the effects of the manipulation of masculinity threat on the perception of masculinity of 60 heterosexual men with low or high sexual prejudice. They found that masculinity threat differentially affected men with high versus low sexual prejudice, but in a way that seems quite contradictory with previous findings. Specifically, the main effect of masculinity threat on participants' perception of their masculinity was not significant. Moreover, men with low sexual prejudice were more likely to react to masculinity threat by perceiving themselves as more masculine, but men with high sexual prejudice reacted to threat by

perceiving themselves as less masculine. In the no-threat condition instead, participants with high sexual prejudice were more likely to self-describe as more masculine, than participants with low sexual prejudice. Such results seem to suggest that masculinity threat might have different impacts on heterosexual men, based on their attitudes and that men with different levels of sexual prejudice might have different strategies to face masculinity threat (Stotzer & Shih, 2012).

Reese et al., (2014) found that masculinity threat reduced the effect of religious affiliation on negative attitudes toward gay men in a sample of 155 heterosexual men. However, in this study masculinity threat was not manipulated, but it consisted in a self-report measure where participants responded to three items asking how much they would feel their masculinity threatened if a gay man interacted with them.

A recent research by O'Connor et al., (2017) was conducted with two experimental studies with 166 and 221 heterosexual men respectively, founding that also anti-gay humor can be used to restore masculinity threat. These two experiments showed that men with high precarious manhood beliefs expressed greater amusement with anti-gay humor after experiencing a masculinity threat, but not in the no-threat condition, because they believed anti-gay humor would have reaffirm their masculinity.

As we can see, all these previous researches included only heterosexual men participants. To our knowledge, the first study regarding masculinity threat with gay men participants was conducted by Hunt et al., (2016). Based on the widespread and persisting stereotype that gay men are less masculine than heterosexual men, this would lead gay men to be vulnerable to masculinity threat too. Thus, they would react to threat by distancing themselves from stereotypical feminine gay men and by presenting themselves as more masculine. The study included 58 Italian gay men subjected to either a masculinity threat or a masculinity affirmation and they read scenarios describing a stereotypical masculine or feminine gay man. Researchers hypothesized that gay men in the condition of masculinity threat would report less liking for, less comfort with, and less

desire to interact with feminine gay man, while they would report more similarity to masculine gay man.

However, their hypotheses were only partially supported. In fact, although hypotheses regarding similarity and interacting were confirmed, however no differences were found between the two experimental conditions on likability scores and on participants' rating of comfortability. Such results provided support for the suggestion that gay men still experience pressure to conform to stereotypical masculine role and to distance themselves from femininity when their masculinity is threatened. A possible and speculative explanation about the not-significant results about likability and comfortability was that they were driven more by an attempt to conform to masculine role by not wanting to be associated with feminine gay men (avoidance attempt), rather than by negative attitudes against them (approach attempt).

The current research questions

The general aim of the present doctoral dissertation was to contribute to the literature about negative attitudes toward LGB people, by deepening some aspects that have received little depth so far. As showed in the previous paragraphs about literature review, most of the studies focused on negative attitudes toward LGB individuals in heterosexual samples (Bosson et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 2007; Stotzer et al., 2012), whereas only few studies investigated such attitudes within the sexual minorities (Hunt et al., 2016; Rubio & Green, 2009). In addition, the latter ones included only gay men participants, whereas the literature about lesbians as subjects (rather than objects) of negative attitude, is practically absent.

Such a scarcity of studies has as a consequence the absence of research investigating if and how the LGB people's adherence and violation of traditional gender roles would influence their negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian people who themselves are not conform to traditional gender roles. Considering that such roles are so interrelated to

internalized sexual stigma (Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009; Salvati et al., 2018a; Sànchez & Vilain, 2012; Szymanski & Carr, 2008), and that stigma was found a strong predictor of several psychological negative outcome for LGB people (Costa, Pereira, & Leal, 2013; Herek et al., 2009; Lingiardi et al., 2012; Livingston & Boyd, 2010), this doctoral dissertation also investigated its negative effects on the attitudes both as main effect and in interaction with traditional gender roles.

Finally, most literature investigated heterosexual participants' negative attitudes to LGB people and all the previous research about masculinity threat related to negative attitudes about gay men, used only explicit or self-report measure about attitudes and behaviors. Thus, such a dissertation also wanted to explore the possible effect of stigma, adherence to traditional gender roles and masculinity threat on the implicit attitudes, measured with Implicit Association Test methodology (Greenwald et al., 1998).

The first study of this dissertation will investigate the role of participants' sexual orientation and perceived masculinity on negative attitudes toward two gay man scenarios. Specifically, we will compare explicit negative affect toward stereotypical feminine and masculine gay man scenarios in an Italian sample of heterosexual and gay men. This research will extend previous literature, exploring gay men's attitudes to feminine and masculine gay scenarios, also focusing on the impact of their internalized sexual stigma.

The main purpose of the second study of this doctoral thesis will be to extend the investigation on negative attitudes both in lesbian participants and toward stereotypical masculine and feminine lesbian scenarios. This research will examine the differences between Italian gay men and lesbian participants in their negative attitudes toward either gay or lesbian scenarios, described with either stereotypical masculine or feminine characteristics.

The third study will focus exclusively on Italian lesbian participants. This is the first study to explore negative attitude toward gay and lesbian scenarios, by investigating

lesbian participants' internalized sexual stigma and their adherence or violation of traditional feminine role. The scenarios will be the same of the second study and represent either a gay man or a lesbian woman conforming to either masculine or feminine traditional gender roles.

The last study of this doctoral dissertation will describe the effects of heterosexual and gay men's manipulation of masculinity threat, their sexual stigma and their adherence to traditional masculinity on the implicit attitudes toward feminine and masculine gay men. First of all, the description of the several construction phases of this instrument and the two pilot studies will be illustrated. Afterwards, the description of the main study will follow.

Study 1: Attitude Toward Gay Men in an Italian Sample: Masculinity and Sexual Orientation Make a Difference

This research was published and can be found here:

Salvati, M., Ioverno, S., Giacomantonio, M., & Baiocco, R. (2016). Attitude toward gay men in an Italian sample: Masculinity and sexual orientation make a difference. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *13*(2), 109–118. doi: 10.1007/s13178-016-0218-0

The present study and Hypotheses

This study investigated if sexual orientation and the perception of one's own masculinity affect men's negative attitudes to feminine and masculine gay men. Such a research was inspired by the work by Glick et al., (2007), which showed that when heterosexual men were threaten their masculinity, they increased negative emotions to feminine, but not masculine gay men scenarios. Hunt et al., (2016) also found that gay men subjected to masculinity threat showed less interest in interacting with feminine gay men, although they did not report less likeability or comfortability toward them, compared to gay men not subjected to masculinity threat. They justified such results suggesting that the distance from femininity are not driven by negative attitudes toward feminine gay men, but by an attempt to conform to masculine roles through not wanting to be associated with them.

This research presents two aspects of novelty. On one hand, we compared both heterosexual and gay men's negative attitude to feminine and masculine gay men scenarios. On the other hand, we focused on the role of internalized sexual stigma, as well as on participants' perception of their own stereotypical masculine characteristics.

Thus, the first research hypothesis was that both heterosexual and gay men would report more negative attitudes toward feminine gay man scenario than masculine gay man scenario (hypothesis 1). Such hypothesis would support the evidence that sexual prejudice

is a cultural phenomenon that affect gay men too. Thus, we hypothesized that gay male participants reporting more internalized sexual stigma, were more likely to have negative affect toward feminine gay man scenario than gay men with lower internalized sexual stigma (hypothesis 2).

The last hypothesis regards the perception of one's own stereotypical masculine personality traits and its influence on attitudes toward feminine and masculine gay man scenarios. Based on previous work by Glick et al., (2007), we hypothesized that heterosexual declaring fewer masculine traits would report more negative attitudes toward feminine gay man scenario, than heterosexual men with more masculine traits (hypothesis 3a). Instead, consistent with Hunt et al., (2016), we hypothesized that gay male participants' perceived stereotypical masculine traits did not affect their negative emotions toward feminine gay man scenario (hypothesis 3b).

Method

Procedure

We recruited participants of our study both from several universities of Central and Southern Italy and from some organizations outside of the university contexts. Specifically, almost of all gay participants were recruited from LGB organizations, whereas heterosexual participants were recruited from sport organization (40%) or universities (60%).

We explained that the aim of the study was to explore the relation between personality traits and attitudes toward homosexuality, in order to prevent participants from knowing the real purposes of the research. All participants were administered a questionnaire packet face to face and they had to respond individually. The set of questionnaires was the same for all participants, with the exception of the measure of internalized sexual stigma that was administered only to gay men.

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. No compensation was provided for the participation to the study, that was totally voluntary. We encouraged all participants to answer as truthfully as possible because anonymity was guaranteed. The time required to complete the questionnaire was about 30-40 minutes and all questionnaires were completed. Before data collection started, the protocol was approved by the Ethics Commission of the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Sapienza University, Rome. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Participants

Participants were 88 men self-declaring gay ($n = 44$) or heterosexual ($n = 44$), based on the Kinsey scale (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). The inclusion criteria were as follows: a) being male; b) being 18 years old at least; c) having Italian nationality; d) having completed all the set of questionnaires; e) having a score of 5 or 6 on the Kinsey scale (*almost completely* or *completely* homosexual, respectively) for gay participants, and a score of 0 or 1 (*completely* or *almost completely* heterosexual, respectively) for heterosexual participants.

Full descriptive statistics are reported in Table 1. Heterosexual participants were on average younger ($M = 22.3$, $SD = 2.7$), than gay participants ($M = 24.4$, $SD = 3.4$). Moreover, heterosexual men reported a higher percentage of students and a lower percentage of workers, than gay men. Instead, no difference emerged about educational level. Thus, we retain that the two groups were highly comparable.

Table 1: *Descriptive statistics for Gay and Heterosexual participants.*

		Gay Men (*N* = 44)		Heterosexual (*N* = 44)			
		Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Age	Mean	24.4	3.4	22.5	2.7	7.79	.006
		N	*%*	*N*	*%*	X^2	*p*
Educational Level						4.18	n.s.
	University Degree	15	34	7	16		
	High School Degree	27	61	33	75		
	Other	2	5	4	9		
		N	*%*	*N*	*%*	X^2	*p*
Employment Status						5.97	.05
	Worker	13	30	4	9		
	Student	27	61	38	86		
	Unemployed	2	5	2	5		

Measures

Manipulation of the Masculinity of the Scenarios. In order to manipulate the masculinity of the scenarios, we used a similar procedure to Glick et al., (2007) and Hunt et al., (2016). Two fictitious self-descriptions about a young gay man were presented to participants. We explained them that the man in the scenario had participated in a previous study, where participants had been asked to describe their physical features, personality traits, studies, interests and hobbies, and so on. Half the participants read the scenario of a stereotypical feminine gay man (GF), whereas the other half the participants read the scenario of a stereotypical masculine gay man (GM).

The GF scenario described a creative, imaginative man who thought outside the box, loving playing dolls with his sister as a child. He claims to study to be a fashion stylist and liked Lady Gaga, disco, shopping, and gaudy dresses. Instead, the GM scenario showed a man self-describing as logical and rational and as a foot-ball lover. He claims that his hobbies were gym, action movies, and playing videogames with friends. Both the scenarios can be read in Appendix 1.

Participants' Masculinity. We employed the Bem Sex Role Inventorty (BSRI), to assess participants' perception of their own masculine personality traits (Bem, 1974). Thirty randomly ordered adjectives form the scale: 10 represent stereotypical feminine traits (i.e. tender, warm), 10 represent stereotypical masculine traits (strong, assertive), and 10 represent gender neutral traits (sincere, conventional). Participants had to rate how well each adjective described their own personality on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 corresponded to *not in the least* and 7 to *through and through*. The masculinity perception score was calculated by averaging the scores of the 10 masculine and 10 feminine adjectives. Obviously, the score of the stereotypical feminine traits were reversed before. We chose to administer the whole scale to make it more difficult the real aim of the measurement. In this study, the internal consistency of the scale was 0.77.

Internalized Sexual Stigma. The Measure of Internalized Sexual Stigma-Gay Men (MISS-G, Lingiardi et al., 2012) was used to assess gay men's negative attitude toward several aspects of homosexuality in themselves. Participants were asked to answer to items on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 corresponded to *I agree* and 5 to *I disagree*. Higher scores were index of greater internalized sexual stigma. The MISS-G consists in three factors that are: a) identity, b) social discomfort, and c) sexuality. For this study we employed the score of the identity subscale, because we hypothesized that it would be the most associated with negative feelings about one's identity. Such a dimension assesses the constant tendency to endorsement of sexual stigma in one's values and identity and to negative attitudes to one's self homosexuality. An example of item is: "*If it were possible, I'd do anything to change my sexual orientation*". In this study, its Cronbach's alpha was 0.70.

Negative Affect. We assessed participants' negative affect about GF or GM scenarios, using a scale with 17 emotions (Glick et al., 2007). Participants had to indicate how much the scenario evoked each emotion in them, through a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 corresponded to *not in the least* and 7 to *through and through*. Although the scale was organized as three subscales (discomfort, fear, and hostility), we preferred to use an overall negative affect score from the average of responses to all items. The discomfort subscale consisted of seven emotions such as *comfort*, *calm* and *secure*, related to discomfort. Four items related to fear formed the second subscale, such as *intimidation*, *nervous* and *fearful*. Finally, the third subscale consisted of six items related to hostility, such as *frustration*, *anger*, and *superiority*. All the score about the emotions of discomfort subscale were reversed before. In this study, Cronbach' alpha was 0.87.

Masculinity Manipulation Check. In order to check that participants had perceived the GF scenario as feminine and the GM scenario as masculine, we administered them a 7-item scale with adjectives referring to stereotypically masculine

(e.g., strong, dominant) or feminine (e.g, warm, tender) characteristics. Participants had to indicate the extent to which they thought each adjective described the scenario, by responding on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *totally*. The score of perceived masculinity of the scenario was calculated by averaging the scores for the all items, after having reversed the scores for the feminine adjectives. Conbach's alpha was 0.68.

Data analysis

Firstly, an analysis for the manipulation check was conducted. Specifically, a 2 (sexual orientation: gay, heterosexual) x 2 (scenario: GF, GM) between-subjects ANOVA on perception of masculinity of the scenarios, was conducted to check that the GF scenario was perceived less masculine, than GM scenario for both gay and heterosexual participants.

Secondly, we tested the first hypothesis that GF scenario would evoke more negative attitudes than GM scenario, both in heterosexual and gay participants. To verify it, we conducted a second 2 (sexual orientation: gay, heterosexual) x 2 (scenario: GF, GM) between-subjects ANOVA on the total negative affect score.

Subsequently, we verified the second hypothesis that gay men not-accepting their homosexuality would be more likely to report negative affect toward GF scenario. Hypothesis 2 was tested with a moderated multiple regression analysis with the product-variable approach, by exploring the main effects of the scenarios (GF vs. GM), the MISS-G dimension of identity, and the interaction between them.

Finally, we tested the last hypotheses regarding the role of participants' perceptions of their own masculine traits on their attitudes toward the scenarios. Hypothesis 3a (less masculine heterosexual men would report more negative affect toward GF scenario, than more masculine heterosexual men) and hypothesis 3b (gay men's masculinity would not affect their negative attitudes toward the GF scenario)

were tested with another moderated regression analysis. We explored the main effects of the scenarios (GF vs. GM), participants' sexual orientation (heterosexual vs. gay), participants' masculinity, and the interactions among them.

Results

Masculinity Manipulation Check

As expected, the 2 (sexual orientation: gay, heterosexual) x 2 (scenario: GF, GM) between-subjects ANOVA on perception of masculinity of the scenarios showed only the significant main effect of the scenario, $F(1, 84) = 112.83$, $p < .001$. Specifically, GF scenario was perceived as less masculine ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.68$), than GM scenario ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 0.60$). Neither main effect of participants' sexual orientation, $F(1, 84) = 0.41$, $p = .52$, nor the interaction between the factors were significant, $F(1, 84) = 0.24$, $p = .62$, indicating that no differences between gay and heterosexual participants were found on the score of the masculinity perception about the scenarios.

Sexual Orientation and Negative Affect toward GF Scenario

The first hypothesis that GF scenario would evoke more negative affect than GM scenario, both in heterosexual and gay participants was confirmed. The 2 (sexual orientation: gay, heterosexual) x 2 (scenario: GF, GM) between-subjects ANOVA on the total negative affect score, showed the expected main effect of the scenario, $F(1, 84) = 11.41$, $p < .001$. It indicated that the GF scenario elicited more negative affect ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.77$) than GM scenario ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 0.56$). Neither main effect of participants' sexual orientation, $F(1, 84) = 0.11$, $p = .74$ nor the interaction between the factors were significant, $F(1, 84) = 0.01$, $p = .94$

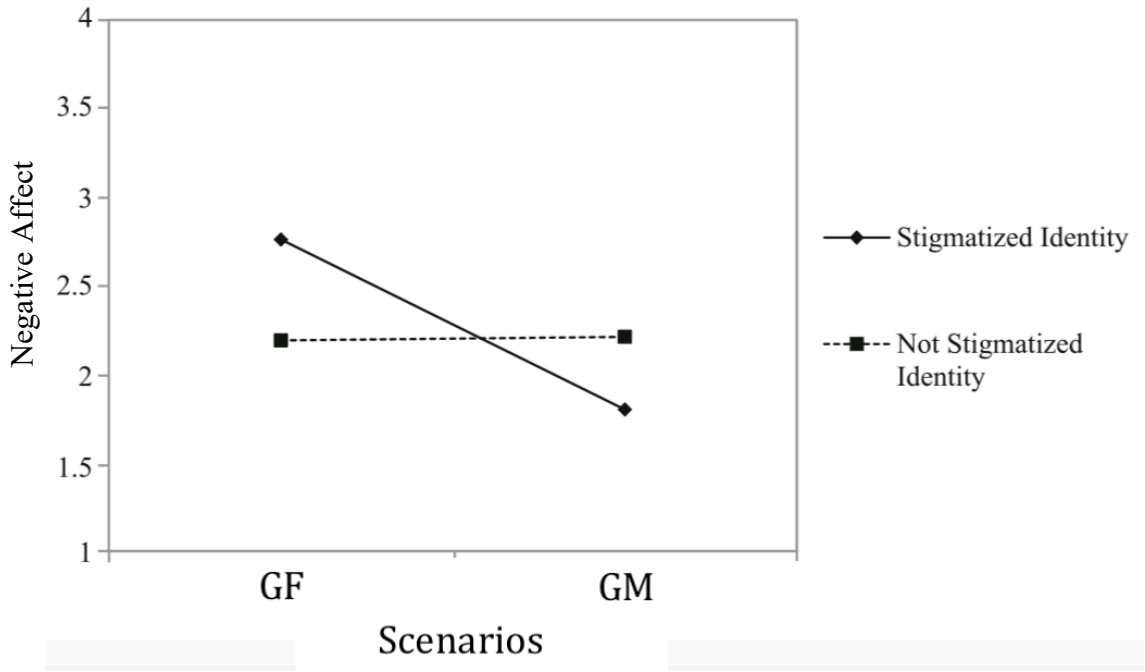
revealing that gay and heterosexual participants had similarly negative affect toward GF scenario, than GM scenario.

Internalized Sexual Stigma and Negative Affect toward the GF Scenario

The moderated multiple regression analysis confirmed the second hypothesis that gay participants with higher internalized sexual stigma were more likely to report more negative attitudes toward the GF scenario, than gay participants with lower internalized sexual stigma. The model explained a significant percentage of variance, $R^2 = .44$, $F(3, 40) = 3.35$, $p = .03$ .Consistent with the previous analysis, we found that GF scenario elicited more negative affect than the GM scenario, $\beta = 0.24$, $SE = .11$, $p = .03$, whereas no main effect of the MISS-G identity dimension on the dependent variable was found, $\beta = 0.05$, $SE = .15$, $p = .72$, .

However, analyses revealed the expected two-way interaction between scenario and MISS-G identity dimension, $R^2 = .10$, $F(1, 40) = 4.77$, $\beta = 0.24$, $SE = .15$, $p = .03$. This significant interaction was deepened by simple slopes analysis revealing that, as predicted, the GF scenario only evoked more negative affect in gay participants with higher internalized stigmatized identity, $\beta = 0.48$, $SE = .15$, $p < .01$, but not among gay men with lower internalized sexual identity, $\beta = -0.01$, $SE = .16$, $p = .99$. These findings are illustrated in Fig. 2.

Figure 2*: Negative affect as a function of scenarios and MISS-G identity.*



Note. GF = Feminine gay scenario; GM = Masculine gay scenario

Masculinity and Negative Affect toward the GF Scenario

We conducted a moderated regression analysis to verify our last hypotheses. Results are reported in Table 2. Consistent with previous results, analyses showed a significant main effect of the scenario, $\beta = 0.25$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$, indicating that the GF scenario evoked more negative affect than the GM scenario. Also a two-way interaction between sexual orientation and masculinity was significant, $\beta = 0.20$, $SE = .08$, $p = .02$, but the significant three-way interaction, $R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 80) = 3.69$, $\beta = 0.17$, $SE = .08$, $p = .05$, qualified better this the two-way interaction.

Simple interaction analysis confirmed that when participants read the GM scenario, the interaction between sexual orientation and masculinity was not significant, $\beta = 0.05$, $F(1, 80) = 0.27$, $p = .60$. Instead, when they read the GF scenario, sexual orientation and masculinity interacted to affect the negative emotions toward the scenario, $\beta = 0.36$, $F(1, 80) = 6.93$, $p = .01$. As predicted, heterosexual men with less masculine traits were more

likely to report negative affect toward the GF scenario, than heterosexual men with more masculine traits, $t = 2.49$, $SE = .18$, $p < .01$.

