Sanchez (2016): Masculinity Issues Among Gay, Bisexual, and Trans Men

Sanchez, Francisco J.


In this article, Sanchez makes a case that the pressure of performing hypermasculinity is even more pronounced in the gay community than it is in society as a whole. He claims that it is common for gay men to value masculinity in their partners and be discounting or to discount the stereotypical effeminate gay man. Though one would assume that, as part of a community that has already been marginalized, gay men would be accepting of diverse gender performance, many gay men report strongly preferring masculine partners. Sanchez also states that there is an expectation for gay men to not be noticeably gay, termed “straight-acting”; they should be masculine enough to pass as straight. The article puts forth several theories about why gay men have such a gatekeeping mentality about the masculinity of other gay men without favoring one—it is a defense mechanism to recover from the emotional distress of being gender-atypical young boys, most gay men are attracted to hypermasculinity, or that gay men have internalized homophobic views.

Sanchez concludes by listing some of the harmful effects of hypermasculinity both on both physical health and interpersonal relationships.

This article introduced some interesting points about masculinity as it relates to the gay community, but it was not specific enough in some areas and did not seem to be well-supported in others. Though Sanchez expressly marked his intention to include bisexual and transsexual men in his arguments, the article was very incomplete in this regard. He cited a lack of research into transmen in some explanation of this, but this piece was overwhelmingly centered on comparing gay men to straight men. The comments about bi or trans men had the effect of seeming “thrown into” a piece that was really about the gay community. This is problematic because bisexual men have often been lumped into the homosexual community without distinction in the past, and transmen are rarely seriously discussed in scholarly works. very good points

Sanchez’s discussion of the biological features of masculinity also leaves something to be desired. He claims that “gay men have anatomical and physiological features that significantly differ from those of heterosexual men” but does not qualify this surprising statement, which was reminiscent of the sweeping generalizations we saw in “Biological Influences on Masculinity (Lippa 2016) I agree and this is one reason I used the reading. He also attributes many gender differences to hormones, saying that high levels of testosterone cause competitiveness and aggression while low levels promote nurturance. This kind of statement is often taken as a given even among scholarly circles, but some of our past articles have presented compelling arguments about socialization being a larger factor than biology or hormones, such as “Gender in Human Evolution Sociobiology” (Roosevelt 2002). For this reason, it would have been more credible for Sanchez to explain his reasoning for adhering to these viewpoints. Sanchez (2016: page number) makes a vague claim that the western descriptions of masculinity as “competitiveness, toughness, protectiveness, independence” are cross-culturally held, professing: “people in various countries define these constructs similarly.” From our prior discussions and readings about the diversity in gender concepts worldwide, such as “Ethnographies and Masculinities (Conway-Long 1994), it is clear that there are diverse ideologies surrounding gender roles worldwide; this statement seems careless. Overall, there are good points to be gleaned from Sanchez’s article, but it rests too heavily on assumptions in many areas. Very good critical analysis.

References Cited:


Reference is in same format as syllabus (e.g., American Antiquity style): yes no minor issues

Entry is concise and informative about the content of the article: Excellent good adequate needs work

Entry connects the resource reading to the core readings: Excellent good adequate needs work it would have been nice to have seen a connection to this week’s core readings

Entry shows evidence of critical thought: Excellent good adequate needs work

Writing style: Excellent good adequate needs work