A Quantitative Analysis of the Social Dynamics of Race & Sexual Identity

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Introduction

The dataset that is being studied comes from a self-report questionnaire that asks respondents various questions about their racial and ethnic background, as well as their sexual and gender identity. It also asks participants their opinions on a plethora of issues within and surrounding LGBT and POC communities. Data was collected via a survey filled out by the respondents. This paper aims to examine the relationships between racial and sexual identities, and how they potentially shape one's life experiences and perspectives, such as the friendships that they choose to have, as well as how they prioritize different aspects of their identity. The variables in the questionnaire cover a variety of topics and ask for the respondent's opinion on their own involvement in LGBT issues and organizations, BMI, height, religious background, employment status and living situation, sexual partners, and cellphone usage. Variables also include aspects of the respondent's personal life such as partners and relationship status, as well as whether or not the participant has a role as a parent or guardian.

The questions that I am interested in answering are as follows: Does sexual identity have an effect on the racial composition of one's LGBT friend circle? On the other hand, does one's racial identity have an effect on the racial composition of their LGBT friends? I am also curious as to how sexual identity versus racial identity potentially affect whether one prioritizes race or sexuality as more important. The questions that I would like to answer regarding this are: Does racial identity impact whether racial identity or sexual identity is considered more important? Does sexual identity affect whether racial or sexual identity is prioritized?

In order to perform an efficient ANOVA test with results that were easy to interpret, I recoded the variable for sexual identity for the sake of performing the test, which originally consisted of twelve categories. I downsized to four broader categories to make the variable easier

to work with. This recoded variable will only be used for the ANOVA test analyzing the

relationship between sexual identity and prioritization of racial or sexual identity. Due to the fact

that this recoded variable provides for less specific insight into each sexuality group, as it groups

multiple categories together, I am opting to use the original variable with all twelve categories

for all other tests being performed with this dataset.

Descriptive Statistics

To dive deeper into analyzing these variables, I created frequency tables for all four

variables to further explore the aforementioned inquiries. The first variable that we are looking at

aims to identify the racial group that the participant most closely identifies with and is titled

"Race Categories." It allows survey respondents to select the racial category(s) that they identify

most strongly with. The answer options that respondents can check are as follows: "only Black",

"only Hispanic/Latino",

"only Asian/Pacific

Islander", "only Native

American", "only White",

"Multracial," and "Only

Other." The number of

Race categories		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Only Black	1651	33.3	34.4	34.4
	Only Hispanic/Latina/o	732	14.8	15.3	49.6
	Only Asian/Pacific Islander	285	5.8	5.9	55.6
	Only Native American	94	1.9	2.0	57.5
	Only White	1062	21.4	22.1	79.7
	Multiracial (Checked Multiracial and/or more than one box)	655	13.2	13.6	93.3
	Only Other	321	6.5	6.7	100.0
	Total	4800	96.9	100.0	
Missing	9.00	153	3.1		
Total		4953	100.0		

valid cases for this variable is 4,800. Over 30% (33.3%) of the respondents answered that they

identify as Only Black. Nearly 15% (14.8%) of participants identified as only Hispanic Latina/o.

The second variable being looked at in this dataset regards the participant's sexual

identity. Respondents were also asked about their self-identified sexual identity and are being

analyzed via a frequency table titled "which one label comes closest to how you describe your

sexual identity." The answer choices for this question are "Gay," "Lesbian," "Bisexual," "Two Spirit," "Queer," "In the Life," "Same gender loving," "Straight/Heterosexual," "Macha/o," "Activa/o," "Pasiva/o," and "Other." The recoded version of the variable was grouped into four categories instead of the original twelve. These new categories are "Gay/Lesbian/Same Gender Loving," "Bisexual/Queer," "Straight/Heterosexual," and "Other." For this variable, the number of valid cases is 4,770. Over 23% (23.2%) percent of survey participants reported that they identify as Lesbian, while over 8% (8.3%) of respondents reported their sexual identity as Straight/Heterosexual.