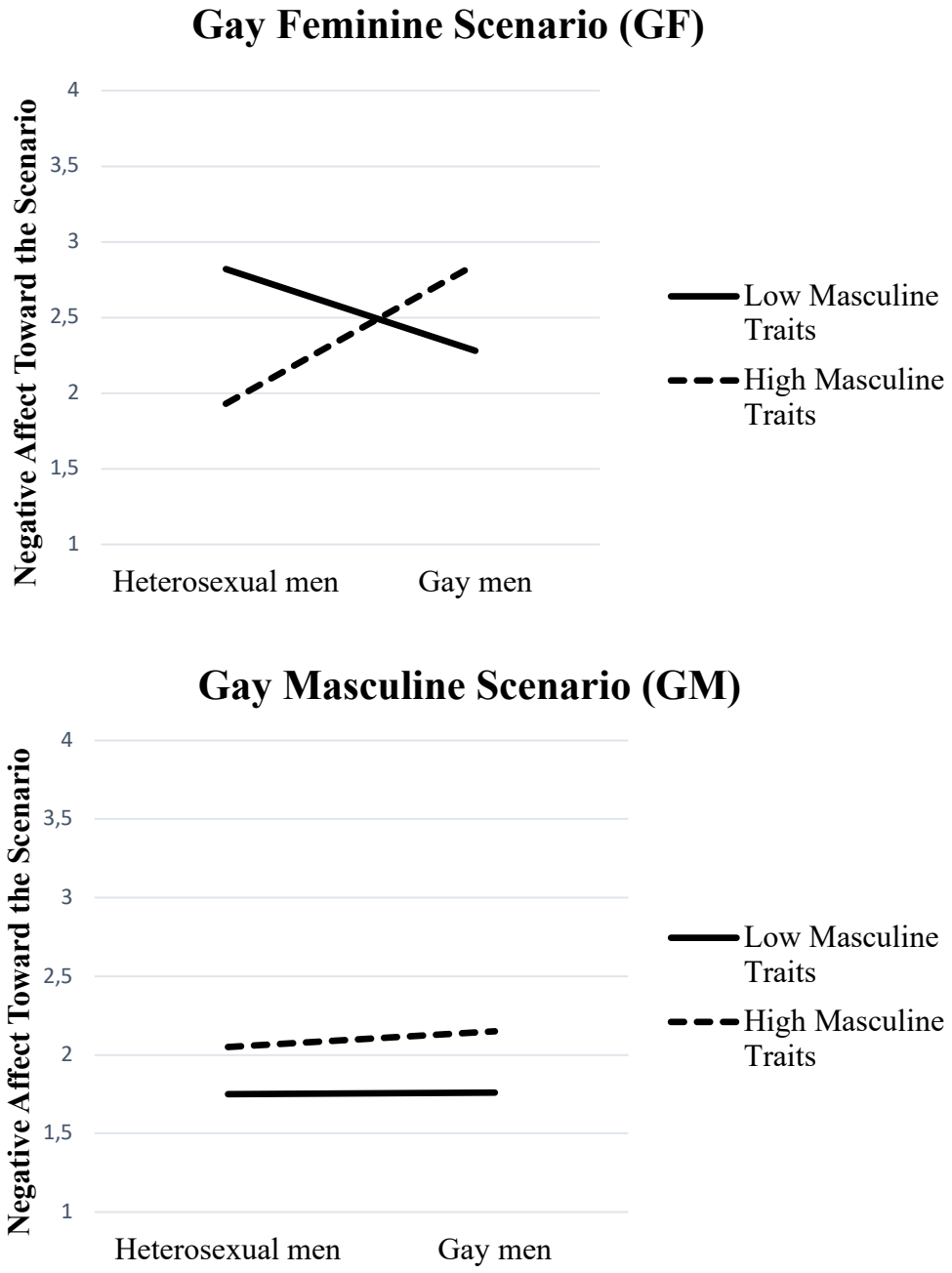
No difference was found for gay men participants regarding their masculinity, although the findings showed a reversed pattern that tends to significance, $t = 1.39$, $SE = .20$, $p = .16$. Specifically, it seems that gay men with more masculine traits are more likely to report negative affect toward the GF scenario, than gay men with less masculine traits. These findings are illustrated by the predicted mean values shown in Fig. 3.

Table 2: *Negative affect as a function of sexual orientation, masculinity and scenario. Results of moderated multiple regression analysis*

Predictors	**Negative Affect Toward the Scenario**
	β
Sexual Orientation (SO)	.08
Masculinity (M)	.04
Scenario (S)	.25**
SO × M	.20*
SO × S	.02
S × M	-.11
SO × M× S	.17*

Notes: $R^2 = .23$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Sexual Orientation: -1 = Heterosexual; 1= Gay men. Scenario: -1 = GM; 1 = GF.

Figure 3: *Negative affect as a function of scenarios, sexual orientation and masculinity.*



Discussion

Findings of the current first study confirmed our hypotheses and are in line with previous research. Italy is a country where gay men have to continue to face several forms of discriminations and marginalization. Moreover, men have to experience more pressure to conform to heteronormative gender roles, compared with lesbians (Baiocco et al., 2012; Bauermeister et al., 2010; Herek 2000; 2002; Hunt et al., 2016). Individuals who seem to not conform to traditional gender norms, such as feminine gay men, are at greatest risk to be victimized than masculine gay men (Friedman et al., 2011; Grossman et al., 2005; Toomey et al., 2010; Martin & Ruble, 2010).

We found that feminine gay men elicited more negative attitude than masculine gay men not only in heterosexual men, but also in gay men, confirming our first hypothesis (Sànchez & Vilain, 2012; Hunt et al, 2016). We did not found difference in negative attitude toward feminine gay men between gay and heterosexual participants. This result might be a further confirmation of how much feminine gay men have to face a condition of marginalization among marginalized (Taywaditep, 2002). Stigma related to the violation of traditional gender roles is an expression of the sexual prejudice, according to which not-heterosexual and masculine behaviors and identities are negative and inferior (Herek, 2007). Such a stigma enforces the social gender dichotomy and contributes to maintain a social hierarchy of power, based on traditional gender norms.

Such result seems to support the idea that anti-femininity in gay men could be motivated by a need to align oneself with a reference group (Herek 2013) through the internalization of the societal traditional gender ideology, considering masculinity superior to femininity. Gay men might desire to avoid being stereotyped and assume traditional masculine roles in order to distance themselves from the stereotypical idea that gay men are all feminine (Salvati et al., 2018a; Szymanski & Carr, 2008). Such attempt might also be a psychological consequence of past discrimination and marginalization

during childhood and adolescence (Harry, 1983; Martin & Ruble, 2010). During these phases, both heterosexual and gay individuals learn to associate gender non-conformity with discomfort and disapproval and to monitor and regulate their behavior in order to display a masculine self-presentation. There's also evidence that gay men wish to be more masculine than they feel they are (Sánchez, Westefeld, Liu, & Vilain, 2010).

The second hypothesis of the study was also confirmed. Findings showed that gay men reporting higher internalized sexual identity, are more likely to report negative attitudes toward feminine gay men, compared with gay men with lower internalized sexual identity. This suggests that the lack of acceptance sexual identity in gay men have a relevant impact on their negative attitudes toward feminine gay men (Salvati et al., 2018a; Szymaski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008; Szymanski & Carr, 2008). Sànchez et al., (2010) also hypothesized that gay men extremely concerning with their masculinity are compensating for feelings of inferiority associated to their sexual orientation.

The last hypotheses regarding the impact of participants' perception of their own masculine traits on negative attitudes toward the feminine gay man was confirmed too. We hypothesized that heterosexual men with less masculine traits would have reported more negative affect toward feminine gay man scenario, than heterosexual men with more masculine traits. Instead, we hypothesized that gay male participants' perceived masculinity did not affect their negative attitudes toward feminine gay man scenario. Findings indicated that both hypotheses were confirmed.

Generally, negative attitudes toward feminine gay men might contribute to reinforce the group boundaries between male and female gender roles (Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny, 2009; Govorun et al., 2006) and this is in line with the first function of sexual prejudice by Herek (2013), named "*social expressive*" or "*social adjustment*" function. Based on such function, sexual prejudice would help people to satisfy affiliative needs, by reinforcing their bonds with reference groups. More specifically, less masculine heterosexual men might also use negative attitudes toward feminine gay men to affirm

and defend their heterosexual orientation and masculinity, by the rejection of femininity (Herek, 2013). This would be in line with the third "*defensive*" function of sexual prejudice, according to which it might be a strategy to cope the perceived threat eliciting anxiety and other negative feelings.

Regarding gay participants, we found that their perception of having masculine traits did not significantly impact on their negative attitudes toward the feminine gay man scenario. However, the findings showed a marginally significant trend showing that more masculine gay men seem to be more likely to have negative attitudes toward the feminine gay man scenario, rather than less masculine gay participants. Several speculative explanations might be given to understand such trend. Such an example, masculinity could be a salient aspect of self-concept that some gay men might emphasize in their appearance (Kilianski, 2003) to respond to the societal pressure about traditional gender norms.

Another explanation could be that masculine gay men might have experienced shame of their possible previous feminine behaviors, leading them to derogate feminine behaviors in themselves and in other gay men (Russel et al., 2010; Toomey et al., 2010). This might become an enduring cognitive tendency to associate chronic discomfort with feminine characteristics (Taywaditep, 2002). Finally, gay men who never showed feminine behaviors might be less likely to have experienced discriminations and they could be more prone to internalize traditional gender norms and derogate feminine behaviors. However, these speculations based on a weak trend should be more deeply examined in future research.

Limitations and future directions

This study is not without limitations. Firstly, all measures were self-reported and social desirability bias might have influenced the results, given the many sensitive topics related to masculinity and homonegativity. Further research might use different

methodologies to compensate for this bias, such as behavioral or implicit measures, and include a measure for social desirability. Secondly, in the manipulation of the masculinity of the scenarios, a description of a non-stereotypical gay man scenario was not included as a control. Further studies should include such control in order to have more solid findings.

A third limitation of the study was the limited generalizability of the findings. It depends on several factors and mainly on the use of a convenience sample. Such an example, all participants were Italian, and it is not possible to know whether the results of this study can be generalized to people from other countries. In addition, all participants were male, and the age range was limited to 18-30 years, thus findings might not be generalized to women and to the adolescents and older men. Because of the processes underlying negative attitudes for men and women and toward gay men and lesbians might be different (Wellman & McCoy, 2014), further research should include lesbian women both as participants of the studies and as target subjected to attitudes, in order to obtain a broader understanding of sexual prejudice. The second study of this doctoral dissertation aims to contribute to fill this gap.

Study 2: Attitude of Italian gay men and Italian lesbian women towards gay and lesbian gender-typed scenarios

This research was published and can be found here:

Salvati, M., Pistella, J., Ioverno, S., Giacomantonio, M., & Baiocco, R. (2018). Attitude of Italian gay men and Italian lesbian women towards gay and lesbian gender-typed scenarios. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 15*(3), 312–328. doi: 10.1007/s13178-017-0296-7

The present study and hypotheses

This second study is in line with the first one (Salvati, Ioverno, Giacomantonio, & Baiocco, 2016) and it was inspired by previous work by Glick et al., (2007) and Cohen et al., (2009). This research extends the results that such previous studies found about negative attitudes toward masculine and feminine gay and lesbian scenarios. Specifically, all of these three previous studies investigated negative attitudes toward a different number of scenarios, but they were submitted or to heterosexual participants only (Glick et al., 2007; Cohen et al., 2009), or to male participants only (Salvati et al., 2016). In particular, Glick et al (2007) explored negative emotions toward two feminine or masculine gay man scenarios, in a sample of only male and heterosexual participants. Cohen et al., (2009) investigated negative attitudes toward four gender-typed scenarios (one feminine gay man, one masculine gay man, one feminine lesbian woman and one masculine lesbian woman), but in a sample of only heterosexual male and female participants. Salvati et al., (2016), extended these previous findings, exploring negative affect elicited by the same two scenarios used by Glick et al., (2007), but in a sample that included both heterosexual and gay men.

Thus, the main purpose of this second study of this doctoral thesis is to extend the investigation on negative attitudes both in lesbian participants and toward stereotypical masculine and feminine lesbian scenarios. This research will examine the differences

between Italian gay men and lesbian participants in their negative affect toward the same four scenarios used by Cohen et al., (2009). Scientific literature always focused less on lesbians' attitudes, rather than gay men's ones, even if they are part of LGBT community, as well gay men. Thus, the inclusion of lesbian participants in the investigation about negative attitudes toward stereotypical masculine and feminine gay and lesbian scenarios is the real innovative feature of this study. It might contribute to obtain a wider comprehension of discrimination phenomena within the LGBT community that constitutes a reference environment for all sexual minority people.

The hypotheses are in line with previous literature and with the role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly 2004) and specifically we expected that both in gay and lesbian participants:

Hypothesis 1: The feminine gay man scenario would elicit more negative affect than the masculine gay man scenario (Glick et al., 2007; Salvati et al., 2016);

Hypothesis 2: The masculine lesbian woman scenario would elicit more negative emotive reactions than the feminine lesbian woman scenario (Cohen et al., 2009);

Hypothesis 3: The feminine gay man scenario would elicit more negative emotions even than the masculine lesbian woman scenario (Herek, 2000; Kerns & Fine, 1994; Kite & Whitley, 1996).

Method

Procedure

We recruited participants from Italian LGBT organizations outside of the university context. Such associations constitute protect spaces where sexual minority people meet and stay together both to discuss about LGBT themes and civil rights and to have fun. We contacted several associations asking them to advertise our research through a mailing

list of their members. However, we also used a snowball sampling in order to also include participants not-registered or attending any associations.

In order to hide the real purposes of our study, we explained to the participants that the aim of the research regarded the examination of the relationship between personality traits and attitude toward homosexuality. Participation to the study requested the administration of some questionnaires face to face, it was voluntary, and no compensation was provided for it. Moreover, we explained that anonymity was guaranteed, thus we urged the participants to respond as truthfully as possible. The participants took about 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaires. The order of the presentation of the four scenarios was randomized within questionnaires, based on four several orders.

Before we commenced the data collection, the protocol was approved by the Ethics Commission of the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, at Sapienza University of Rome. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Participants

The original sample consisted of 155 gay men and lesbians. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) Italian nationality; (b) gay or lesbian sexual orientation; (c) 18-40 years old; (d) having completed the whole set of questionnaires without misunderstandings. Based on such criteria, 14 participants were excluded because their sexual orientation was not gay or lesbian. Specifically, 6 participants self-declared bisexual, 3 participants self-declared pansexual and 2 participants self-declared heterosexual. The presence of these not gay and lesbian participants was probably due to some misunderstandings or they ignored the instruction during the snowball sampling procedure. In addition, other 5 participants were excluded because they did not complete

the whole set of questionnaires or completed it with misunderstandings. The final sample consisted of 138 participants (gay men: n = 71, 51.4%; lesbians: n = 67, 48.6), ranged from 18 to 40 years old (gay men: M = 26.14, SD = 5.05; lesbians: M = 28.28, SD = 5.87). Full descriptive statistics are reported in Table 3.

Measures

Identifying Information and Sexual Orientation. We collected data about participants' demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, residency, education, employment, economic status and sexual orientation, through an identifying form. Participants were asked to report their sexual orientation by responding to an item with five alternative responses: 1 = *lesbian*, 2 = *gay*, 3 = *bisexual*, 4 = *heterosexual*, 5 = *other*. In the case of the "other" alternative, participants were invited to specify their sexual orientation.

Manipulation of the Scenarios. All the participants were administered all the four scenarios used in the study by Cohen et al., (2009). Previously, they were translated and adapted to the Italian context. They differed for the person's gender and his or her adherence to the stereotypical gender roles, but in all the scenarios, the person described himself or herself as gay or lesbian.

The four scenarios included: 1) a masculine gay man (GM), describing himself with characteristics and interests stereotypically associated to men; 2) a feminine gay man (GF), describing himself with characteristics and interests traditionally associated to women; 3) a masculine lesbian woman (LM), describing herself with characteristics and interests typically associated to men. 4) a feminine lesbian woman (LF), describing herself with characteristics and interests stereotypically associated to women.

Table 3. *Descriptive (means, standard deviations, percentages, and sexual identity differences) of the sample's characteristics*

	Participants				
	Gay Participants $N = 71$ (51.4%)	Lesbian Participants $N = 67$ (49.6%)	Total Participants $N = 138$ (100%)	F/χ^2	p
Age	26.14 (5.05)	28.28 (5.87)	27.18 (5.55)	5.30	0.02
Questionnaire Order					
Order 1	18 (25.4%)	19 (28.4%)	37 (26.8%)		
Order 2	15 (21.0%)	16 (23.8%)	31 (22.5%)	0.55	0.91
Order 3	18 (25.4%)	14 (20.9%)	32 (23.2%)		
Order 4	20 (28.2%)	18 (26.9%)	38 (27.5%)		
Education					
High School Diploma	38 (53.5%)	30 (44.8%)	68 (49.3%)		
Bachelor Degree	14 (19.7%)	15 (22.4%)	29 (21.0%)	1.08	0.58
At least Master Degree	19 (26.8%)	22 (32.8%)	41 (29.7%)		
Employment					
Student	42 (59.1%)	28 (41.8%)	70 (50.7%)		
Worker	21 (29.6%)	31 (46.3%)	52 (37.7%)	4.61	0.10
Unemployed/Other	8 (11.3%)	8 (11.9%)	16 (11.6%)		
Residency					
North/Central Italy	63 (88.7%)	55 (82.1%)	118 (85.5%)	1.23	0.27
South Italy	8 (11.3%)	12 (17.9%)	20 (14.5%)		
Economic Status					
Low/Medium	57 (80.3%)	52 (77.6%)	109 (79.0%)	0.15	0.70
High	14 (19.7%)	15 (22.4%)	29 (21.0%)		

Note. Standard deviations or percentages are presented in parentheses.

We preferred brief description of the scenarios instead of other kind of stimuli, such as photo or video for convenience reasons, although they could have been more evocative. However, such a choice was also due to the fact that brief textual descriptions were already used in previous studies, showing that they work very well (Cohen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 2007; Salvati et al., 2016). In addition, this allowed us to avoid spending a lot of resources to create ex novo new and more complex stimuli such as photo or video. All the four scenarios could be read in the Appendix 2.

Negative affect toward the Scenarios. This measure was the same used and described in the first study of this doctoral dissertation (Salvati et al., 2006). It consisted in 17 emotions organized on three subscales (Glick et al., 2007). Participants indicated how much each scenario elicited the 17 emotions, using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *not in the least*, to 7 = *through and through*. Like in the first study, we preferred to use the overall negative affect score for each of the four scenarios, from the average of responses to all the 17 items. Cronbach's $alpha_{GM} = 0.82$; Cronbach's $alpha_{GF} = 0.86$; Cronbach's $alpha_{LM} = 0.75$; Cronbach's $alpha_{LF} = 0.80$.

Manipulation Check about the Scenarios' Gender Roles. In order to verify that participants had perceived the four scenarios as feminine of masculine, we asked them to answer to two items: "*In your opinion, how masculine is the young man (or woman) described?*" and "*In your opinion, how feminine is the young man (or woman) described?*". Participants used a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *not at all*, to 7 = *totally*. The perceived masculinity of the scenario was the average of the score for the two items, after reversing the score of the feminine item. Thus, higher scores indicated that the scenario was perceived as very masculine, whereas low scores indicated that the scenario was perceived as very feminine. To estimate an appropriate reliability coefficient, we used the Spearmann-Brown statistic, because it is more appropriate than cronbach's alpha for a two-item scale (Eisinga, Grotenhuis, & Pelzer, 2013). For the four scenarios, the coefficients were the following: $r_{GM} = 0.67$, $r_{GF} = 0.63$, $r_{LM} = 0.47$, $r_{LF} =$

0.66. Obviously, they are quite low, mainly that one regarding masculine lesbian woman, because of only two item scores. Furthermore, according to Bem (1974; 1981), masculinity and femininity constitute two independent dimension of gender and not two extremes of a single continuum. This might be an additional reason why these two items for the manipulation check are not correlated so strongly.

Data Analysis

We conducted analyses with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0). Firstly, we ran bivariate correlations to assess the relationships among negative emotions elicited by the four scenarios and the other variables considered in the study. Afterwards, we checked the effectiveness of the manipulation using a mixed ANOVA 2 (participants' sexual orientation [SO]: gay vs. lesbian) x 2 (gender of the scenario [GS]: male vs. female) x 2 (adherence of the scenario to gender roles [AdS], with the last two factors within subjects. Finally, we tested our hypotheses, by analyzing the differences in negative affect between gay and lesbian participants toward the four scenarios, using another mixed ANOVA 2 (SO: gay vs. lesbian) x 2 (GS: male vs. female) x 2 (AdS: masculine vs. feminine), with last two factors within subjects.

We also checked possible effects of variables such as education and order presentation of the scenarios with a mixed ANCOVA 2 (SO: gay vs. lesbian) x 2 (GS: male vs. female) x 2 (AdS: masculine vs. feminine) x 4 (order of presentation of the scenario [OP]: order 1 vs. order 2 vs. order 3 vs. order 4), with education as covariate. However, because of the lack of the effects of education and order of presentation of the scenarios, because of complexity of the analysis and because results did not differ by those ones obtained by the main and simpler ANOVA, we preferred to report only these results for major clarity reasons.

Results

Correlations

Correlations among the variable investigated in the study are shown in Table 4. The findings showed that all the measure of negative affect toward the four scenarios were positively related with a low-to-medium effect size, ranging between 0.34 (negative affect toward the GM scenario and negative affect toward the GF scenario) and 0.56 (negative affect toward the GF scenario and negative affect toward the LF scenario). Moreover, all correlations between masculinity perception scores of the four scenarios were related too, with a low-to-medium effect size, ranging between 0.31 (masculinity perception score of the GM scenario and masculinity perception score of the LF scenario) and -0.62 (masculinity perception score of the GM scenario and masculinity perception score of the LF scenario).

Finally, results indicated that participants with more negative affect toward the GF scenario were more likely to report lower scores of masculinity perception of the GF scenario, $r = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$. Similarly, more negative affect toward the GF scenario were related to a higher score of masculinity perception of the LM scenario, $r = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$. As the literature pointed out, rigid boundaries regarding gender roles are associated to more negative affect toward feminine gay men and masculine lesbian women.

Table 4. *Pearson's r between Masculinity perceptions of targets and Negative Emotions provoked by scenarios (N = 138)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	1.00											
2. Sexual Identity	-.18*	1.00										
3. Economic Status	.07	.12	1.00									
4. Education	.21*	-.08	.12	1.00								
5. Negative Emotions towards GM	.10	.05	-.01	.04	1.00							
6. Negative Emotions towards GF	.01	-.13	-.02	.03	.34**	1.00						
7. Negative Emotions towards LM	.04	.05	.05	-.02	.52**	.47**	1.00					
8. Negative Emotions towards LF	.04	-.14	-.05	.13	.46**	.56**	.45*	1.00				
9. Masculinity Perception of GM	-.18*	-.15	-.07	.01	-.08	.01	-.17*	-.08	1.00			
10. Masculinity Perception of GF	.21*	.32**	.15	-.18*	.04	-.18*	.10	-.07	-.55**	1.00		
11. Masculinity Perception of LM	-.02	-.32**	-.02	.15	.01	.25**	.06	.15	.31**	-.61**	1.00	
12. Masculinity Perception of LF	.21*	.12	-.05	-.01	.09	-.07	.07	.07	-.62**	.50**	-.36**	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. **GM**: *Masculine Gay Man scenario*; **GF**: *Feminine Gay Man scenario*; **LM**: *Masculine Lesbian Woman scenario*; **LF**: *Feminine Lesbian Woman scenario*

Manipulation Check

In order to test whether participants perceived the GM scenario as more masculine than the GF scenario and the LM scenario as more masculine than the LF scenario, we conducted a mixed ANOVA 2 (participants' sexual orientation [SO]: gay vs. lesbian) x 2 (gender of the scenario [GS]: male vs. female) x 2 (adherence of the scenario to gender roles [AdS], with the last two factors within subjects. The results showed a significant main effect of AdS on masculinity score, $F(1, 136) = 450.52$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.77$, indicating that the GM and LM scenarios were perceived as more masculine ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.06$) than the GF and LF targets ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 0.07$). The effect of GS on masculinity score was significant too, $F(1, 136) = 52.36$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.278$, showing that the two male scenarios were perceived as more masculine ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.04$) than the two female scenarios ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.04$).

Furthermore, neither the effect of the three-way interaction SO x GS x AdS, $F(1, 136) = 0.506$, $p = 0.48$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.004$, nor the effect of the two-way interaction GS x AdS, $F(1, 136) = 0.714$, $p = 0.40$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.005$, was significant. Instead, the two-way interactions SO x GS and SO x AdS were significant, but they were not reported because they were not relevant for the purpose of this research.

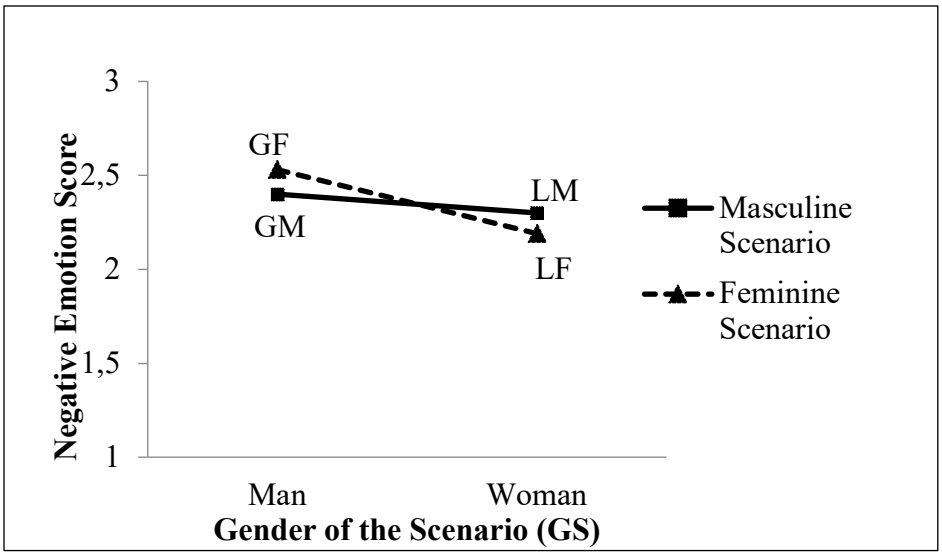
Differences in Negative Emotions toward the four Scenarios

In order to test our three hypotheses, we conducted mixed ANOVA 2 (SO: gay vs. lesbian) x 2 (GS: male vs. female) x 2 (AdS: masculine vs. feminine), with last two factors within subjects**,** on the negative emotions scores. The findings confirmed the expected two-way interaction GS x AdS, $F(1, 136) = 9.209$, $p = 0.003$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.063$. A simple effect analysis indicated that in both gay and lesbian participants: (1) the GF scenario elicited more negative affect than the GM scenario, confirming hypothesis 1, $F(1, 136) = 3.942$, $p = 0.049$; (2) the LM scenario elicited more negative affect than the LF scenario, confirming hypothesis 2, $F(1, 136) = 4.681$, $p = 0.032$; (3) the GF scenario elicited more

negative affect even than the LM scenario, confirming hypothesis 3, $F(1.136) = 42.062$, $p < 0.001$. Instead, the mean difference between the GM and LM scenario was not significant, $F(1, 136) = 3.355$, $p = 0.069$, although a marginally significant tendency reporting more negative affect toward the GM than the LM scenario. These findings are shown in Fig. 4.

Finally, the three-way interaction SO x GS x AdS, resulted not significant, $F(1, 136) = 0.057$, $p = 0.811$, $\eta_p^2 < 0.001$, suggesting that there were no differences between gay and lesbian participants in their negative emotions toward the four specific scenarios. The two-way interaction SO x GS was not significant too, $F(1, 136) = 0.098$, $p = 0.75$, whereas the two-way interaction SO x AdS was significant, $F(1, 136) = 7.190$, $p < 0.001$. But this last interaction is not relevant for the aims of this study. Means and standard deviation by sexual orientation on negative affect toward the four scenarios are reported in Table 5.

Figure 4. *Negative Emotions toward the four Scenarios*



Note. **GM**: *Masculine Gay Man scenario*; **GF**: *Feminine Gay Man scenario*; **LM**: *Masculine Lesbian Woman scenario*; **LF**: *Feminine Lesbian Woman scenario*

Table 5. *Means and Standard Deviations by Sexual Orientation on Negative Emotions toward the Scenarios*

		M	*SD*
Participants' Sexual Orientation	Scenarios		
Gay Men	GM	2.43	0.76
	GF	2.43	0.75
	LM	2.33	0.67
	LF	2.19	0.55
Lesbian Women	GM	2.37	0.50
	GF	2.62	0.67
	LM	2.27	0.52
	LF	2.27	0.45
Total	GM	2.40	0.64
	GF	2.53	0.71
	LM	2.30	0.60
	LF	2.19	0.55

Note. **GM**: *Masculine Gay Man scenario*; **GF**: *Feminine Gay Man scenario*; **LM**: *Masculine Lesbian Woman scenario*; **LF**: *Feminine Lesbian Woman scenario*

Discussion

The purpose of this second research was to investigate differences in the negative attitude toward gay men and lesbians conforming or not to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles, in a sample of both gay and lesbian participants. Such a study contributed to deepen and extend previous research that explored differences in negative attitudes toward such scenario in samples with only heterosexual (Cohen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 2007) or heterosexual and gay men participants (Salvati et al., 2016). Findings showed that all the expected three hypotheses of our study were confirmed.

Specifically, first hypothesis consisted in our expectation that both gay and lesbian participants would have more negative attitudes toward the feminine gay man scenario (GF), than the masculine gay man scenario (GM). Such result is in line with the role congruity theory (Eagly, 2004; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Specifically, GF scenario describe himself as incongruent, due to his feminine characteristics, moving away from the masculine gender roles. Gay men participants perceiving such incongruity might have more negative attitude toward the GF scenario also because they might be afraid to be labelled as incongruent, just for the fact of being gay (Hunt et al., 2015; Sànchez & Vilain, 2012). Lesbian participants, as well gay participants, reported more negative affect toward the GF than GM scenario and also such absence of differences between gay and lesbian participants in their negative attitude toward GF scenario is coherent with the role congruity theory (Eagly, 2004; Eagly & Karau, 2002). In fact, it argues that everybody perceive incongruity, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

Findings confirmed our second hypothesis too. In particular, we expected that both gay and lesbian participants would have more negative attitudes toward the masculine lesbian woman scenario (LM), often named "butch lesbian woman", rather than the feminine lesbian woman scenario (LF) (Geiger et al., 2006). Even this finding is in line with the role congruity theory (Eagly, 2004; Eagly & Karau, 2002), because masculine lesbian women, as well feminine gay men, are perceived as incongruent between their masculine and feminine characteristics. Moreover, such result is coherent with the previous literature showing that both heterosexual and sexual minority people are more likely to report negative attitudes lesbian women behaving in a stereotypical masculine way (Carr, 2007). Furthermore, it is in line with the datum that both male and female heterosexual people prefer the LF scenario, more than the LM scenario (Cohen et al., 2009).

Finally, our results confirmed the third hypothesis too, showing that the GF scenario provoked more negative affect than LM scenario, with no differences between gay and

lesbian participants. This seems to indicate that adhering to the feminine role, by showing an incongruity with the masculine role, might lead to more negative consequences, than adhering to the masculine role, by showing an incongruity with the female role. One explanation of this result might be the fact that attitudes toward gay men are more hostile than those ones toward lesbian women (Kite & Whitley, 1996; Lingiardi et al., 2012). Italy, as western society, is still sexist in many aspects (Glick & Fiske, 2001), thus women' possible violations of stereotypical gender roles could be considered less serious than men. Moreover, other research found that gender norms are more rigidly prescribed for men than women (Herek, 2000; 2002). Finally, as indicated by Bauermeinster et al., (2010), men have greater loss in their social position if they express same-sex attraction, compared to women. Instead, women might have greater opportunities to expresso same-sex attraction and are less subjected to social penalties when they violate traditional feminine roles.

Limitations and future directions

This second study has several limitations. Firstly, all measures were self-reported, and we did not include a measure of social desirability. Such a measure should have been included, due to many variables related to sensitive topics, such as negative affect. Secondly, sample size of this study is not very large, but such an aspect is due to the difficulty to recruit gay and lesbian participants, that represent a particular sample that is a minority, compared to heterosexual people. Related to the theme about sampling, we have to mention another limitation, regarding the limited generalizability of our findings, due to our Italian convenience sample. In addition, participants' age ranged from 18 to 40 years old, thus our findings might not be generalized to adolescents or older individuals.

Another limitation consisted in the fact that two non-stereotypical scenarios were not included as controls. The great number of scenarios to present to each participant has

oriented our decision, thus we preferred to use four scenarios instead of six. Most importantly, in this second research we did not include other several and relevant variables, such as internalized sexual stigma and participants' perception of their own adherence to traditional gender roles.

However, this second research just wanted to take a first look at negative affect toward both gay and lesbian scenarios, conforming or not to traditional gender roles, by comparing such negative emotions in a sample of both gay and lesbian participants. Nevertheless, because of in the first study of this dissertation (Salvati et al., 2016), we have already investigated the moderating role of gay participants' internalized sexual stigma and their adherence to stereotypical gender roles, we decided to explore the role of the same two moderators in a sample of a lesbian participants in the next third study.

Study 3: Lesbians' negative affect toward sexual minority people with stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics

This research was published and can be found here:

Salvati, M., Pistella, J., Giacomantonio, M., & Baiocco, R. (2018). Lesbians' negative affect toward sexual minority people with stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics. *International Journal of Sexual Health.* Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/19317611.2018.1472705

The present study and hypotheses

The current third research wants to extend the findings of the previous two studies of this doctoral dissertation (Salvati et al., 2016; Salvati, Pistella, Ioverno, Giacomantonio, & Baiocco, 2018). Because we did not include lesbian participants in the first study, whereas in the second study they were included but without investigating the role of their internalized sexual stigma and their adherence to traditional gender roles on negative attitudes toward the gay and lesbian scenarios, the present study wants to fill this gap. In addition, to our knowledge, this this the first study to explore lesbians' negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian scenarios, by investigating variables such as internalized sexual stigma and lesbian participants' adherence to traditional gender roles.

Several researchers have argued that masculinity is more related to the characteristics of competence and agency, whereas femininity is more associated with the dimensions of warmth and communion (Abele, 2003; Chalabaev, Sarrazin, Fontayne, Boichè, & Clèment-Guillotin, 2013; Suitner & Maas, 2008). Moreover, because of the sexism that reflects and maintains a hierarchy of status, according to which masculinity is considered superior and more positive than femininity (Glick & Fiske, 1996), we supposed that the characteristics of competence might be considered as more positive and desirable, than characteristics related to warmth.

Previous findings might be also read to the light of this. In fact, gay men are perceived less competent and warmer than lesbians, who instead are perceived more competent and less warm (Bauermeister et al., 2010; Brambilla et al., 2011b; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Furthermore, lesbians with more masculine/agentic characteristics might be seen as having more positive characteristics for their perceived similarity with heterosexual men (Eliason et al., 2001). Conversely, gay men might be seen as having more negative and undesirable characteristics, such as passivity and submission, leading them to be perceived more similar to heterosexual women, and this might contribute to elicit more negative attitudes toward them (Cohen et al., 2009; Kite & Whitley, 1996; Lingiardi et al., 2012; Salvati et al., 2018b). In other words, in a sexist point of view, women who violate traditional feminine roles, show characteristics, traits and behaviors that are more related to highly-valued masculinity. Instead, men who violate traditional masculine role, display characteristics that are more related to less-valued femininity.

Regarding lesbians, a lot of them have a past that has long been interwoven with the feminist movement (De Oliveira, Pena, & Nogueira, 2011; Ellis & Peel, 2011, Poirot, 2009), and such an aspect helped us to formulate the hypotheses of this study. Specifically, we thought that lesbians might reject the traditional feminine role, even more strongly than heterosexual women. In addition, lesbians might also feel negative affect and revulsion toward feminine gay men, because they might be seen as having the same stereotypical feminine characteristics that lesbians have always rejected.

Moreover, mainly lesbians with more masculine characteristics of competence, independence, and strength, might consider lesbians with stereotypical feminine characteristics more negatively. Such an aspect might represent a desire to move away from traditional feminine roles. Finally, previous literature showed that traditional gender roles are strongly related to internalized sexual stigma, especially for women participants, although the results are not uniform (Black, Oles, & Moore, 1998; Salvati et al., 2018a; Sandfort, Melendez, & Diaz, 2007; Szymanski & Henrichs-Beck, 2014).

Thus, based on such previous findings and considerations, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: The feminine gay man scenario (GF) would elicit negative affect more than the masculine gay man scenario (GM) and than the masculine and feminine lesbian scenarios (LM and LF respectively);

Hypothesis 2: Lesbian participants less adhering to traditional feminine role would feel more negative affect toward the GF and LF scenarios, compared with lesbians more adhering to stereotypical feminine role;

Hypothesis 3: Lesbian participants with stronger internalized sexual stigma would fell more negative affect toward the GF and LF scenarios, than lesbian participants with weaker internalized sexual stigma;

Hypothesis 4: Internalized sexual stigma would moderate the relationship between participant's adherence to feminine role and their negative affect toward the GF and LF scenarios. Specifically, based on our assumption that gender non-conformity would have greater weight than internalized sexual stigma, we expected that lesbians adhering less to feminine role could have more negative affect toward the GF and LF scenarios, independently of their levels of internalized sexual stigma. Instead, we expected that lesbians who adhered to feminine role would have more negative affect toward the GF and LF, only when they reported high levels of internalized sexual stigma, because they might consider having feminine characteristics less negatively.

Method

Procedure

As in previous studies of this doctoral dissertation, we recruited participants from Italian LGBT organizations outside of the university context, whose purposes are to contrast gender and sexual discriminations and promote civil rights. We contacted these organizations and proposed them to ask for their members' availability to participate in our research. However, snowball sampling was also employed in order to reach lesbians who did not habitually frequent any LGBT association too. The all set of questionnaires consisted in pencil and paper questionnaires. All participants read all four different scenarios, and their order within the questionnaires was randomized. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was guaranteed. Moreover, no compensation was given for the participation to the study. Written informed consent was obtained before proceeding with the administration of the questionnaires.

Participants were not told the real research objectives, but we told them that the purpose of our study was to explore the relation between some personality characteristics and general attitude toward homosexuality. Participation took 20-30 minutes to complete all the set of questionnaires and at the end, the real aims of the research were revealed, and each participant was debriefed. The research occurred in a lab room at the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Sapienza University, Rome, where lesbian participants were left alone after the brief description of the study by the researcher.

Before data collection started, the protocol was approved by the Ethics Commission of the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Sapienza University, Rome. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Participants

The original sample included 78 female participants. The inclusion criteria were as follows: a) having Italian nationality; b) being lesbian; and c) having completed the set of questionnaires without errors. Based on such criteria, 6 participants were excluded because they did not self-declare as lesbian. Specifically, 2 participants self-declared heterosexual, 2 bisexual, 1 pansexual and 1 demisexual. In addition, a further one lesbian woman was excluded because she did not complete all the questionnaires. Thus, the final sample consisted of 71 lesbians, with age ranged between 18 and 46 years old, (M = 28.75, SD = 6.65), that showed a normal distribution.

Measures

Identifying Information and sexual identity. Firstly, we administered an identification form to each participant, that requested data about their demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, residency, socioeconomic status and sexual identity. We asked them to report their sexual identity using an item with four alternative responses: 1 = *lesbian*, 2 = *bisexual*, 3 = *heterosexual*, 4 = *other*. When participants responded "other", we invited them to specify their sexual identity. All the descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. *Descriptive of the sample's characteristics (N = 71)*

	Frequencies	Percentages
Education Level		
Middle School Diploma	2	2.8%
High School Diploma	30	42.3%
Bachelor degree	15	21.1%
Master degree	22	31.0%
Postgraduate Level	2	2.8%
Socio-Economic Status		
Very Low	0	0.0%
Low	20	28.2%
Average	36	50.7%
High	12	16.9%
Very High	3	4.2%
Religious Affiliation		
Atheist/Agnostic	46	64.7%
Catholic	21	29.6%
Other Religion	4	5.6%

Note. Descriptive were coded as follows: *Education Level*: 1= Middle School Diploma; 2= High School Diploma; 3 = Bachelor Degree; 4 = Master Degree; 5 = Postgraduate Level; Socio-Economic Status: Very Low = 1; Low = 2; Average = 3; High = 4; Very High = 5; *Religious Affiliation*: Atheist/Agnostic = 1; Catholic = 2; Other Religion = 3.

Self-Perceived Femininity. As in the previous two studies of this doctoral dissertation, we used the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), to measure lesbian participants' perceptions of their own femininity role. The instruments asked participants to rate how well each of 30 adjectives (10 stereotypical masculine, 10 stereotypical feminine and 10 gender neutral) described their own personality with a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to "*never or almost never true*" and 7 to "*always or almost always true*".

However, unlike the previous two studies (Salvati et al., 2016; Salvati et al., 2018b) where we used both masculine and feminine items to calculate the total score, in the current research we preferred to calculate the single score of self-perceived femininity, by averaging only the responses to the 10 feminine items. In fact, the BSRI was initially created to measure two independent dimensions of masculinity and femininity. As usual, we administered all the 30 items to make it more difficult for participants to detect the real aim of the scale. Masculinity score was also calculated, even if it was not employed in the main analysis of this study. Cronbach's alpha was 0.84 for femininity score and 0.79 for masculinity score

Measure of Internalized Sexual Stigma-Lesbian Version. We employed the Measure of Internalized Sexual Stigma-Lesbian Version (MISS-L, Lingiardi et al., 2012), to assess negative attitudes of lesbian participants toward their homosexuality. An example item was "*If it were possible, I'd do anything to change my sexual orientation*". Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "*I agree*" to 5 "*I disagree*", and the higher scores corresponded greater internalized sexual stigma. Although, the MISS-L included three subscales, for the purpose of this study, we preferred to use the general total score. In this research, Cronbach's alpha was 0.91.

Manipulation of the Scenarios. Each participant was shown all four scenarios used in the second study of this doctoral dissertation (Salvati et al., 2018b), that were translated and adapted from the scenarios employed in the research by Cohen e al., (2009).

Each scenario described a gay or a lesbian person who explicitly self-described as gay or lesbian and who either does or does not conform to traditional gender roles. Thus, the four scenarios differed by gender and adherence to gender roles, and they were the following: 1) a gay man self-describing with stereotypically masculine characteristics and interests (GM); 2); a gay man self-describing with stereotypically feminine characteristics and interests (GF); 3) a lesbian woman self-describing with stereotypically masculine characteristics and interests (LM); and 4) a lesbian woman self-describing with stereotypically feminine characteristics (LF). All four scenarios can be found in the Appendix 2.

Negative Affect toward the Scenarios. Negative affect toward each of the four scenarios was measured using the same scale used in the previous two studies of this doctoral thesis (Salvati et al., 2016; Salvati et al., 2018b), and by Glick et al., (2007). Participants were asked to rate how much each scenario aroused each emotion in them, with a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to "*not in the least"* and 7 to "*through and through*". Like in previous studies, an overall negative affect score of the 17 items was calculated for each of the four scenarios. The four Cronbach's alpha are the following: Cronbach's $alpha_{GM}$ = .75; Cronbach's $alpha_{GF}$ = .85; Cronbach's $alpha_{LM}$ = .81; Cronbach's $alpha_{LF}$ = .80.

Perception of Masculinity and Femininity of the Scenarios. In order to check our manipulation, we asked participants to evaluate the extent to which each person described in the scenarios adhered to either stereotypical feminine or masculine roles. We employed two items that asked: (1) "*In your opinion, how masculine is the young man (or woman) described?*" and (2) "*In your opinion, how feminine is the young man (or woman) described?"*. Participants responded with a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *not at all*, to 7 = *totally*. Like the Bem Sex Role Inventory, the two single items were used as two independent dimensions. To support this, Person correlations showing that the two items were not strongly correlated: r_{GM} = -.34, r_{GF} = -.57, r_{LM} = -.43, r_{LF} = -.51.

Data Analysis

All the analyses were conducted using SPSS v. 25 and its macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2012). We performed bivariate correlations to assess the relations among the negative affect toward the four scenarios and the other variables of the study. Before testing our hypotheses, we checked the manipulation effectiveness by running two repeated measures ANCOVA 2 (Gender of the Scenario [Gen]: Gay Man vs. Lesbian Woman) x 2 (Masculinity/Femininity of the Scenario [MF]: Masculine vs. Feminine), on lesbian participants' perceptions of masculinity and femininity of the scenarios. Age was entered as covariate in the analysis. Next, a repeated measures ANOVA with the four scenarios as the within-subjects factor was conducted on negative emotions to test the first hypothesis: the feminine gay scenario (GF) would elicit more negative emotions than the other three ones. Finally, we conducted moderated regression analyses to test the other three hypotheses: internalized sexual stigma and self-perceived femininity would be predictor of negative emotions toward the GF and LF scenarios, and internalized sexual stigma would be a moderator of the relation between self-perceived femininity and negative affect toward the GF and LF scenarios.