which one label comes closest to how you describe your sexual identity					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Gay	1775	35.8	37.2	37.2
	Lesbian	1108	22.4	23.2	60.4
	Bisexual	527	10.6	11.0	71.5
	Two Spirit	107	2.2	2.2	73.7
	Queer	321	6.5	6.7	80.5
	In the Life	86	1.7	1.8	82.3
	Same gender loving	237	4.8	5.0	87.2
	Straight/Heterosexual	412	8.3	8.6	95.9
	Macha/o	27	.5	.6	96.4
	Activa/o	4	.1	.1	96.5
	Pasiva/o	5	.1	.1	96.6
	Other	161	3.3	3.4	100.0
	Total	4770	96.3	100.0	
Missing	missing	23	.5		
	System	160	3.2		
	Total	183	3.7		
Total		4953	100.0		

The third variable that is being analyzed aims to gauge how many of the respondent's LGBT friends are the same race as them. The frequency table being used to display the data is titled "thinking about your LGBT friends, how many of them are the same race as you." Participants were given the choice to answer with "None," "Some," "About half," "Most," or "All." The number of valid cases for this question is 4,704. Nearly 40% (38.7%) of participants responded with "Most" of their

thinking about your LGBT friends, how many of them are the same race as you					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	286	5.8	6.1	6.1
	Some	1205	24.3	25.6	31.7
	About half	1098	22.2	23.3	55.0
	Most	1820	36.7	38.7	93.7
	All	295	6.0	6.3	100.0
	Total	4704	95.0	100.0	
Missing	missing	73	1.5		
	System	176	3.6		
	Total	249	5.0		
Total		4953	100.0		

LGBT friends being the same race as them. On the other hand, over 5% (5.8%) of respondents

answered that "None" of their LGBT friends are the same race as them.

Survey respondents were also asked whether they believe sexual or racial identity to be

more important, which is
the fourth variable being
analyzed, and this
information is showcased in
a frequency table with the
title "Which identity is
more important: Sexual or Race?" The answer choices for this question were "Sexual identity is

Which identity is more important: Sexual or Race?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Sexual Identity is more important	1858	37.5	41.5	41.5
	Sexual and Racial Identity are equal	1673	33.8	37.3	78.8
	Racial Identity is more important	951	19.2	21.2	100.0
	Total	4482	90.5	100.0	
Missing	System	471	9.5		
Total		4953	100.0		

more important," "Sexual and Racial Identity are equal," and "Racial Identity is more

important." For this question, the number of valid cases is 4,482. Over 20% (21.2%) of

respondents answered that "Racial Identity is more important."

Hypothesis Statements

Based on the questions that are being answered through studying these four variables, these

hypotheses were formulated to test the relationships between them.

- Across different sexual identities, there is no difference between whether sexual identity

   or racial identity is thought to be more important.

   - Independent variable: Sexual identity

   - Dependent variable: Prioritization of racial identity or sexual identity

- Across racial groups, there is no difference between whether racial identity or sexual

   identity holds more importance.

- Independent variable: Racial Identity

- Dependent variable: Prioritization of racial identity or sexual identity

● There is no difference across racial groups as to what amount of their LGBT friends are the same race as them.

- Independent variable: Racial Identity

- Dependent variable: Amount of LGBT friends that are the same race

● There is no difference across sexual identities as to what amount of their LGBT friends are the same race as them.

- Independent variable: Sexual identity

- Dependent variable: Amount of LGBT friends that are the same race

Analysis

To test the first hypothesis, which focuses on the potential relationship between sexual identity and whether racial or sexual identity is more of a priority, a crosstabulation test was run. The independent variable used for this test was self-described sexual identity and the dependent variable was whether sexuality or race was considered more important to the respondent. Crosstabulation testing is useful in this case, as both variables being studied are categorical rather than numerical, and it allows for the relationship between the two to be examined. When looking at the output table generated from this test, it showcases the frequency distribution of both variables in relation to one another. To determine statistical significance of the test and its results, a Chi square test was also performed with the same variables, using a significance threshold value of 0.05, meaning that a Chi square value less than the threshold indicates statistical significance.