Results

Correlations

Correlations among age, internalized sexual stigma, self-perceived femininity and masculinity, and negative emotions toward the four scenarios are reported in Table 7. The results showed no significant relations between age or internalized sexual stigma toward the four scenarios. The findings, instead, indicated a negative association with a medium effect size between self-perceived femininity and negative emotions toward the GF scenario, $r = -.48$, $p < .01$, and a negative relation with a medium-low effect size between self-perceived femininity and negative emotions toward the LF scenario, $r = -.30$, $p < .05$.

Such a result contributes to support our thought that self-perceived femininity has a stronger relation than internalized sexual stigma with negative emotions toward the scenarios. Indeed, no correlation between internalized sexual stigma and negative affect toward the scenario resulted significant. Furthermore, findings also indicated a positive association with a low effect size, between self-perceived masculinity and negative emotions toward the GF scenario, $r = .25$, $p < .05$.

These results corroborated the hypothesis that less feminine and more masculine lesbian participants are more likely to feel negative emotions toward the two feminine GF and LF scenarios, rather than the two masculine GM and LM scenarios. At last, the findings also showed some positive associations with a medium effect size among the negative emotions toward the four scenarios themselves, with a range from .53 to .55. However, we do not discuss such relations, because they are not relevant for the purpose of the current study.

Table 7. *Pearson's r between Age, Internalized Sexual Stigma, Self-perceived Femininity and Negative Affect toward the Four Scenarios (N = 71)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Internalized Sexual Stigma	-.20	1	–	–	–	–	–
3. Self-Perceived Femininity	.01	.13	1	–	–	–	–
4. Negative Affect for the GM	.05	.05	.10	1	–	–	–
5. Negative Affect for the GF	-.03	-.20	-.47**	.19	1	–	–
6. Negative Affect for the LM	.15	.07	-.03	.56**	.23	1	–
7. Negative Affect for the LF	-.02	-.13	-.25*	.52**	.55**	.53**	1

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. GM: *Gay Man Adhering Masculine Role*; GF: *Gay Man Adhering Feminine Role*; LM: *Lesbian Woman Adhering Masculine Role*; LF: *Lesbian Woman Adhering Feminine Role*

Manipulation Check

We conducted two repeated measures ANCOVA 2 (Gender of the Scenario [Gen]: Gay Man vs. Lesbian Woman) x 2 (Masculinity/Femininity of the Scenario [MF]: Masculine vs. Feminine) with both within-subjects factors, on lesbians' perceptions of masculinity femininity of the four scenarios, to check that manipulation was effective. Participants' age was added as covariate. The results can be seen in Table 8.

The results showed a significant main effect of MF both on the perception of masculinity of the four scenarios, $F(1, 69) = 41.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .38$, and on their femininity, $F(1, 69) = 32.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .32$. These findings indicated that our manipulation was effective. In particular, lesbian participants perceived the GM and LM scenarios as more masculine and less feminine that GF and LF scenarios, which were perceived as more feminine and less masculine. In fact, as expected the non-significant interaction Gen x MF, indicated no mean differences within the levels of the same factor. In other words, GM and LM scenarios were perceived as equally masculine, whereas GF and LF were perceived as equally feminine.

Mean Differences in Negative Affect toward the Four Scenarios

In order to verify our first hypothesis, we conducted a repeated measures ANOVA, with the four scenarios as the within-subjects, on negative emotions toward them. Our first hypothesis consisted in the prediction that the GF scenario would elicit more negative affect than the other three scenarios. Findings can be found in Table 8. The results showed the expected significant main effect of the four scenarios, $F(3, 68) = 8.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .112$. Post hoc analyses confirmed our expectations, revealing that the GF scenario elicited higher negative emotions, than the other three ones. Furthermore, the results indicated no significant differences between LF, LM, and GM scenarios. The findings

reported significant mean differences as follows: a) between negative emotions toward the GF and GM scenarios, $F = 7.26$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$; b) between negative affect toward the GF and LM scenarios, $F = 12.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$; and c) between negative affect toward the GF and LF scenarios, $F = 22.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .24$). For clarity reasons, the other three non-significant mean differences are not reported here.

Table 8. *Mean Differences in Masculine/Feminine perception of the Four Scenarios and in Negative Affect vs. the Four Scenarios*

Perception of Masculinity of Scenarios*	***M***	***DS***
Masculine Gay Man (GM) Scenario	5.39 (a)	1.15
Feminine Gay Man (GF) Scenario	2.43 (b)	1.10
Masculine Lesbian Woman (LM) Scenario	5.10 (a)	1.14
Feminine Lesbian Woman (LF) Scenario	2.16 (b)	.85
Perception of Femininity of Scenarios**	***M***	***DS***
Masculine Gay Man (GM) Scenario	2.37 (a)	1.11
Feminine Gay Man (GF) Scenario	5.17 (b)	1.13
Masculine Lesbian Woman (LM) Scenario	2.85 (a)	1.15
Feminine Lesbian Woman (LF) Scenario	5.45 (b)	1.02
Negative Affect vs. the Four Scenarios***	***M***	***DS***
Negative Affect for the GM Scenario	2.39 (a)	.50
Negative Affect for the GF Scenario	2.63 (b)	.66
Negative Affect for the LM Scenario	2.31 (a)	.54
Negative Affect for the LF Scenario	2.31 (a)	.50

Note. All the means marked with the same letter were not significantly different.

**Higher score indicates adherence to masculine characteristics*

***Higher score indicates adherence to feminine characteristics*

**** Higher score indicates more negative affect vs. scenario*

Moderated Regression Analyses

We tested the other three hypotheses by conducting a moderated regression analysis on negative emotions toward GF and LF scenarios. Self-perceived femininity was the predictor, while internalized sexual stigma was the moderator. Age was entered as covariate. We also repeated the same analyses on negative emotions toward the other two GM and LM scenarios, but as expected, none indicated significant results. Thus, the findings for these two last scenarios are not discussed further here. In addition, we also conducted the same analyses with self-perceived masculinity as predictor, instead of self-perceived femininity, but as expected, they showed no significant results and we will not discuss them.

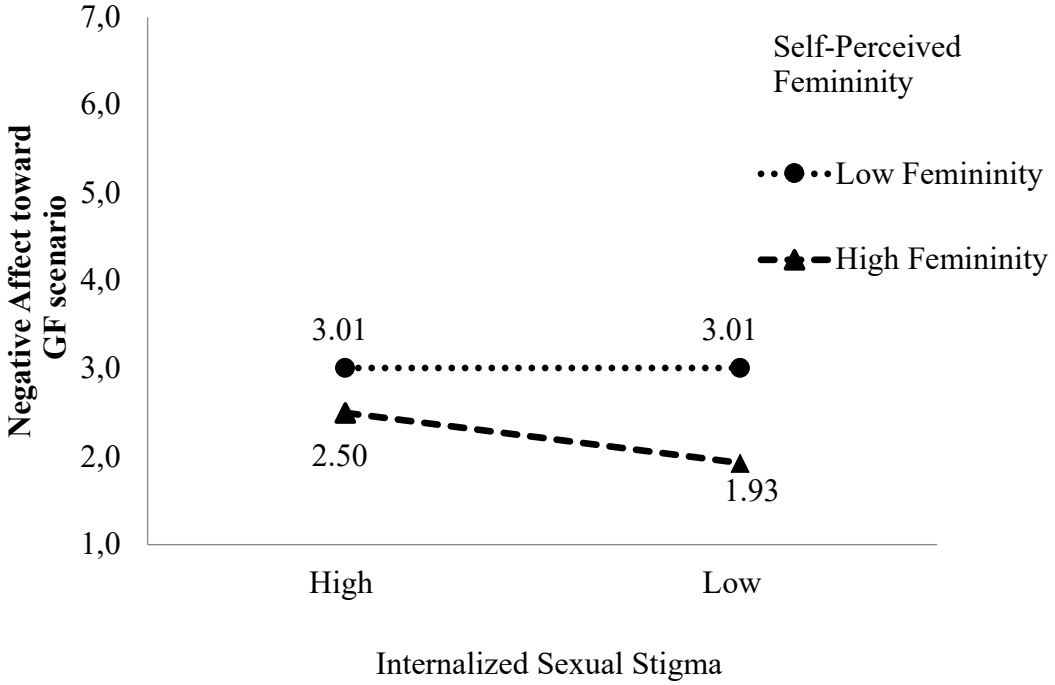
The model about negative emotions toward GF scenario was significant, $F = 7.68$, $R^2 = .32$, $p < .001$. Findings showed a significant main effect of self-perceived femininity, $B = -.37$, $t = -4.85$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, indicating that lesbians self-perceiving with less stereotypical feminine characteristics were more likely to report higher negative emotions toward the GF scenario, than did lesbians self-perceiving with more stereotypical feminine characteristics. The results also showed a significant main effect of internalized sexual stigma, $B = .23$, $t = 1.97$, $SE = .12$, $p = .05$, indicating that lesbians with higher internalized sexual stigma were more likely to report higher negative emotions toward the GF scenario, than did lesbians with lower internalized sexual stigma. The interaction between perceived femininity and internalized sexual stigma was marginally significant, $B = .24$, $t = 0.88$, $SE = .01$, $F = 3.63$, $p = .06$, but this would have been probably significant with a larger size of our sample.

Indeed, simple slopes analyses clarified the marginally significant interaction pattern and estimated means are shown in Figure 5. As expected, when lesbian participants reported low self-perceived femininity, internalized sexual stigma did not

affect their negative emotions toward the GF scenario, t = -.09, SE = .18, p = .93. Conversely, when participants reported high self-perceived femininity, the more they reported high internalized sexual stigma, the more they had high negative emotions toward the GF scenario, compared to lesbian participants with low internalized sexual stigma, t = 2.81, SE = .17, p < .01. This seems to confirm that self-perceived femininity had greater weight than internalized sexual stigma on negative emotions toward the GF scenario. In conclusion, simple slopes analyses also showed that the difference in negative emotions toward the GF scenario between lesbians with low and high self-perceived femininity was significant for lesbians with lower internalized sexual stigma, t = -4.81, SE = .10, p < .001, and not significant for those ones with higher internalized sexual stigma, t = -1.66, SE = .12, p = .10.

Regarding the model about negative emotions toward the LF scenario, results showed that it was marginally significant, F = 2.31, R^2 = .12, p = .06. Findings indicated that the only significant main effect was that one about self-perceived femininity, B = -.17, t = - 2.61, SE = .06, p = .011, showing that lesbians self-perceiving with lower feminine characteristics were more likely to report higher negative emotions toward the LF scenario, compared to lesbians self-perceiving with higher feminine characteristics. Neither the effect of internalized sexual stigma, B = .12, t = 1.13, SE = .10, p = .26, nor the interaction were significant, B = .12, t = 1.12, SE = .11, p = .27. Even if such results were only marginally significant, however they contribute to corroborate the correlational findings and support the thought that less self-perceived feminine lesbians are more likely to feel negative emotions than higher self-perceived feminine lesbians do toward the LF scenario.

Figure 5. *Simple Slopes Analysis on Negative Affect toward Gay Man Adhering to Feminine Role (GF) Scenario*



Discussion

The purpose of this third research was to enrich and extend the results of the two previous studies of such a doctoral dissertation (Salvati et al., 2016; Salvati et al., 2018b). To do this, we explored in a sample if Italian lesbians, the effects of their self-perceived femininity and internalized sexual stigma on their negative affect toward gay and lesbian scenarios with stereotypical masculine or feminine characteristics.

Our first hypothesis was that the GF scenario would elicit more negative emotions than the other three ones and it was confirmed. Such a result supports the previous literature showing that gay men who are perceived as more feminine provoke more negative emotions that do other targets (Glick et al., 2007; Cohen et al., 2009). As written

previously, this is in line with the fact that attitudes toward gay men are more likely to be more hostile than toward lesbians (Ahrold & Meston 2010; Breen & Karpinski, 2013; Kite & Whitley, 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998; Lingiardi et al., 2012; Louderbeck & Whitley, 1997; Mange & Lepastourel, 2013) and with the idea that gender norms are more rigidly prescribed for men than for women (Bauemeister et al., 2010).

The second hypothesis predicted that lesbians with lower self-perceived femininity would feel more negative emotions toward the two feminine GF and LF scenarios, compared to lesbian participants with higher self-perceived femininity. Our results confirmed such a hypothesis, showing that less feminine lesbians felt more negative affect toward the GF scenario, than more feminine lesbians. Regarding the LF scenario, although the findings are weaker, the same tendency emerged, indicating that masculine lesbians tended to express more negative affect than feminine lesbians.

Such results seem to confirm a sexist point of view, according to which masculinity is considered more positive and superior to femininity (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Herek, 2004). Furthermore, the characteristics of competence and agency, which are traditionally associated with masculine people, are perceived more positively than are the characteristics of warmth and communion, traditionally associated with femininity. In addition, the fact that a lot of lesbians (although not everyone) are past feminists, especially older ones, and that feminist values are still strong for most of them today (Browne & Olaisk, 2016), might contribute to explain these results. Such an aspect could have contributed to their rejection of the traditional and stereotypical feminine characteristics (De Oliveira et al., 2011; Ellis & Peel, 2011; Poirot, 2009). Finally, more masculine lesbians might also desire to move away from these stereotypical and traditional feminine characteristics, and could therefore react negatively to gay men who, conversely, show such feminine characteristics.

As third hypothesis, we expected that lesbians with higher internalized sexual stigma would feel more negative emotions toward the GF and LF scenarios than lesbians with lower internalized sexual stigma would. Such hypothesis was confirmed in half. Specifically, the results indicated that lesbians with higher internalized sexual stigma were more likely to feel negative affect toward the GF, but not LF scenario, compared to lesbians with lower internalized sexual stigma.

A speculative explanation could be that our participants might understand and sympathize with why a woman would feel compelled by sexism to act femininely, but not see why a man would do so when they did not have to. Furthermore, results indicated that internalized sexual stigma had a weaker effect than self-perceived femininity on negative emotions toward the scenarios (Szymansky & Henrichs-Beck, 2014).

In particular, in regard to negative affect toward the GF scenario, even if the effects of self-perceived femininity and internalized sexual stigma were both significant, however, there was a stronger relation with self-perceived femininity, than of internalized sexual stigma. A mere speculative explanation needing to be tested, might be that the more a woman has feminine characteristics, the more she identifies with other feminine people and such kind of identification would be stronger with people of the same sex and sexual orientation, because they are more "like me".

Our fourth and last hypothesis expected that internalized sexual stigma would moderate the relationship between self-perceived femininity and negative emotions toward the GF and LF scenarios. Specifically, we predicted no effect of self-perceived femininity among lesbians with low internalized sexual stigma. Conversely, we expected that self-perceived femininity would affect negative emotions toward the GF and LF scenarios among lesbians with high internalized sexual stigma. Even such a hypothesis was confirmed only in half. Specifically, the results indicated the expected pattern of

results for the GF, but not for the LF scenario. In particular, less feminine lesbians felt more negative emotions toward the GF scenario, regardless of their levels of internalized sexual stigma. Conversely, more feminine lesbians showed more negative affect toward the GF scenario only when they reported high levels of internalized sexual stigma.

These results supported our expectation that internalized sexual stigma would have a stronger effect for more feminine lesbians, compared to less feminine lesbians. A possible explanation might be that feminine lesbians could have experienced less discrimination than masculine lesbians, due to their adherence to the stereotypical feminine role and therefore might be more prone to internalize traditional gender norms and sexual stigma (Salvati et al., 2016). Furthermore, feminine lesbians could not consider their feminine characteristics negatively, and therefore their internalized sexual stigma could become the main factor that affects their negative emotions toward the GF scenario. Another speculative explanation could be that masculine lesbians believe that because they are not stereotypically feminine, all the sexual stigma characteristics do not really apply to them, whereas for feminine lesbians it feels very much like it does. Of course, all these speculative explanations should be deepened in future research.

Limitations and future directions

This third research has several limitations. The first one is represented by the sample size that was small, because of the difficulty of recruiting a sample that included exclusively lesbian participants. Secondly, we employed only self-reported questionnaires with no measure of social desirability, even if this study was dealing with many sensitive topics. Thirdly, another limitation was the generalizability of our findings, due to our convenience sample of Italian lesbians aged between 18 and 46 only. Finally, we did not control the analyses for the membership to a LGBT organization, due to the

fact that we did not ask such an aspect in the questionnaire. However, we think that the most of our lesbian participants were member of them, due to out modality of recruitment.

Future research might include both heterosexual and lesbian women participants, to analyze possible differences between them. In addition, further studies should include a more representative sample of sexual minority people, by including bisexual participants too. Indeed, previous literature indicated that bisexual people are a peculiar subgroup of sexual minority people and that gay and lesbian persons might have negative attitudes toward them (Worthen, 2013). Therefore, it could be also possible that bisexual persons might have negative attitudes toward gay men and lesbians, being perceived as a minority group within the sexual minorities (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). Also, cross-national samples might be involved to make the findings more generalizable, because gender processes vary across race, class and other global signifiers of identity and social location.

In conclusion, both this research and the two previous studies of this doctoral dissertation (Salvati et al., 2016; Salvati et al., 2018b), employed only explicit measures of attitudes, whereas implicit measures might corroborate and strengthen the results found so far, because they are less affected by social desirability (Fazio & Olson, 2003). Ultimately, all these three studies used a textual description of the scenarios, whereas also different kinds of stimuli, such as pictures, photos, or videos might strengthen these findings. The next and last study of this doctoral dissertation wants just to overcome several of these limitations, by manipulating participants' perception of their own masculinity, by employing the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al., 1998) to have a measure of implicit attitudes, and finally by having stimuli consisting in pictures of feminine and masculine gay men.

Study 4: Masculinity threat and implicit attitudes to masculine and feminine gay pictures: sexual orientation, stigma and self-perceived masculinity

This research was not published yet

Salvati, M., Passarelli, M., Chiorri, C., Giacomantonio, M., & Baiocco, R. (2018). Masculinity threat and implicit attitudes to masculine and feminine gay pictures: the role of sexual orientation, stigma and self-perceived masculinity. *In preparation.*

The present study and hypotheses

The current fourth and last study of this doctoral dissertation intended to overcome some limitations that characterized all the three previous studies examined so far. Their main critical aspects were: a) the use of only explicit and self-reported instruments to measure negative attitudes toward the scenarios; b) the use of only textual descriptions as stimuli, objects of attitudes; c) the absence of a manipulation about participants' masculinity. Thus, in order to both control social desirability and explore implicit attitudes toward masculine and feminine gay scenarios, in the current research we employed the Implicit Association Test (IAT, Greenwald et al., 1998).

Furthermore, the comparative nature of the measure, that is typical of the IAT paradigm, could allow us to explore more deeply the possible differences between gay and heterosexual men about their negative attitudes toward the gay feminine scenario, rather than the independent explicit measures used in the previous studies of this dissertation. In addition, new stimuli were expressly created to be added in the IAT and we preferred to use pictures of masculine and feminine gay men, instead of textual descriptions of them. Finally, we decided to manipulate participants' masculine identity, through fictitious feedbacks to the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974).

In line with the comparative measure of the IAT and with previous research (Banse, Seise, & Zerbes, 2001; Jellison, McConnell, & Gabriel, 2004), we might expect that when faced with a choice of associations between two targets, heterosexual men, more than gay men, could be more likely to associate negative stimuli to feminine than masculine gay men (hypothesis 1). This might be expected based on the three possible functions of sexual prejudice, explained by Herek (2013): "social expressive", "value expressive", and "defensive" functions of sexual stigma.

Based on previous literature regarding the not-uniform relations about masculinity threat and attitudes toward homosexuality, in samples with heterosexual and gay men (Bosson et al., 2012; Glick et al., 2007; Hunt et al., 2016; O'Connor et al., 2017; Reese et al., 2014; Stotzer & Shih, 2012; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008), our hypotheses about masculinity threat were more explorative than the other ones. Specifically, some studies have reported that when heterosexual participants' masculinity was threatened, they reacted more negatively toward gay men (Glick et al., 2007; Tally & Betterncourt, 2008) like an approach attempt to restore they masculinity. Other studies, instead, have found that a more avoidance attempt is preferred to restore masculinity when it was threatened, such an example by distancing of self from what is perceived as opposed to masculinity, such as gay men (Bosson et al., 2011; Hunt et al., 2016).

The work by Stotzer & Shih (2012), also found that the effects of the manipulation of masculinity threat differentially affected the perception of their own masculinity in men with high versus low sexual prejudice, in a quite contradictory way. This indicated that masculinity threat might have different effects on heterosexual and gay men, based on their levels on sexual stigma and internalized sexual stigma respectively.

Thus, on one hand, based on the studies founding an "approach attempt" to restore the masculinity threat (Glick et al., 2007; Tally & Betterncourt, 2008), we might expect

that participants in the experimental group of masculinity threat would report more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men, compared to the participants in the "masculinity confirmation" experimental group and control group (hypothesis 2a). On the other hand, in line with the studies showing a preferred "avoidance attempt" to restore masculinity threat (Bosson et al., 2011; Hunt et al., 2016), we also might hypothesize that participants subjected to masculinity threat would not report more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men, rather than the control group or the other experimental group of "masculinity confirmation" (hypothesis 2b).

Furthermore, regarding our last hypotheses about self-perceived masculinity and sexual stigma, we hypothesized that self-perceived masculinity would have a higher impact, compared to sexual stigma, on negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men, both in heterosexual and gay participants (Hypothesis 3), based on the previous findings indicating that the adherence to traditional gender roles affects negative attitudes more than sexual stigma (Salvati et al., 2018a, 2018c).

In addition, we explored the moderating role of sexual stigma and internalized sexual stigma (respectively in heterosexual and gay men), on the relation between self-perceived masculinity and negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men. Specifically, regarding gay men we expected that the more they would self-perceive masculine, the more they would report negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men, but in condition of high and not low internalized sexual stigma (hypothesis 4a). Finally, regarding heterosexual men participants, we explored the moderating role of sexual stigma on the relationship between self-perceived masculinity and negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men (hypothesis 4b). Particularly, we expected that participants with high score both in self-perceived masculinity and sexual stigma would report more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men, compared to

other three conditions (low scores in both the measures, or high score in only one measure).

Pilot Study 1

Preliminary creation of the stimuli

Firstly, we had to create new specific stimuli to implement in the IAT, for the purpose of our study. We needed five pairs of pictures, each one characterized by two versions of the same man: one feminized and one masculinized. We decided to contact a professional designer, that would have designed the picture for us.

Before, we used an online free software, “Flash Face”, to create more than thirty men faces, among which we would have made a selection to give to the professional designer to use as a guide. Flash Face is a software used to create avatars that are very reminiscent of the design by identikit, thus creating a design of a face, with the guide of the tools made available. You can decide the details of the face like hair, nose, mouth, all in a detailed and realistic way. Even if Flash Face was less graphically beautiful because the faces were not colored and were as if they were drawn in pencil or pen, however, it resulted suitable for our purposes.

After creating more than thirty faces, a group of five experts about the themes of homosexuality and gender roles, did a preliminary screening, by selecting 16 faces, based on the following indicative criteria: (a) being perceived on average masculine; (b) being perceived as western man; (c) being perceived with an age range between 25 and 35 years old.

Procedure

After such preliminary selection, we decided to conduct a brief pilot study to select the best faces to give to the professional designer, in order to be used as a guide for create two versions, masculinized and femininized, of the same face. We proceeded to recruit participants with a snowball sampling. We asked them to participate to a pilot study about the theme of perception. Participation was voluntary, and no compensation was given. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. The time required to complete the questionnaire was about 15-20 minutes and all questionnaires were completed. The administration of the questionnaires was face to face. After responding about their own age, gender, and sexual orientation, all the participants saw each face one by one and their order was randomized. Participants sat in front of the researcher, who showed the faces to them, each one marked with a different letter. Simultaneously, participants had the questionnaires to fill in, by reporting the letter to which his or her answers referred.

Participants

Participants were 67 men and women living in Rome, equally distributed by gender and sexual orientation (heterosexual men = 19; heterosexual women = 18; gay/bisexual men = 18; lesbian/bisexual women = 12), $X^2 = 0.50$, $p = .323$. Although the main study would have involved only heterosexual and gay men, however, we decided to include both heterosexual and lesbian women in the sample of this pilot study, in order to validate the faces also for female participants for future studies. The age range was between 19 and 42 years old, ($M = 26.91$, $SD = 4{,}59$), that showed a normal distribution.

Measures

Identifying information and sexual orientation. Participants were invited to indicate their own age, gender, city of residency and sexual orientation. Item about sexual orientation had 6 response alternatives: 1= *exclusively heterosexual*, 2 = *predominantly heterosexual,* 3 = *bisexual*, 4 = *predominantly homosexual*, 5 = *exclusively homosexual*, 6 = *other*. In the case the participants responded "other", he or she was invited to specify his or her sexual orientation. For the purposes of our pilot study, participants who responded 1 or 2 were coded as heterosexual, whereas those ones responding 3, 4, or 5 were coded as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). Nobody answered "other".

Gender of the Face. One single item asked: "*Does the face you are observing belong to a man or a woman?*". Participants had 2 responses alternatives: 1= *man*; 2 = *woman*.

Age of the Face. One single item asked: "*What age would you give to the person depicted?*". Participants were invited to write the precise age, expressed in years.

Westerness of the Face. One single item on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*, asked: "*How likely do you think the depicted face belongs to a Western person?*

Likability of the Face. A single item on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*, asked: How much do you think the face depicted could please?

Masculinity and Femininity of the Face. Two single items on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*, asked: *How much do you think the face depicted is masculine?*" and "*How much do you think the face depicted is feminine?*" A total score of masculinity of the face was obtained by the mean of the two items, after having reversed the score of the femininity one.

Data analysis

Firstly, we checked that all the 16 faces were perceived as belonging to men and not to women. Secondly, 3 different repeated measures ANCOVA were ran on age, westerness, and likability of the faces respectively, in order to exclude some faces about the main and final analysis about the perceived masculinity of the faces, and to give it greater strength. As exclusion criteria for the main analysis, we decided to exclude the faces obtaining an age mean score lower than 25 and higher than 35, and the faces obtaining a mean score lower than 2 and higher than 6, on the 7-point Likert scale about westerness and likability.

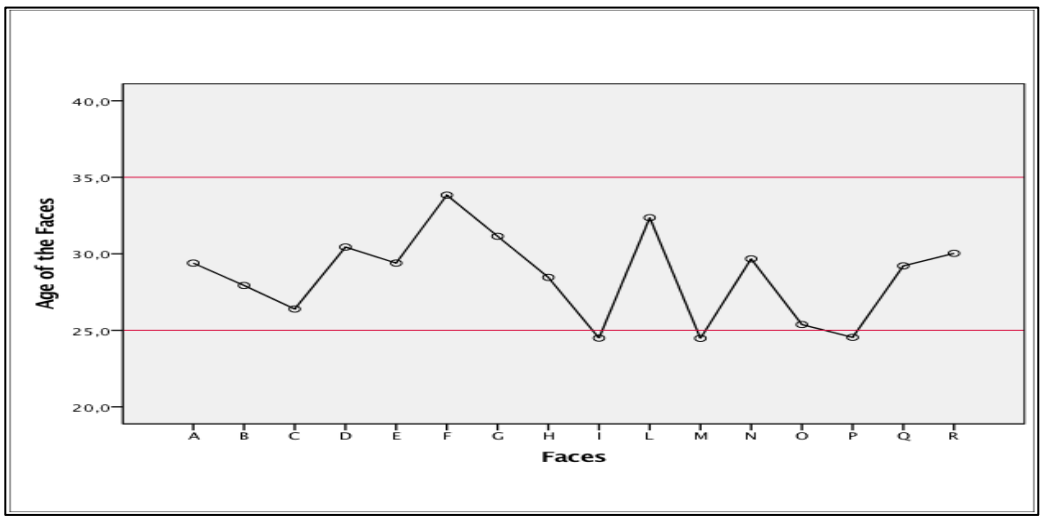
Finally, the main and last analysis consisted in a repeated measure ANCOVA on the total score about perceived masculinity of the faces. As exclusion criteria for the main analysis, we decided to exclude the faces obtaining a masculinity score lower than 2.5 and higher than 5.5, on the 7-point Likert scale. In all the ANCOVA, participants' age, gender and sexual orientation were added as covariates.

Results

All the 67 participants have attributed the male gender to all the 16 faces, except for the face marked with the letter "I". Specifically, 3 participants attributed the female gender to this face. Furthermore, results about the 3 ANCOVA regarding age, westerness and likability of the faces can be seen in Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8 respectively, whereas means and standard deviations are reported in Table 9. Specifically, findings showed that the main effect of age of the faces was significant, $F(15, 43) = 2.38$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.40$, whereas the main effects of westerness, $F(15, 49) = 0.64$, $p = .844$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.10$, and likability, $F(15, 49) = 0.90$, $p = .567$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.01$, were not significant.

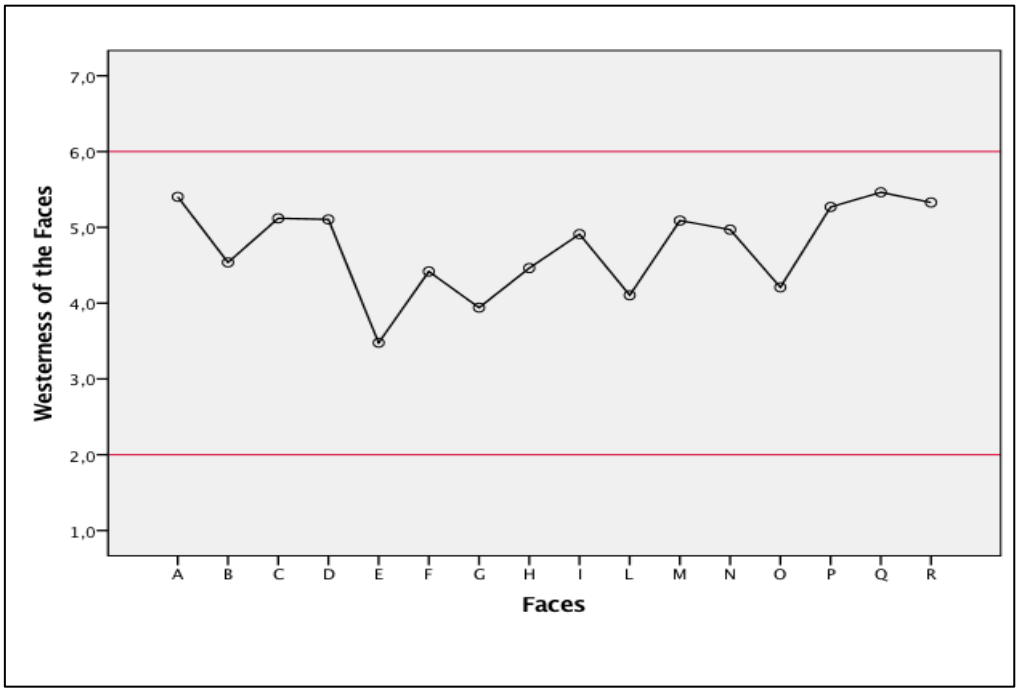
Based on such results, we decided to exclude the 3 faces marked with the letters "I", "M", and "P". Subsequently, we ran the final ANCOVA on the perceived masculinity about the 13 remaining faces. Findings can be seen in Figure 9, whereas means and standard deviations are reported in Table 10. The results indicated that the main effect of the perceived masculinity of the faces was significant, $F(12, 50) = 2.65$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$. Based on these results, we decided to exclude other 4 faces: those ones marked with the letters "B", "C", "D", and "O".

Figure 6. *Results about ANCOVA on the age of the 16 Faces*



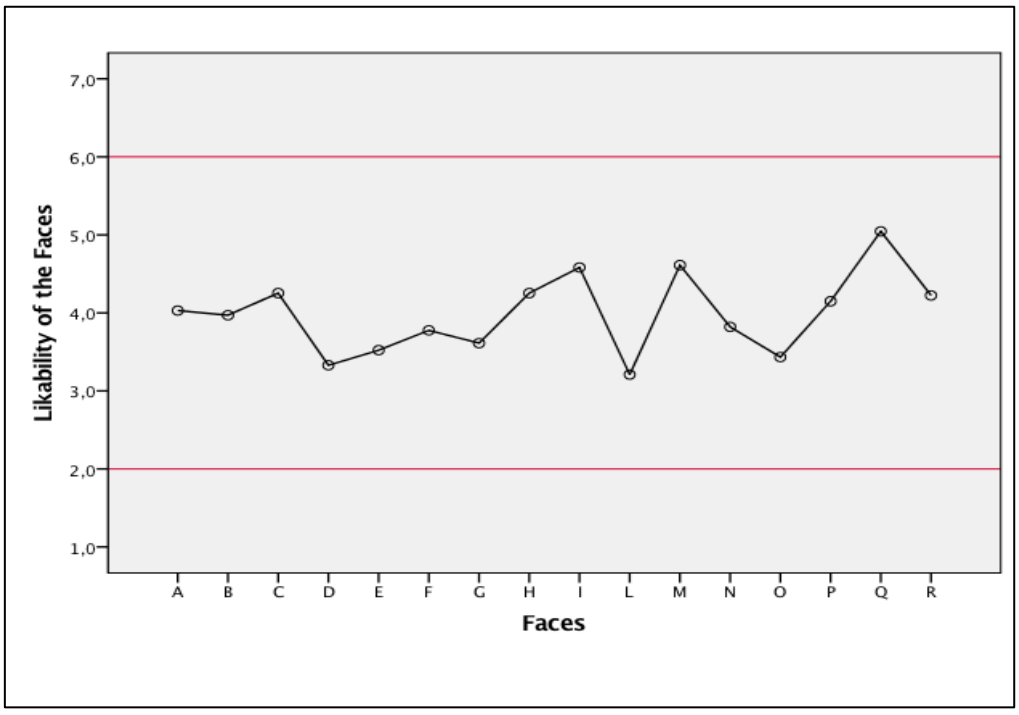
Note. Faces "I", "M", and "P", were deleted because below the defined criteria (in red).

Figure 7. *Results about ANCOVA on the westerness of the 16 Faces*



Note. All the 16 faces are within the range between the defined criteria (in red).

Figure 8. Results about ANCOVA on the likability of the 16 Faces



Note. All the 16 faces are within the range between the defined criteria (in red).

Table 9. *Means and Standard Deviations about Age, Westerness and Likability of the Faces (n = 67)*

	Age		Westerness		Likability	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Face A	29.39	4.53	5.40	1.12	4.03	1.11
Face B	27.93	4.01	4.54	1.22	3.97	1.29
Face C	26.39	4.23	5.12	1.13	4.25	1.08
Face D	30.44	5.75	5.10	1.38	3.33	1.25
Face E	29.39	4.65	3.48	1.34	3.52	1.15
Face F	33.84	5.29	4.42	1.35	3.78	1.20
Face G	31.15	3.72	3.94	1.37	3.61	1.25
Face H	28.46	3.92	4.46	1.36	4.25	1.34
Face I	24.49	2.95	4.91	1.65	4.58	1.28
Face L	32.36	5.34	4.10	1.44	3.21	1.16
Face M	24.48	4.70	5.09	1.20	4.61	1.44
Face N	29.67	4.54	4.97	1.06	3.82	1.14
Face O	25.38	4.11	4.21	1.33	3.43	1.14
Face P	24.54	6.45	5.27	1.29	4.15	1.20
Face Q	29.21	4.53	5.46	1.11	5.05	1.08
Face R	30.03	5.05	5.33	1.06	4.22	1.14

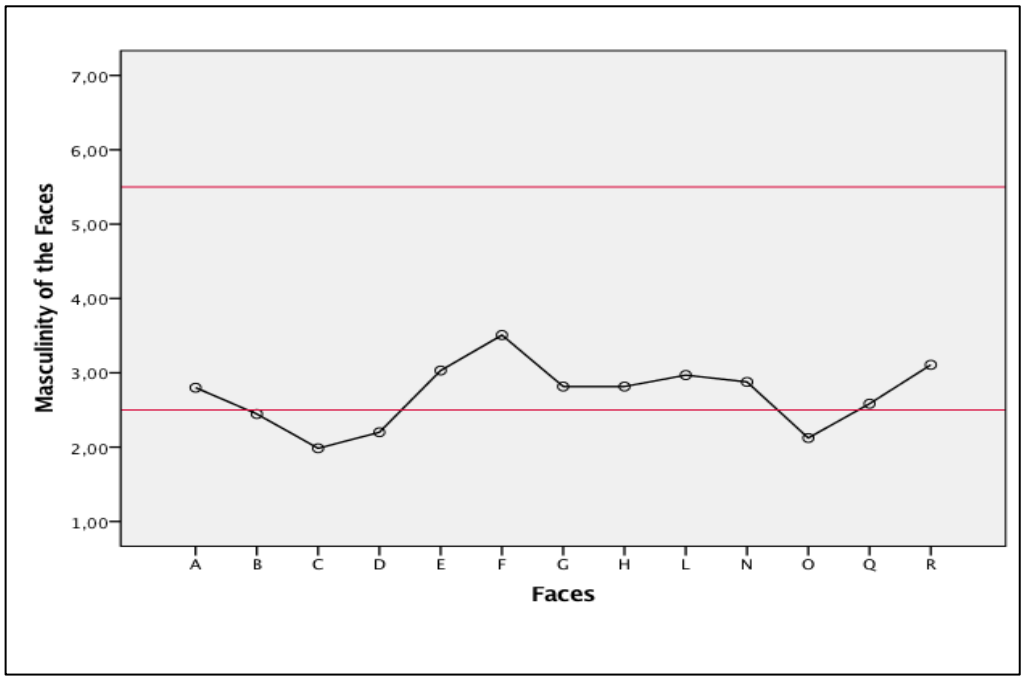
Note. Excluded Faces are reported in red

Table 10. *Means and Standard Deviations about Masculinity of the 13 Faces (n = 67)*

Faces	A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F*	*G*	*H*	*L*	*N*	*O*	*Q*	*R*
Mean	1.80	2.45	1.98	2.20	3.03	3.51	2.82	2.82	2.97	2.88	2.12	2.58	3.11
SD	1.82	2.15	2.54	2.01	1.95	1.56	1.90	1.92	2.13	1.82	2.04	2.20	1.61

Note. Excluded Faces are reported in red

Figure 9. *Results about ANCOVA on the masculinity of the 13 Faces*



Note. Faces “B”, “C”, “D” and “O”, were excluded because below the defined criteria (in red)

Pilot Study 2

The next step was to give the 9 faces to a professional designer, asking her to create two versions of a gay man picture, inspired to each one of the faces, that would have represented a masculinized and a femininized half-length bust version of the original one. We asked her to maintain the dimensions of the pictures constant (within the half of a A4 paper form). We told her that she could manipulate the features of the faces, the hair and the muscles. We preferred to have black and white picture, to avoid that the different colors could influence the further results. After three months, the professional designer gave us the new 9 pairs of pictures. We have associated a letter for each of them. Thus, the nine pairs were: “A-B”; “C-D”; “E-F”; “G-H”; “I-L”: “M-N”; “O-P”; “Q-R”; “S-T”, with “A”, “C”, “D”, “G”, “I”, “M”, “O”, “Q”, and “S” as feminine gay men pictures, and “B”, “D”, “F”, “H”, “L”, “N”, “P”, “R”, and “T” as masculine gay men pictures.

Procedure

We decided to conduct a second pilot study to select the best five pairs of pictures to include in the IAT. Considering the limited time available and that the main study would have included only male participants, we proceeded to recruit only heterosexual and gay men participants for this second pilot study. Again, we presented the study, like a voluntary research about the perception with no compensation. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. The time required to complete the questionnaire was about 20-30 minutes and all questionnaires were completed. The administration of the questionnaires was online with a snowball sampling. All the researchers posted on their social networks the link to the questionnaires, asking to other people to do the same. After asking if people had already participated in a study about the perception of gay men faces,

the questionnaires proceeded with very questions about general information about participants and then with the questions about each one of the 18 pictures, in a randomized order. Each one of the 18 gay men pictures were identified by a letter. After having completed the study, participants read a descriptive text about the real aims about the pilot study and they were thanked.

Participants

Participants were 127 men, and the inclusion criteria were: (a) having Italian nationality; (b) being of legal age and lower than 50 years old; (c) having heterosexual or gay sexual orientation (d) having complete all the questionnaires. Based on such criteria, the total sample was reduced to 119 participants. 8 participants were excluded because 2 young men were 17 years old, whereas four participants were older than 50 years old. The last 2 participants were excluded because they self-declared a bisexual sexual orientation. Thus, our final sample include both heterosexual (N = 54, 45.4%) and gay men (N = 65, 54.6%), aged between 18 and 49 years old (M = 29.27, SD = 6.93), normally distributed.

Measures

Identifying information and sexual orientation. As in the first pilot study, participants were invited to report their own age, gender, city of residency and sexual orientation. Item about sexual orientation had 6 response alternatives: 1= *exclusively heterosexual*, 2 = *predominantly heterosexual,* 3 = *bisexual*, 4 = *predominantly homosexual*, 5 = *exclusively homosexual*, 6 = *other*. In the case the participants responded "other", he or she had to specify his or her sexual orientation. Participants who responded

1 or 2 were coded as heterosexual, whereas those ones responding, 4, or 5 were coded as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). Nobody answered "other".

Data collection tool. One single item asked participants what tool they were using to complete the questionnaires. They had to mark one of four alternative responses: 1 = *personal computer*; 2 = *smartphone*; 3 = *tablet*; 4 = *other*. In the case participants responded the option "other", they were invited to indicate what tool they were using. We chose to add such a measure in the questionnaires, in order to check that the kind of tool used to respond to the questionnaires did not influence the results.

Age of the Picture. One single item asked: "*What age would you give to the man depicted?*". Participants were invited to write the precise age, expressed in years.

Westerness of the Picture. One single item on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*, asked: "*How likely do you think the man represented is Western?*

Good-looking of the Picture. Instead to use the same item about likability of the previous pilot study, we change it by asking: "*How much do you think the man represented is good-looking*? We made this change because we thought that the previous question could have been misunderstood, especially by heterosexual participants. The 7-point Likert scale was the same from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*.

List of adjectives about masculinity and femininity of the Picture. Eight items on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*, asked: *How much do you think the man represented is [Adjective]?*". The four items regarding masculinity were: "*masculine*", "*strong*", "*dominant*", and "*decisive*", whereas the four items about femininity were: "*feminine*", "*gentle*", "*tender*", and "*affectionate*". Two separate masculinity and femininity scores were obtained by the average of the four respective items.

Data analysis

In order to select our best 5 pairs of pictures we firstly ran a Latent Profile Analysis, based on the list of the 8 adjectives. We expected two clusters, within which the 18 pictures would be distributed: the masculine cluster and the feminine cluster. Then several t tests were conducted on the means of masculinity and femininity scores of the pairs of pictures, to verify that they significantly differed on both of them. Finally, three different repeated measures ANCOVA were ran on perceived age, westerness, and good-looking of the pictures respectively. Participants' age was added as covariate.

As exclusion criteria for the main analysis, we decided to exclude: (a) the men pictures obtaining an age mean score outside the range of 20-35 years old, (b) the men pictures obtaining a mean score lower than 4 (the midpoint), on the 7-point Likert scale about westerness; and (c) the men pictures obtaining a mean score lower than 3 or higher than 5, to exclude the men perceived too or too low handsome.

Results

The results of the Latent Profile Analysis confirmed the hypothesized two cluster solution (Table 11 and Table 12). However, the findings showed that 7 gay men pictures were included in the feminine cluster, while 11 gay men pictures were included in the masculine cluster. Because the results included the pictures "G" and "M", in the masculine cluster, although they were designed as feminine, the pairs "G-H" an "M-N" were the first pairs to be excluded from subsequent analyses.

Table 11. Latent Profile Analysis results (n = 119)

Variable	*Estimate*	*SE*	*z*	*p*
Affectionate	-0.03	0.14	-0.24	.42
Decisive	-1.33	0.10	-12.90	<.001
Dominant	-1.63	0.09	-17.23	<.001
Strong	-1.43	0.08	-17.94	<.001
Gentle	-0.20	0.13	-1.54	.08
Tender	-0.03	0.14	-0.20	.420
Feminine	1.78	0.18	10.01	<.001
Masculine	-2.01	0.10	-19.54	<.001

Note. Negative estimates indicate higher scores in Profile 2 (Masculine)

Table 12. Latent Profile Analysis results (n = 119)

Stimulus	*Profile*	*p (class membership)*
A	1	.83
B	2	.50
C	1	.81
D	2	.67
E	1	.54
F	2	.69
G	2	.65
H	2	.83
I	1	.52
L	2	.64
M	2	.67
N	2	.87
O	1	.80
P	2	.69
Q	1	.54
R	2	.74
S	1	.64
T	2	.69

Note. Profiles 1 = Feminine cluster; Profile 2 = Masculine Cluster. Excluded pairs are reported in red.

To select the five best pairs gay men pictures within the 7 ones remained, we conducted several t tests on the means of the total scores of masculinity and femininity. We wanted to test that the two gay men pictures of each pair differed on the two scores. Findings about masculinity score showed a significant difference in the expected direction, between the 2 masculine and feminine gay men of each pair of pictures. Instead, regarding the results about femininity scores, all the pairs of pictures have reported significant differences in the expected directions, except the pair formed by the pictures "E" and "F". Indeed, contrary to our expectation, the picture "F" was perceived more feminine than the picture "E", thus the pair "E-F" was excluded. Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha were reported in Table 13, whereas the results of t tests on masculinity and femininity scores are reported in Table 14 and in Table 15 respectively.

Subsequently, in order to exclude the last pair within the six pairs remained ("A-B", "C-D", "I-L", "O-P". "Q-R", and "S-T"), we ran three repeated measures ANCOVA on the scores of perceived age, westerness, and good-looking respectively. Findings showed a significant main effect of perceived age of the pictures, $F(11, 107) = 9.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.07$, a significant main effect of perceived westerness of the pictures, $F(11, 107) = 2.40$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.02$, and a significant main effect of the good-looking of the pictures, $F(11, 107) = 3.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$. The results of the three ANCOVA on perceived age, westerness and good-looking of the pictures are reported in Figure 10, Figure 11 and Figure 12 respectively. Instead, means and standard deviations of the three measures are reported in Table 16.

Table 13. *Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha of the pictures*

Picture	$M_{Masculinity}$	$SD_{Masculinity}$	$\alpha_{Masculinity}$	$M_{Femininity}$	$SD_{Femininity}$	$\alpha_{Femininity}$
A	3.45	0.96	.81	4.02	0.90	.70
B	4.37	1.06	.83	3.42	0.95	.74
C	3.32	1.04	.80	4.01	0.97	.73
D	4.39	0.94	.80	3.39	0.90	.75
E	4.09	0.93	.80	3.96	0.88	.70
F	4.41	0.80	.76	4.32	0.84	.71
I	4.21	0.98	.80	3.68	0.85	.66
L	4.55	0.93	.80	3.52	0.82	.66
O	3.41	0.94	.81	4.46	0.92	.74
P	4.59	0.95	.82	3.83	0.71	.55
Q	4.13	0.87	.75	4.20	0.88	.68
R	4.54	0.84	.82	3.83	0.88	.79
S	3.92	0.88	.72	3.99	0.82	.60
T	4.48	0.85	.75	3.54	0.77	.61

Note. The excluded pair is reported in red

Table 14. *Mean differences on femininity score*

Picture	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Pair A-B	0.61	0.94	7.00	<.001
Pair C-D	0.63	1.06	6.47	<.001
Pair E-F	-0.37	0.96	-4.15	<.001
Pair I-L	0.15	1.00	1.68	<.001
Pair O-P	0.64	1.02	6.72	<.001
Pair Q-R	0.37	0.91	4.44	<.001
Pair S-T	0.45	0.91	5.41	<.001

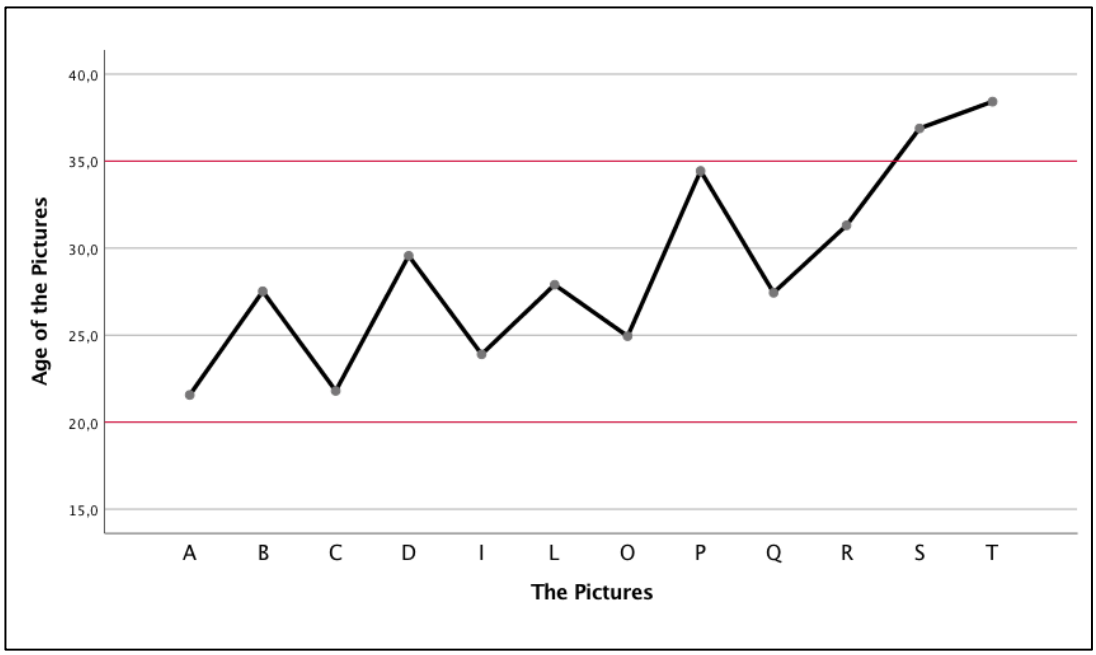
Note. The excluded pair is reported in red

Table 15. *Mean differences on masculinity score*

Picture	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Pair A-B	-0.92	1.07	-9.38	<.001
Pair C-D	-1.07	1.09	-10.72	<.001
Pair E-F	-0.31	0.80	-4.23	<.001
Pair I-L	-0.34	1.02	-3.58	<.001
Pair O-P	-1.18	1.08	-11.98	<.001
Pair Q-R	-0.41	0.87	-5.14	<.001
Pair S-T	-0.57	0.80	-7.68	<.001

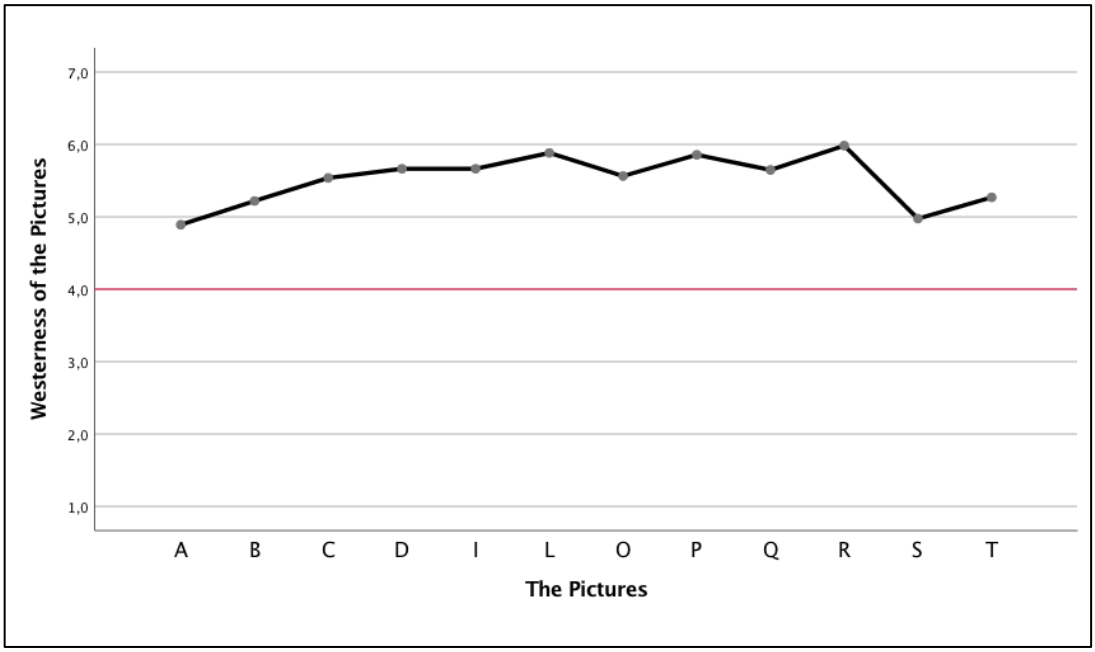
Note. The excluded pair is reported in red

Figure 10. *Results about ANCOVA on the perceived age of the 12 Pictures (n = 119)*



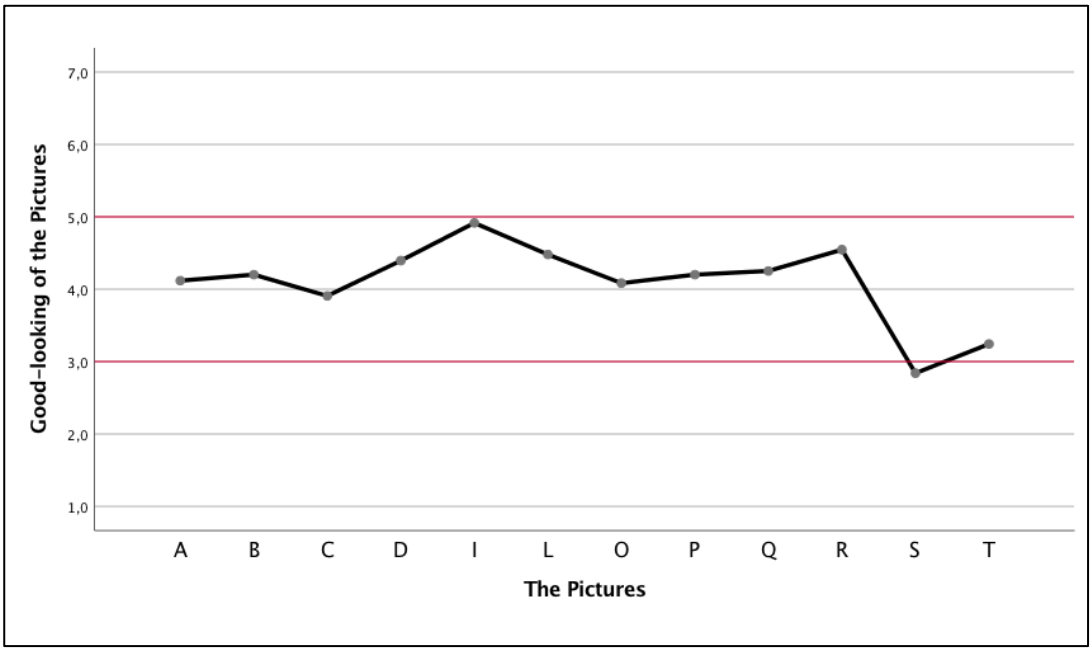
Note. Pictures “S” and “T” are outside the range between the defined criteria (in red).

Figure 11. *Results about ANCOVA on the westerness of the 12 Pictures (n = 119)*



Note. All the 12 pictures are above the defined criteria (in red).

Figure 12. *Results about ANCOVA on the good-looking of the 12 Pictures (n = 119)*



Note. Picture "S" is outside the range between the defined criteria (in red).

Thus, based on the mentioned criteria, all the pictures were perceived as being older than 20 and younger than 35, except for the pictures of the pair "S-T". In fact, both of them were perceived as older than 35 years old. Regarding the westerness, all the pictures scored more than 4, the midpoint of the 7-point Likert scale, and almost all even more than 5, indicating that all the gay men depicted were perceived as western. Finally, regarding the good-looking, all the pictures were perceived as average good-looking, obtaining a score between 4 and 5, except for the picture "S", perceived as less good-looking, than other ones. In truth, also the picture "T", obtained a low score of good-looking, compared to other pictures, although it was within the range of the criteria. Thus, considering that both the pictures of the pair "S-T" were perceived as older than 35 and unpleasant, compared to the others, we chose that the pair "S-T" would be the last to be

excluded. The final pairs of pictures that were selected to be included in the IAT were: "A-B", "C-D", "I-L", "O-P", and "Q-R" and they can be seen in Appendix 3.

Table 16. *Means and Standard Deviations about perceived Age, Westerness and Good-looking of the Pictures (n = 119)*

	Age		Westerness		Good-looking	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Picture A	21.56	3.78	4.89	1.57	4.12	1.46
Picture B	27.52	3.92	5.22	1.38	4.20	1.45
Picture C	21.80	4.23	5.54	1.27	3.91	1.45
Picture D	29.56	5.33	5.66	1.18	4.40	1.37
Picture I	23.90	3.61	5.66	1.31	4.92	1.26
Picture L	27.90	4.68	5.88	1.21	4.48	1.47
Picture O	24.94	3.86	5.56	1.27	4.08	1.36
Picture P	34.44	5.80	5.86	1.14	4.20	1.46
Picture Q	27.44	4.49	5.65	1.30	4.25	1.54
Picture R	31.31	4.70	5.98	0.99	4.55	1.33
Picture S	36.88	6.05	4.98	1.45	2.84	1.24
Picture T	38.42	5.05	5.27	1.30	3.24	1.29

Note. Excluded pair is reported in red

Method of the Main Study

Procedure

We used a snowball sampling to recruit our participants outside the university context, because we wanted to have a sample that did not include exclusively university students. The choice of a snowball sampling was due to two main reasons. The first one was the difficulty to have gay participants, that are a particular target difficult to recruit, because they represent a minority within the general population. The second one was related to the fact that we needed gay participants who did not participate to the previous studies of this doctoral dissertation.

Participants were told that the aims of the research were to investigate the "formation of impressions" and that the participation did not provide a compensation. The experiment consisted in five parts. During the first one, each participant was received in the Lab, he was told the fictitious scope of the research and he signed the informed consent. We encouraged all participants to answer as truthfully as possible because anonymity was guaranteed. The second phase of the experiment consisting in an online compilation about participants' socio-demographic information, and about several measures of variable investigated (i.e., sexual stigma and adherence to traditional gender roles). The third part consisted in the online manipulation of participants' masculinity by a fictitious score on Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). The fourth phase consisting in the administration of the Implicit Association Test (IAT, Greenwald, 1998). The fifth and last part provided several online manipulation check measures. At the end of each session, the participant rang a bell to communicate that he had finished. Thus, the researcher re-entered in the Lab to explain the next phase and then left the room. After

the final session, all participants were debriefed and were told that their score to the personality test of BSRI was just fictitious and that BSRI was not a real personality test.

The time required to complete the questionnaire was about 30-40 minute. The protocol was approved by the Ethics Commission of the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, Sapienza University, Rome. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Participants

One hundred and eighty-nine persons participated to the study. The inclusion criteria were: (a) being male; (b) having Italian nationality; (c) being 18-40 years old; (d) having completed the whole set of questionnaires.

However, 7 participants were excluded because the computer did not save the information about their membership to the experimental or control groups. One other participant was excluded because he responded “other” to the question about his gender, while another one was excluded because he was not Italian.

Thus, the final sample consisted in 180 Italian men participants, both heterosexual (N = 91, 50.6%) and gay/bisexual (N = 89, 49.4%). The age range was between 18 and 40 years old (M = 28.23, SD = 5.59), and it was normally distributed. Descriptive and socio-demographic characteristics of the sample can be seen in Table 17.

Table 17. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations about socio-demographics (n = 180)

Descriptive of the sample's characteristics	Participants		
	Heterosexual Men (n = 91)	Gay/Bisexual Men (n = 89)	Total (n = 180)
Age	28.52 (6.01)	27.94 (5.14)	28.23 (5.59)
Socio-economic Status	6.48 (1.33)	6.27 (1.28)	6.38 (1.30)
Educational Level			
Middle School Diploma	9 (9.9%)	1 (1.1%)	10 (5.6%)
High School Diploma	41 (45.1%)	45 (50.6%)	86 (47.8%)
Bachelor Degree	21 (23.1%)	12 (13.4%)	33 (18.3%)
Master Degree	16 (17.5%)	24 (27.0%)	40 (22.2%)
Post-degree Diploma	4 (4.4%)	7 (7.9%)	11 (6.1%)
Work			
Full time Employed	37 (40.7%)	32 (36.0%)	69 (38.3%)
Part time Employed	17 (18.6%)	15 (16.9%)	26 (14.4%)
Unemployed	10 (11.0%)	4 (4.5%)	20 (11.1%)
Student	24 (26.4%)	38 (42.6%)	62 (34.5%)
Other	3 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.7%)
Residency			
Northern Italy	1 (1.1%)	5 (5.6%)	6 (3.3%)
Central Italy	61 (67.0%)	48 (53.9%)	109 (60.6%)
Southern Italy	29 (31.9%)	36 (40.5%)	65 (36.1%)
Religion			
Atheist or Agnostic	37 (40.7%)	47 (52.8%)	84 (46.7%)
Catholic	46 (50.5%)	28 (31.5%)	74 (41.1%)
Other	8 (8.8%)	14 (15.7%)	22 (12.2%)
Political Orientation	3.56 (1.51)	2.92 (1.03)	3.24 (1.33)

Note. Standard deviations and percentages are in parentheses

Measures

Identifying Information and Sexual Orientation. We collected data about participants' socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, residency, education, employment, economic status, religious affiliation, political orientation and sexual orientation. Participants were asked to report their sexual orientation by responding to an item with six alternative responses: 1 = *Exclusively heterosexual*, 2 = *predominantly heterosexual*, 3 = *bisexual*, 4 = *predominantly homosexual*, 5 = *exclusively homosexual*; 6 = *Other*. In the case of the "other" alternative, participants were invited to specify their sexual orientation. Subsequently, participants were included in only 2 groups: Heterosexual versus Gay/Bisexual participants.

Education was investigated by asking the higher educational level completed and participants could choose 6 alternative responses: 1 = *Elementary School Diploma*, 2 = *Middle School Diploma*, 3 = *Higher School Diploma*, 4 = *Bachelor Degree*, 5 = *Master Degree*, 6 = *Post Degree Diploma*. We explored participants' employment status by asking their current work condition. They had the following alternative responses: 1 = *full-time employed*, 2 = *part-time employed*, 3 = *unemployed*, 4 = *student*, 5 = *other*.

Socio-economic status was asked through a graphic single item, where participants saw a depicted stairway with 10 steps and they had to mark the step where they would site themselves. The higher steps corresponded to higher socio-economic status whereas the lower steps indicated lower socio-economic status.

Participants responded to one single item about religious affiliation with the following alternative responses: 1 = *Atheist or Agnostic*, 2 = *Catholic*; 3 = *Other religious affiliation*. In this last case, participants were invited to specify it. Finally, political orientation was investigated by a single item with 7 alternative responses where 1 corresponded to extreme-left and 7 corresponded to extreme-right.

Italian Validation of the Modern Homophobia Scale–Gay Version (MHS-G, Lingiardi et al., 2005). In order to measure heterosexual participants' sexual stigma, we used the Italian validation of the Modern Homophobia Scale (Morrison & Morrison, 2003). In consisted in 22 items with statements about gay men, and participants are invited to rate their degree of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*. A total score was used by averaging the 22 items, after having reversed 6 items and higher scores indicated higher sexual stigma. An example of item was: "*The thought of two men having a romantic relationship makes me uncomfortable*". For the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .93.

The Measure of Internalized Sexual Stigma–Gay Version (MISS-G, Lingiardi et al., 2012). As in previous studies of this doctoral dissertation, we used the MISS-G to evaluate gay/bisexual participants' internalized sexual stigma. Participants responded to 17 items on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 = *I agree* to 5 to *I disagree*. Higher scores corresponded to greater internalized sexual stigma. Although the MISS-G consists in three factors (identity, social discomfort, and sexuality), for the current study we employed the total score of the scale, by averaging all the 17 items. An example of item was: "*If it were possible, I'd do anything to change my sexual orientation*". In this study, Cronbach's alpha was .88.

Traditional Masculinity-Femininity Scale (TMF, Kachel, Steffens, & Niedlich, 2016). We used the TMF scale to measure participants' adherence to traditional gender roles. Such a scale consisted in 6 items with statements that end with suspensive dots and the 7-point Likert scale corresponded to final part of the sentences from 1 = *very feminine* to 7 = *very masculine*. The 6 items were the following: "*I consider myself as…*", "*Ideally, I would like to be…*", "*Traditionally, my interests would be considered as…"*, "*Traditionally, my attitudes and beliefs would be considered as…*", "*Traditionally, my*

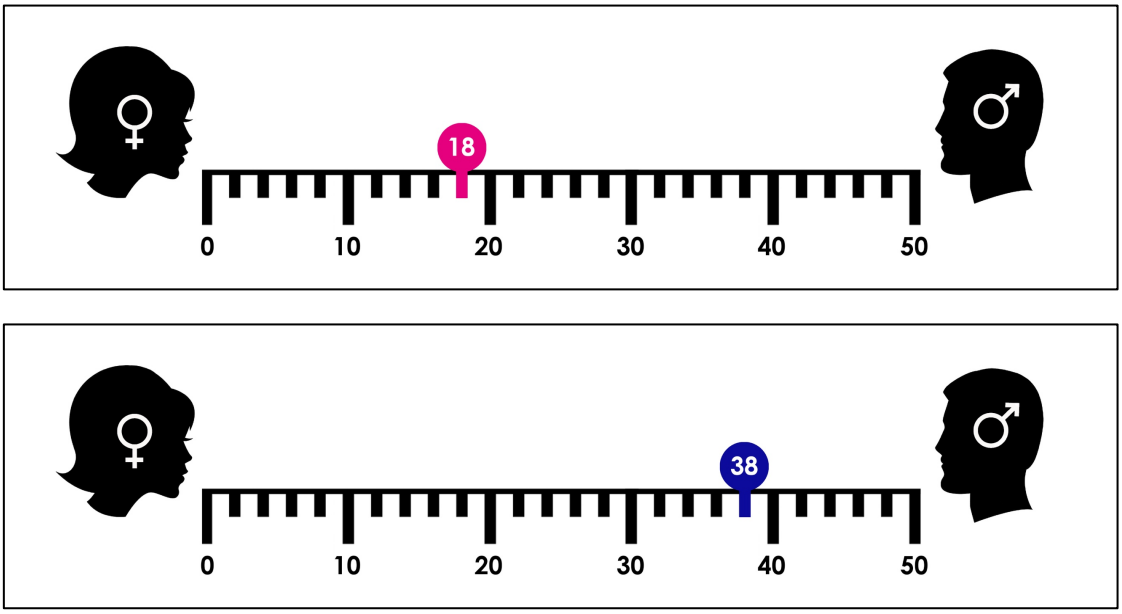
behavior could be considered as…", "*Traditionally, my outer appearance could be considered as…*". The total score was obtained by the average of the 6 items and higher score corresponded to higher adherence to traditional masculine gender role, whereas lower score was indicative of higher adherence to traditional feminine gender role. For the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .89 for gay/bisexual men participants and .92 for heterosexual men participants.

Manipulation of Masculinity Threat. In order to manipulate the masculinity threat, we asked participants to respond to the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI, Bem et al., 1974), that was presented as a validated personality test very used in psychological research. Before the administration of the BSRI, participants read on the screen that such a test returned a total score from 0 to 50, where 0 corresponded to an extremely feminine personality where 50 corresponded to an extremely masculine personality.

In addition, the two-third participants also read that the computer would show them their score and that the researcher would not know their result. Thus, independently of what participants responded, one-third of them obtained a total score of 18, index of a more feminine personality, another one-third obtained a total score of 38, index of a more masculine personality, and the last one-third did not receive any feedback, constituting the control group. The two possible feedbacks of the two experimental groups appeared on the screen after few seconds that participants finished the BSRI.

To reinforce this manipulation, the feedbacks were shown graphically by a centimeter meter, where two stylized heads of a woman and of a man were collocated to the extreme poles of the meter. Furthermore, the score was colored in pink for the experimental group of "*masculinity threat*" and it was blue for the other experimental group of "*masculinity confirmation*". These feedbacks can be seen in Figure 13.

Figure 13. *The two feedbacks received by the participants of the two experimental groups*



Note. The experimental group of "masculinity threat" received the pink score, whereas the experimental group of "masculinity confirmation" received the blue scores.

The Implicit Association Test (Greenwald et al., 1998). In order to have an implicit measure of negative attitudes toward feminine gay men, we employed the Implicit Association Test (IAT). It traditionally includes two combined tasks, where stimuli belonging to four concepts that are differently mapped onto two responses. At the base of IAT, there's the idea that if people are able to react fast when two concepts share a response, this means that such concepts are more strongly associated for these people. Specifically, our stimuli were related to the concepts of "*positive*", *negative*", "*effeminate*", and "*masculine*".

In one task, the stimuli that represented "positive or masculine" required one response, while stimuli that represented "negative or effeminate" required the other response. Instead, in the other task, the stimuli that represented "positive or effeminate"

required one response, while stimuli that represented “negative or masculine” required the other response. Participants were invited to respond as fast as they could, by pressing a left versus right key press. A participant with more negative attitude toward feminine gay men should be less able to react faster in the positive/effeminate, than negative/masculine task.

The stimuli associated with the concepts of “effeminate” and “masculine” were the 10 pictures selected in the previous pilot study, that can be seen in the Appendix 3. Instead the stimuli associated with the concepts of “positive” and “negative” were the following 10 words: “*to smile*”, “*joy*”, “*happiness*”, “to *love*”, “*to help*” for the positive dimension, whereas “*to kill*”, “*to steal*”, “*war*”, “*disease*”, and “*to trick*” for the negative dimension. Before beginning the IAT, participants have the possibility to become acquainted with the stimuli, by observe the 10 words and the 10 pictures on the screen for one minute.

After reading the instruction of the IAT, participants saw each stimulus in the center of the screen, while the labels of the four dimensions appeared at the top left and right of the screen. One new stimulus appeared after participants associated the previous one. A red cross appeared in the center of the screen each time the participant made a mistake. The IAT consisted in five blocks of 20, 20, 80, 20 and 80 associations respectively.

The three blocks with 20 stimuli were just trial task to allow participants to familiarize with the IAT procedure. The first trial block required to associate the 10 words to the concepts of “positive” or “negative”. The second trial block required to associate the 10 pictures of gay men to the concepts of “masculine” or “effeminate”. The third trial block was similar to the first one, but the two dimensions were inverted on the top left and right of the screen.

The two blocks requiring 80 associations constituted the experimental blocks. The first one had the labels “positive or masculine” on the top left of the screen and “negative

or effeminate" on the top right of the screen. Instead the second one had the labels "positive or effeminate" on the top left of the screen and "negative or masculine" on the top right of the screen.

The order of the stimuli within each block was randomized and they were presented over and over. Furthermore, we created two versions of the same IAT, by reversing the order presentation of the two experimental blocks, in order to check possible order effects. Half participants were administered one of the two versions of the IAT.

The total score of the IAT was computed similar to the IAT *d* effect (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2005), except that no "error penalty" was used (Steffens, Kirschbaum, & Glados, 2008). Specifically, the reaction time difference between the positive-masculine/negative-effeminate and the positive-effeminate/negative-masculine tasks was computed and divided by each individual's standard deviation across both tasks.

Manipulation Check. We used two measures to check that our manipulation was effective. The first one consisted in a scale with 5 emotional adjectives and participants included in the two experimental groups were invited to rate how they felt, after they received the fictitious total score in the previous personality test. Participants of control group responded to the same scale too, but the instruction asked them to respond to the several items, by thinking how they felt after responding to the previous personality test, without mentioning the fictitious total score. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to "*not at all*" and 5 to "*extremely*". The 5 emotional items were the following: "*sad*", "*nervous*", "*threatened*", "*annoyed*", and "*discomfort*". A total score was calculated by averaging all the 5 items, so that to higher scores corresponded more negative affect. The current Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .90 for gay/bisexual men participants and .80 for heterosexual men participants. The second manipulation

check consisted in another one single item on the same 5-point Likert scale, that asked "*I think I got a higher male personality score, compared to most other men*".

Data analysis

After calculating the frequencies and percentages about the descriptive of the sample, we checked the assumptions of normality of our continuous variables, by calculating the indexes of skewness and kurtosis. The following thresholds were defined, as directed by Kline (2015): absolute skewness and kurtosis values lower than 3 and 8 respectively. Multicollinearity was tested by examining the correlations among the variables,and using a maximum correlation threshold of |.80| as an indicator of no multicollinearity (Field, 2009).

Next, we proceeded with the analyses of manipulation effectiveness. We ran two ANOVAs 2 (Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual versus Gay/Bisexual) x 3 (Manipulation: Masculinity threat versus Masculinity confirmation versus Control group) between subjects, on the score of emotional scale and on the score about the perceived comparison with the most other men respectively. In addition, we deepened such results with planned comparison analyses.

Subsequently, we ran the main analysis consisting in an ANOVA 2 (Sexual orientation) x 3 (Manipulation) between subjects, on the IAT total score. In the case of significant interaction, we would deepen it by simple effects analyses. This analysis should test both our hypothesis 1 (heterosexual men, more than gay men, would be more likely to associate negative stimuli to feminine than masculine gay men), and one of the two alternative hypotheses 2a or 2b. Hypothesis 2a regarding the "approach attempt" to restore the masculinity threat, expected that participants in the experimental group of masculinity threat would report more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay

men, compared to the participants in the "masculinity confirmation" experimental group and control group. Hypothesis 2b regarding the "avoidance attempt" to restore masculinity threat expected that participants subjected to masculinity threat would not report more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men, rather than the control group or the other experimental group of "masculinity confirmation".

Finally, two separate moderated regression analyses were ran on the IAT total score of heterosexual and gay/bisexual participants respectively, to test the last hypothesis 3 (the adherence to traditional masculine gender role would affect negative implicit attitudes more than sexual stigma), hypothesis 4a and hypothesis 4b (the moderating role of sexual stigma on the relations between participants' traditional masculinity and negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men). In the former regression, we included sexual stigma (MHS-G) as predictor, the adherence to traditional masculinity (TMF) as moderator and manipulation groups as covariate. In the latter regression, we included internalized sexual stigma (MISS-G) as predictor, the TMF score as moderator and manipulation groups as covariate. In both the moderated regression analyses, we would deepen the potential significant interactions with simple slope analyses.

Results

Preliminary and Correlation analyses

Firstly, we checked the assumptions of normality and multicollinearity of the variables, by calculating correlations and the indexes of skewness and kurtosis. The results are reported in Table 18. The findings showed that significant correlations ranged from $r = |.18|$ to $r = |.67|$, indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue. Furthermore,

skewness and kurtosis values ranged from -0.73 to 2.10, showing that the assumptions of normality were met.

Correlations among the variables that will be included in the following analyses indicated a positive association between heterosexual participants' sexual stigma and their adherence to traditional masculinity, $r = .37$, $p < .01$, with a medium effect size. This relation suggested that the more heterosexual participants adhered to traditional masculinity role, the more they reported higher sexual stigma. Instead, gay/bisexual participants' internalized sexual stigma was not significantly associated to their adherence to traditional masculinity, $r = .12$, $p = .24$. This result is in line with previous research founding a quadratic and non-linear association between internalized sexual stigma and adherence to traditional gender roles both in gay an in lesbian participants (Salvati et al., 2018a).

The IAT scores were positively associated to participants' traditional masculinity, $r = .38$, $p < .01$, with a medium effect size and with heterosexual participants' sexual stigma, $r = .25$, $p < .01$, with a low effect size. However, such last correlations did not take into account participants' membership to manipulation or control groups, thus they are not very informative.

Table 18. *Pearson's r, means, standard deviations and indexes of skewness and kurtosis of the variables (N = 180)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Sexual Orientation	1								
2. Age	.05	1							
3. Educational Level	-.14	.33**	1						
4. Socio-Economic Status	.08	.10	.15	1					
5. Political Orientation	.24**	-.10	-.12	.11	1				
6. Sexual Stigma (MHS-G)	-	.06	-.17	.15	.67**	1			
7. Internalized Sexual Stigma (MISS-G)	-	-.02	-.13	-.11	.15	-	1		
8. Traditional Masculinity (TMF)	.37**	.10	-.10	.06	.20**	.37**	.12	1	
9. IAT score	.32**	.07	-.13	-.18*	.20**	.25**	.09	.38**	1
Mean	-	28.23	3.76	6.38	3.24	1.98	1.59	5.26	0.04
Standard Deviation	-	5.59	1.05	1.30	1.33	0.71	0.55	1.17	0.44
Skewness	-	0.24	0.54	-0.44	0.59	0.89	1.46	-0.22	-0.12
Kurtosis	-	-0.69	-0.73	0.60	-0.37	-0.28	2.10	-0.78	-0.11

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Sexual Orientation was coded: -1 = Gay/Bisexual ($n = 89$); 1= Heterosexual ($n = 91$);

To higher scores in political orientation corresponded greater right-conservative political orientation;

To higher IAT scores corresponded more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men.

ANOVAs about effectiveness of the manipulation

We ran two ANOVAs 2 (Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual versus Gay/Bisexual) x 3 (Manipulation: Masculinity threat versus Masculinity confirmation versus Control group) between subjects, on the score of emotional scale and on the score about the perceived comparison with the most other men respectively. Subsequently, we deepened the significant results with planned comparisons analyses. Means, standard deviation and group size by several manipulation groups were reported in Table 19.

Regarding the former manipulation check, we expected that participants in the experimental "masculinity threat" group would report higher negative emotions after the fictitious personality test, compared both to the other experimental "masculinity confirmation" group, and to control group with any feedback to the test. Analyses revealed a significant main effect of our manipulation on negative emotional scale, $F(2, 172) = 2.16$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, whereas neither the main effect of sexual orientation, $F(1, 172) = 0.35$, $p = .555$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, nor the two-way interaction resulted significant, $F(2, 172) = 0.30$, $p = .741$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$.

In order to verify that our main effect confirmed our expected direction, we ran a polynomial planned comparison analysis. The findings confirmed our expectations, revealing a significant linear effect = -0.29, $p = .002$. As shown in the Figure 14, the results indicated that participants in the condition of "masculinity threat" reported the highest negative emotions, whereas participants in the condition of "masculinity confirmation" reported the lowest negative emotions.

Regarding the latter manipulation check, we expected that participants in the experimental "masculinity threat" group would report lower perception, than both "masculinity confirmation" and control groups, about having got a higher male personality score, compared to the most other men. Analyses revealed a significant main

effect of manipulation, $F(2, 172) = 14.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$, whereas neither the main effect of sexual orientation, $F(1, 172) = 1.2$, $p = .272$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, nor the two-way interaction resulted significant, $F(2, 172) = 0.68$, $p = 5071$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$.

Again, to test that our main effect of manipulation confirmed the expected direction, we ran a polynomial planned comparison analysis. The findings confirmed our expectations, revealing a significant linear effect = 0.64, $p < .001$. As shown in the Figure 15, the results indicated that participants in the condition of "masculinity threat" reported the lowest perception about having got a higher male personality score, compared to the most other men, whereas participants in the condition of "masculinity confirmation" reported the lowest score.

Table 19. *Means, Standard deviations and group size by manipulation groups*

			Check 1		*Check 2*	
Sexual Orientation	*Manipulation Groups*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Gay/Bisexual Men	Masculinity Threat	29	1.84	0.90	1.48	0.63
	Control Group	28	1.51	0.74	2.32	0.86
	Masculinity Confirmation	31	1.32	0.63	2.58	1.09
Heterosexual Men	Masculinity Threat	31	1.66	0.87	1.87	0.85
	Control Group	31	1.45	0.60	2.42	1.06
	Masculinity Confirmation	28	1.35	0.51	2.57	1.17
Total Sample	Masculinity Threat	60	1.75	0.88	1.68	0.77
	Control Group	59	1.58	0.66	2.37	0.96
	Masculinity Confirmation	59	1.34	0.57	2.58	1.12

Note. Check 1 refers to Negative Emotional Score; Check 2 refers to the perception about having got a higher masculine personality score, compared to most other men.

Figure 14. *Scores on the Negative Emotional Scale by Sexual Orientation and Manipulation groups (n = 180).*

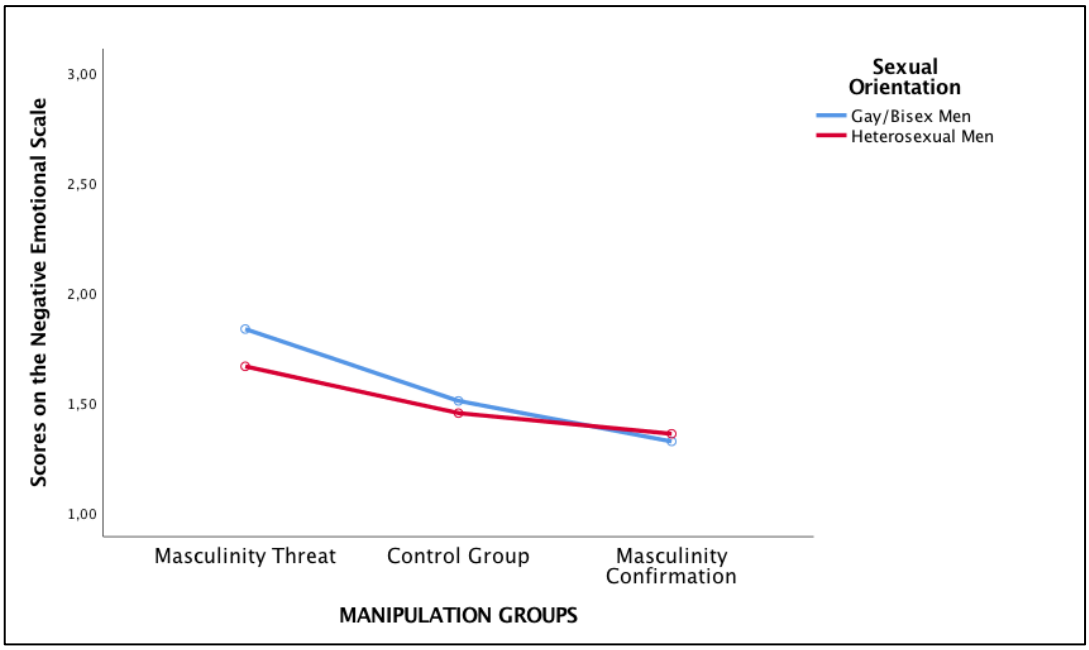
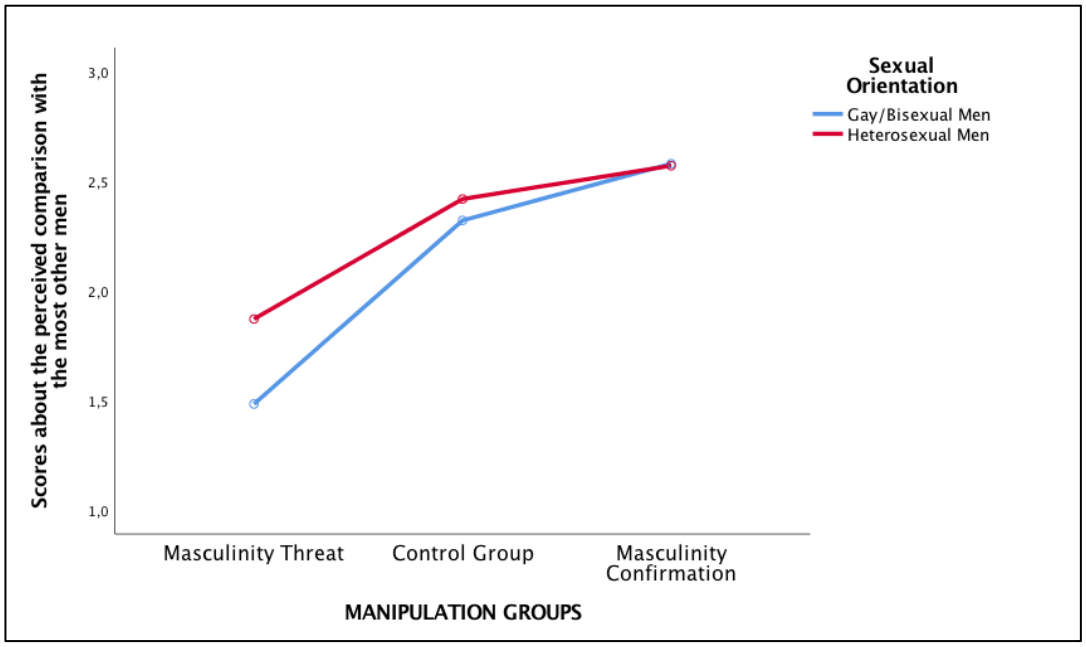


Figure 15. *Scores on the perceived comparison with the most other men by Sexual Orientation and Manipulation groups (n = 180).*



Main ANOVA on the IAT score

In order to test our hypothesis 1, and to verify one of our alternative hypotheses 2a or 2b, we ran the main analysis consisting in an ANOVA 2 (Sexual orientation) x 3 (Manipulation) between subjects, on the IAT total score. Based on our hypothesis 1, we expected that heterosexual men participants, would be more likely to report higher implicit negative attitudes toward feminine gay men, rather than gay/bisexual men participants.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b wants to verify the "approach attempt" or the "avoidance attempt" respectively, in order to restore participants' masculinity in the experimental group of "masculinity threat". The former expected that participants in the "masculinity threat" group would report more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men, compared to the other two groups. The latter, instead, expected no differences among the three groups on implicit negative attitudes toward feminine gat men.

The findings showed a significant main effect of participants' sexual orientation, $F(1, 174) = 19.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, confirming our hypothesis 1. Indeed, the results indicated that heterosexual participants reported more implicit negative attitudes toward feminine gay men ($M = 0.17$, $SD = 0.46$), compared to gay/bisexual participants ($M = -0.11$, $SD = 0.39$). Neither main effect of manipulation, $F(2, 174) = 0.75$, $p = .476$, $\eta_p^2 < .01$, nor the two-way interaction resulted significant, $F(2, 172) = 0.50$, $p = .609$, $\eta_p^2 = <. 01$.

These findings seem to suggest empirical evidence more for the "avoidance attempt" (hypothesis 2b), than "approach attempt" (hypothesis 2a). Specifically, participants who were threatened by a fictitious feminine personality feedback did not report greater negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men ($M = -0.01$, $SD = 0.46$), compared to participants that did not receive any feedback ($M = 0.05$, $SD = 0.46$),

or that received a feedback that confirmed their own masculine personality ($M = 0.07$, $SD = 0.42$).

Moderated Regression Analyses

Our last three hypotheses were testes by two separate moderated regression analyses on the IAT total score of heterosexual and gay/bisexual participants respectively. Hypotheses 3 stated that that traditional masculinity (TMF) would affect negative implicit attitudes more than sexual stigma (MHS-G) in heterosexual participants and more than internalized sexual stigma (MISS-G) in gay/bisexual participants. Instead, hypothesis 4a and 4b expected (in heterosexual and gay/bisexual respectively) a moderating effect of sexual stigma and internalized sexual stigma on the relationship between traditional masculinity and negative implicit attitudes toward gay men. In both analyses we added the manipulation group as covariate.

The findings about moderated regression analysis on heterosexual participants showed a significant main effect of TMF, $B = 0.11$, $SE = .05$, $\beta = 0.30$, $t = 2.34$, $p = .022$, indicating that the more participants reported higher traditional masculinity, the more they showed higher negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men. Neither main effect of MHS-G, $B = 0.10$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = 0.18$, $t = 1.29$, $p = .201$, nor the two-way interaction resulted significant, $B = -0.04$, $SE = .07$, $\beta = -0.08$, $t = -0.55$, $p = .585$. The model explained significant variance of IAT score, $F(4, 86) = 3.77$, $R^2 = .15$, $SE = .19$, $p = .007$.

The findings about moderated regression analysis on gay/bisexual participants showed a significant main effect of TMF, $B = 0.09$, $SE = .04$, $\beta = 0.24$, $t = 2.58$, $p = .012$, indicating that gay/bisexual participants adhering more to traditional masculinity were more likely to report negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men. The main effect of MISS-G was not significant, $B = -0.01$, $SE = .08$, $\beta = -0.01$, $t = -0.03$, $p = .972$, whereas

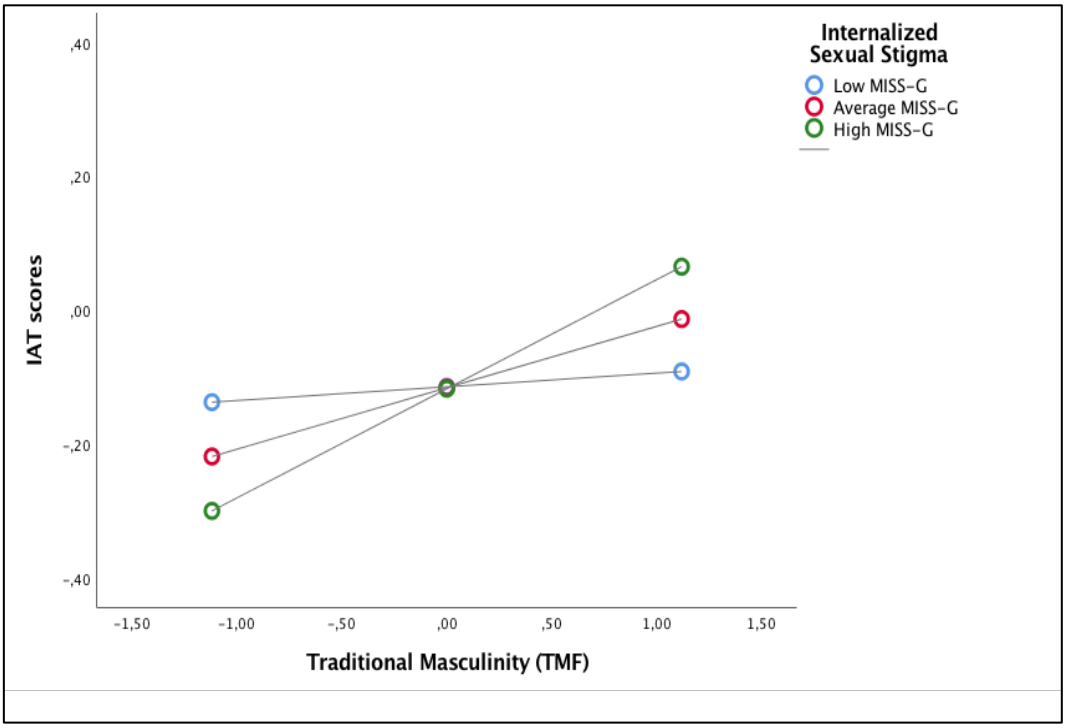
the two-way interaction resulted significant, $B = 0.13$, $SE = .06$, $\beta = 0.19$, $t = 2.32$, $F(1, 84) = 5.40$, $R^2 = .06$, $p = .023$. The model explained significant variance of IAT score, $F(4, 84) = 3.13$, $R^2 = .13$, $SE = .14$, $p = .019$.

We deepened the significant two-way interaction by simple slopes analysis. Findings can be showed in Figure 16. They showed that the effect of TMF on the IAT score was significant only when participant reported high internalized sexual stigma (MISS-G), $B = 0.16$, $SE = .05$, $\beta = 0.43$, $t = 3.40$, $p = .001$, and not low internalized sexual stigma, $B = -0.55$, $SE = .02$, $\beta = 0.05$, $t = 0.44$, $p = .659$.

Based on such results, hypothesis 3 was confirmed both for heterosexual and gay/bisexual participants. Indeed, participants' traditional masculinity affected negative implicit attitudes toward gay men more than sexual stigma in heterosexual men and more than internalized sexual stigma in gay/bisexual participants. Hypothesis 4a was not confirmed, because analysis did not indicate that heterosexual participants' sexual stigma moderated the relationship between traditional masculinity and negative implicit attitudes toward gay men. Instead, hypothesis 4b was confirmed, because analyses on gay/bisexual participants found that their internalized sexual stigma moderated the relationship between traditional masculinity and negative attitudes toward feminine gay men.[1]

[1] We repeated all the previous analyses also adding the variable including the two versions of the IAT. However, because any significant effect resulted, we preferred to report all the analysis without this variable, for reasons of greater clarity for the readers.

Figure 16. *Findings of simple slope analysis on gay/bisexual participants' negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men (IAT) (n = 89)*



Discussion

The present last study of this doctoral dissertation had the aims to deepen the results found in the three previous studies (Salvati et al., 2016; Salvati et al., 2018b; 2018c), and to overcome some of their limitations. In this research we investigated implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men pictures by the IAT (Greenwald et al., 1998), in a sample of both heterosexual and gay/bisexual Italian participants. The comparative nature of the IAT allowed to bring out differences between implicit negative attitudes of heterosexual and gay/bisexual men. Indeed, all the three previous studies used independent explicit

measures of emotional attitudes, that made it more difficult for the participants to express their possible negative attitude toward feminine gay men.

In line with this and with previous literature (Banse et al., 2001; Jellison et al., 2004), our first hypothesis expected that when participants would have faced with a choice of associations between two stimuli, heterosexual men, more that gay men, would have reported more negative implicit attitudes toward feminine, rather than masculine gay men. This might be explained both as an ingroup bias (Greenwald et al., 1998; Rudman, Greenwald, & McGhee, 2001), and with several argumentations based on the three possible mentioned functions by Herek (2013): "social expressive", "value expressive", and "defensive" functions of sexual stigma.

Furthermore, such a study wanted to contribute to the literature about the effects of masculinity threat on attitudes toward homosexuality (Bosson et al., 2012; Glick et al., 2007; Hunt et al., 2016; O'Connor et al., 2017; Reese et al., 2014; Stotzer & Shih, 2012; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). Because of previous literature indicated not-uniform results, we wanted to verify two alternative hypotheses, based on different participants' attempts to restore their masculinity when threatened.

On one hand, our hypothesis 2a referred to an "approach attempt", supported by several studies reporting that heterosexual participants' would react more negatively toward gay men, in case of threat of their masculinity (Glick et al., 2007; Tally & Betterncourt, 2008). In line with that, we might have expected that participants would have reported more negative implicit attitudes toward gay men in the condition of masculinity threat, compared to the condition of masculinity confirmation and control.

On the other hand, our hypothesis 2b referred to an "avoidance attempt", supported by other studies founding that men would prefer to distance themselves from gay men, when their masculinity is threatened (Bosson et al., 2011; Hunt et al., 2016). In line with

that, we might have expected that participants subjected to masculinity threat would not report higher negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay men, compared to masculinity confirmation or control groups.

Our results seem to support more this last hypothesis. In fact, both heterosexual and gay/bisexual participants whose masculinity was threatened by a fictitious feminine personality feedback did not report more negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men, compared both to participants who did not receive any feedback and to participants who received a fictitious masculine personality feedback that confirmed their masculinity. Such a result seems to suggest that men whose masculinity is threatened, might use different strategies to restore their masculinity that do not include having more implicit negative attitudes toward feminine gay men. Alternatively, our manipulation may have been too weak and therefore not very effective.

However, it is also possible that implicit attitudes are not the best indicator of a possible strategy to restore masculinity threat. In fact, implicit measures of negative attitudes are not expression of people's conscious evaluations, individuals are not able to control them, thus implicit attitudes are slower to change than more explicit attitudes (Sloman, 1996; Smith & DeCoster, 2000). However, this is only a speculative explanation that should be tested by further studies.

Furthermore, our hypothesis 3 was confirmed too. It stated that participants' self-perceived traditional masculinity would have affected negative implicit attitudes toward gay men, more than sexual stigma for heterosexual men and internalized sexual stigma for gay/bisexual men (Salvati et al., 2018a, 2018c). Specifically, the more participants would report high traditional masculinity, the more they would show negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men. Correlation analyses gave a first confirmation to such hypothesis, by showing that the relation between participants' traditional masculinity and

negative implicit attitudes toward gay men, was stronger than both association with sexual stigma in heterosexual participants and with internalized sexual stigma in gay/bisexual participants. Regression analyses strengthened such findings, showing that neither heterosexual participants' sexual stigma, nor gay/bisexual participants' internalized sexual stigma predicted negative implicit attitudes toward gay men, whereas traditional masculinity predicted them in the expected direction.

One of the possible reasons that might contribute to explain these results might regard our specific "object" of attitudes: the feminine gay men. Indeed, sexual stigma and internalized sexual stigma refer more to negative attitudes toward the general superordinate category of gay men, than the specific subgrouping of feminine gay men. These latter ones, more than superordinate category, explicitly challenge the boundaries of masculinity and this could contribute to explain why traditional masculinity was found more related to negative attitudes toward feminine gay men than sexual stigma or internalized sexual stigma.

Furthermore, the result about the relation between traditional masculinity (TMF, Kachel et al., 2016) and negative implicit attitudes toward gay men, showed a different direction, compared to the relationship found in the first study of this doctoral dissertation (Salvati et al., 2016) between explicit attitudes toward gay men and the Bem Sex Role characteristics of stereotypical masculinity (BSRI, Bem, 1974). A possible explanation of this contradictory result might be the different construct evaluated by the BSRI and the TMF measures.

The former evaluates participants' perception to have characteristics stereotypically associated to masculinity, such as strength, assertiveness, or leadership skills, and it might not capture the complex and multidimensional nature of masculinity (Choi & Fuqua, 2003). Several authors stated that BSRI appears to tap constructs, often referred to agency

and communion (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Fiske et al., 2002), rather than masculinity in general. The latter, instead, is more specific to measure participants' gender-role self-concept, including its three central aspects (Constantinople, 1973): *gender-role adoption* (how masculine an individual considers himself), *gender-role preference* (how masculine an individual ideally would like to be), and *gender-role identity* (how an individual actually looks compared to expected gender-typical appearances based on societal norms). Thus, TMF might offer more reliable results than BSRI. Moreover, the fact that TMF, compared to BSRI, was found positively associated to negative attitudes both in heterosexual and in gay/bisexual men, might be one proof to support this.

Finally, our two last hypotheses 4a and 4b were specific for heterosexual and gay/bisexual participants respectively. We expected that gay/bisexual participants with high traditional masculinity would have reported more negative implicit attitudes toward gay men, only in the condition of high and not low internalized sexual stigma (hypothesis 4a), and this expectation was verified. Instead, the same hypothesis about the moderating role of sexual stigma on the relation between heterosexual participants' traditional masculinity and negative attitudes toward feminine gay men (hypothesis 4b) was not confirmed.

Gay/bisexual men with low traditional masculinity are often the target of prejudice and discriminations (Cohen et al., 2009; D'Augelli et al., 2006; Glick et al.., 2007; Rubio & Green, 2009; Salvati et al., 2016; 2018b; Skidmore et al., 2006; Steffens et al., 2015). Thus, the fact that they did not showed implicit negative attitudes toward member of their ingroup was not surprising. Even gay/bisexual participants with an high traditional masculinity, but who are confident and comfortable with their sexual identity, might see feminine gay men less threatening for their masculine identity. Their concept of sexual identity could be more unrelated to the concept of masculinity, compared to gay/bisexual

participants with high internalized sexual stigma (Govorun et al., 2006; Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny, 2009).

Instead, the fact that heterosexual men's sexual stigma did not moderate the relationship between their traditional masculinity and negative attitudes toward gay men was particularly notable. Our results suggested that traditional masculinity was a sufficient factor for heterosexual men to have negative attitudes toward feminine gay men, independently from their levels of sexual stigma. Such an aspect was in line previous research indicating that the repudiation of femininity might constitute an attempt to reinforce the social status as heterosexual men and to strengthen the construction of a masculine identity (Govorun et al., 2006; Kilianski, 2003).

Limitations and future directions

As previous studies of this doctoral dissertation the main limitation of this current research is characterized by the low generalizability of our results, due to the snowball sampling and to the specific characteristics of the participants. Indeed, all participants were Italian, with age ranging from 18 to 40 years old. We cannot know if these results could be replicated in different national contexts, thus future studies might explore this possibility. Further research might also involve a more representative sample, including more bisexual men, so that they might constitute a different group from both gay and heterosexual men, in order to explore possible differences among them. Furthermore, such a study might be replicated with a female sample too, that includes both heterosexual and lesbian and bisexual women.

Another limitation is the lack of a more specific dependent variable related to the "avoidance attempt" hypothesis. The fact that our participants in the condition of masculinity threat did not report more negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay

men, did not necessarily support the alternative hypothesis of “avoidance attempt”. It simply did not confirm the hypothesis of “approach attempt” to restore masculinity. Thus, additional research should be conducted to better verify such alternative hypothesis. Such an example, a second IAT might be created, simply by replacing the two evaluative concepts of “positive” and “negative” with the concepts of “self” and “others”. These latter ones could constitute good measures of distancing of self from feminine gay men.

Conclusions

The main purpose of the current doctoral dissertation was to contribute to the literature about negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals, within the sexual minorities themselves. The poor previous literature that investigated these attitudes in gay participants and the total absence of studies that included lesbian participants, have constituted one of the motivations that led us to want to conduct the four studies of this doctoral thesis. The second motivation was the constant daily evidence that feminine gay men are often a discriminated target, within the LGBT community itself. We were not surprised into knowing that the daily evidence was supported by the empirical evidence of scientific literature too, but that investigated only heterosexual people's negative attitudes toward the feminine gay men. The third motivation was the lack of studies that investigated the role of internalized sexual stigma on gay and lesbian people's negative attitudes toward sexual minority individuals.

Considering how strong the traditional gender roles is related to sexual stigma and internalized sexual stigma in heterosexual and sexual minorities respectively, we wanted to deepen their interaction role on peoples' negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals, who are not conform to stereotypical gender roles. Thus, the absence of previous research about such specific targets, that included sexual minority participants, and the investigation of participants' sexual stigma and adherence to traditional gender roles, represent all notable novelty aspects of this doctoral dissertation. Another relevant aspect was the use of implicit methodologies too, that strengthened the results pointed out by explicit measures.

Specifically, the first study of this thesis gave a first empirical confirmation that gay men, as well as heterosexual men, might have more negative explicit attitudes toward

feminine, rather than masculine gay men. Moreover, the results confirmed that internalized sexual stigma plays a relevant role on these negative attitudes. Regarding participants' perception about their personality traits, stereotypically associated to masculinity, the findings indicated that they did not affect explicit negative attitudes in gay participants. Instead, the results showed that heterosexual men with less personality traits traditionally associated to masculinity reported more negative attitudes toward feminine, rather than masculine gay men.

The second study extended these results by including two stereotypical masculine and feminine lesbian target too, and by including also lesbian participants. The findings confirmed that both for lesbian and gay participants, the feminine gay man was the target that elicited more negative attitudes, both compared to masculine gay man and to masculine and feminine lesbian woman. The results also showed that the masculine lesbian woman elicited more negative attitudes than feminine lesbian woman in both gay and lesbian participants.

The third study focused exclusively on a sample of lesbian participants, in order to deepen the role of their internalized sexual stigma and their adherence to stereotypical feminine personality traits. The findings confirmed that the feminine gay man target elicited more negative attitudes than the other three targets did. In addition, the results indicated that lesbians with more stereotypical masculine personality traits hold more negative attitudes toward the two feminine gay and lesbian targets, compared to lesbians with more stereotypical feminine personality traits. Furthermore, the findings showed a moderating role of internalized sexual stigma on the relationship between participants' stereotypical femininity traits and their negative attitudes toward the feminine gay man target. Specifically, more feminine lesbians reported more negative attitudes toward the feminine gay man target, only if they showed high internalized sexual stigma, whereas

more masculine lesbians had more negative attitudes toward the feminine gay man target, regardless of their levels of internalized sexual stigma.

Finally, the fourth and last study wanted to deepen some of these previous results, by adopting an implicit methodology to measure negative attitudes and by manipulating the heterosexual and gay/bisexual participants' masculinity, through its threat or confirmation. The findings indicated that heterosexual men, compared to gay/bisexual men, hold more negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men. Moreover, the results showed that when participants were subjected to a threat of their masculinity, they did not react more negatively by having more negative implicit attitudes toward the feminine gay man. This would suggest that they might prefer a different strategy to restore their masculinity, such a more avoidance rather than approach strategy. Moreover, this study confirmed that traditional masculinity has a greater impact on these attitudes, compared to sexual stigma and internalized sexual stigma in heterosexual and gay/bisexual people respectively. Specifically, traditional masculinity seems to be a sufficient factor for heterosexual men to have negative attitudes toward feminine gay men, independently from their levels of sexual stigma. Instead, gay/bisexual participants with high traditional masculinity reported more negative implicit attitudes toward feminine gay men, only in the condition of high and not low internalized sexual stigma.

In conclusion, this doctoral thesis is just a first step to contribute to the scientific literature about negative attitudes within LGB community toward gay and lesbian people who violate the traditional gender roles. Our findings tried to help the comprehension of this complex and poorly understood phenomenon. These and futures studies should encourage formative and updating projects in school and in all educational or working settings, in order to explain the different dimensions of human sexuality that are too often confused with traditional gender roles. More and more research about this theme seem to

be crucial to prevent negative psychosocial outcomes for sexual minority people within their communities too. These last should constitute a supportive environment for all young gay, bisexual and lesbian individuals, and not the umpteenth place where sexual minority youths who violate the stereotypical gender roles live a condition of marginalization among marginalized.

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Appendix 1

Feminine Gay Man (GF) Scenario

“My name is Luca, I'm 24 years old and I'm from Rome. I'm 1.80 tall and I'm pretty thin. I like to take care of my appearance a lot because I think it's a fundamental thing. I study to become a stylist and my dream is to establish myself on a global level like many Italian fashion icons. I love fashion and shopping and I always choose carefully what to wear before leaving home, for this reason I always arrive late for appointments. Even as a child, I enjoyed myself so much with my sister to change clothes to her dolls. The weekend nights I often go to the disco to dance with friends and I like to dress in a very flashy way to make myself noticed while I dance the choreography of my favorite singers, Lady Gaga and Beyoncè. Every now and then we go to the cinema, the films that I prefer are romantic ones, even if my favorite is obviously "The devil wears Prada" and I adore Meryl Streep. I describe myself as an imaginative, creative and unconventional person who loves to be the center of attention."

Masculine Gay Man (GM) Scenario

"My name is Luca, I'm 24 and I'm from Rome. I am 1.80 and I have an athletic body that I like to train carefully in the gym. I study Engineering Management and I would like to become a multinational logistics manager. I really like the ball and I enjoy playing fantasy football. As a child, in fact, I enjoyed so much to collect the cards of the players that I was buying every time I had the opportunity. I do not like to go to the disco to dance, in my free time I prefer to organize evenings at home with friends and have fun with the playstation. When we go out, we usually go to a pub or even to the cinema. I really like action movies, especially those with Matt Damon. As a music I listen a lot to Depeche Mode and Muse. I do not like shopping and I do not follow fashion very much and I can not stand those who take a lot of time to prepare. I describe myself as a punctual, very logical and rational person, who does not like being in the center of attention and dressed in a particularly flashy manner."

Appendix 2

In the next pages the four target descriptions are reported.

The first (GIACOMO) is about feminine gay man;

The second (VIOLA) is about masculine lesbian woman.

The third (IGOR) is about masculine gay man;

The fourth (REBECCA) is about feminine lesbian woman.

Below there's a brief description that a gay boy has given about himself for a previous study. We asked to him to write about his studies, his interests and hobbies and his main personality characteristics and ambitions.

Please, read carefully the description in order to answer some questions about him at the following pages.

GIACOMO, 25 YEARS OLD, GAY	
Studies:	Style and Fashion Studies
Hobbies:	Love Novels, Singing, Classic Dance.
4 Adjectives that describe you:	Extroverted, Emotional, Tender, Sociable.
Favourite programs and films:	Grey's Anatomy, The Devil Wears Prada, Musicals.
Brief description about you:	I'm an imaginative and creative boy and I like being the centre of attention. I adore fashion and shopping: I always choose my clothes with care. I like having fun with my friends, I love dancing and going to disco.
How do you imagine yourself in 10 years?	Happy with a man who loves me and who takes care of me.

Below there's a brief description that a lesbian girl has given about herself for a previous study. We asked to her to write about her studies, her interests and hobbies and her main personality characteristics and ambitions.

Please, read carefully the description in order to answer some questions about her at the following pages.

VIOLA, 25 YEARS OLD, LESBIAN	
Studies:	Science and Technics of Sport.
Hobbies:	Football, Photography, Sporting Bets.
4 Adjectives that describe you:	Determined, Scrappy, Obstinate, Independent.
Favourite programs and films:	Football matches, The L World, Star Wars.
Brief description about you:	I'm a logical and rational girl. I'm proud of my independence and I love sport, in particular football that I play and follow on TV. I think it's important to be tenacious in order to defend our own ideas.
How do you imagine yourself in 10 years?	Realized on work place and economically independent.

Below there's a brief description that a gay boy has given about himself for a previous study. We asked to him to write about his studies, his interests and hobbies and his main personality characteristics and ambitions.
Please, read carefully the description in order to answer some questions about him at the following pages.

IGOR, 25 YEARS OLD **GAY**	
Studies:	Management Engineering Studies
Hobbies:	Gym, Informatics, Videogames
4 Adjectives that describe you:	Resolute, Strong, Punctual, Rational
Favourite programs and films:	Rocky, House of Cards, Sports Programs
Brief description about you:	I'm a determined and concrete boy. I like team sports, Rugby in particular, and I like to see action films. I think it's important to have some definite goals in life and to pursue them with determination.
How do you imagine yourself in 10 years?	I will be a multinational logistics manager.

Below there's a brief description that a lesbian girl has given about herself for a previous study. We asked to her to write about her studies, her interests and hobbies and her main personality characteristics and ambitions.
Please, read carefully the description in order to answer some questions about her at the following pages.

REBECCA, 25 YEARS OLD **LESBIAN**	
Studies:	Educational Science
Hobbies:	Shopping, Cooking, Dance.
4 Adjectives that describe you:	Consciousness, Expressive, Susceptible, Quiet.
Favourite programs and films:	Sex & the City, Pretty Woman, Talent Show.
Brief description about you:	I'm a cheerful and emotional girl. I like to spend hours at telephone with my best friend. I like children and to spend time with my family. I think it's important in life to be able to communicate our feelings to others.
How do you imagine yourself in 10 years?	Married and happy with a family and some children.

Appendix 3

In the next pages the five pairs of pictures used for the Implicit Association Test,

about gay men with stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics.

The pictures on the left are those ones representing the version of the gay man with feminine characteristics.

The pictures on the right are those ones representing the version of the gay man with masculine characteristics.

The five pairs are reported in the following order:

1. A-B
2. C-D
3. I-L
4. O-P
5. Q-R