To examine the second hypothesis, which looks at whether or not a respondent's race has an association with whether they believe racial or sexual identity to be more important, a crosstabulation test and a Chi square test was used. This test utilized racial identity as the independent variable and prioritization of racial or sexual identity as more important as the dependent variable, allowing us to see how these two variables may relate to one another. The resulting crosstabulation table shows the various ways that those of the various racial categories answered as to which they believe is more important between race and sexuality. A Chi square value <0.05 points towards a statistically significant test.

The third hypothesis involves racial groups and what amount of their LGBT friends are the same race as them. This test used racial categories as the independent variable and the amount of the respondent's LGBT friends that are the same race as the dependent. To figure out the potential relationship between these two variables, a crosstabulation test was performed. A Chi square test was also done to examine whether or not the test was statistically significant. A statistically significant test would return a value <0.05, the threshold for significance.

To see the relationship between sexual identity and what amount of the participant's LGBT friends are the same race as them, as is suggested with the fourth hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA test was used. The recoded sexual identity variable was input as the independent variable, and the racial composition of the respondent's LGBT friend group was used as the dependent variable. The ANOVA results table provides the mean answer of each group, allowing us to compare the responses and draw conclusions. The test also allows us to determine if the differences between the means are or are not statistically significant by providing a significance value. The test is statistically significant if this p-value is <0.05.

Results

A crosstabulation test was performed to test the first hypothesis, which states that "across different sexual identities, there is no difference between whether sexual identity or racial identity is thought to be more important." Participants who identified as Lesbian had the highest percentage of individuals (47.8%) who responded that sexual identity is more important than racial identity, while those who identified their sexual identity as In The Life had the highest percentage of respondents (38.0%) who believe racial identity to be more important than sexuality. After running a Chi square test on the data, the significance value is <0.001, indicating that the difference between different sexual identities and whether they believe that sexual or racial identity is more important is statistically significant. Due to obtaining such a small Chi square value, which is much less than the threshold value of significance (0.05) we can reject the null hypothesis.

The second hypothesis states that "across racial groups, there is no difference between whether racial identity or sexual identity holds more importance." To test this hypothesis, a crosstabulation test was run. After running the test, results showed that individuals identifying as only White strongly believe sexual identity to be more important than racial identity, with 70% answering this way. Individuals identifying as only Black had the highest percentage of respondents, over 30% (31.5%), who believe that racial identity is more important. Those who identified themselves as only Asian/Pacific Islander were most inclined to believe sexual and racial identity to be equally important, at 45.1%. The Chi square significance value obtained from the crosstabulation test is <0.001, which points towards the test being statistically significant. This means that we can reject the null hypothesis.

To test the third hypothesis, which says that "there is no difference across racial groups as to what amount of their LGBT friends are the same race as them," a crosstabulation test and a Chi square test were run. Results of the test showed that participants identifying as only Black had the highest response, over 10% (11.0%) for all of their LGBT friends being the same race as them. Respondents identifying as only Asian/Pacific Islander had the highest response of all racial categories, at over 15% (16.3%), for none of their LGBT friends being the same race as them. The Chi square test returned a value of <.001, indicating a statistically significant test. The difference between groups is a significant one. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

The last hypothesis being tested suggests that "there is no difference across sexual identities as to what amount of their LGBT friends are the same race as them." To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA test was run to test for statistical significance between the means of the sexual identity groups and the racial composition of their LGBT friend groups. Based on the ANOVA results, those identifying as Gay/Lesbian/Same Gender Loving have the highest mean (3.21), indicating that of all sexual identity groups, these respondents are most likely to have LGBT friends who are the same race as them. Those who identified as straight/heterosexual had the lowest mean (2.84), which suggests that these respondents have the least LGBT friends that are the same race as them. The results of the ANOVA returned a significance value of <0.001, which is less than 0.05 and therefore suggests that this is a statistically significant test. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion

This paper aimed to look at the relationship between one's social identities and the way that it may affect their friendships as well as their views on whether racial identity or sexual

identity holds more weight. All four tests that were run, the first three crosstabulation tests and the fourth ANOVA test, came back with statistically significant results. This means that all four null hypotheses have been rejected. It can be concluded across different sexual identities, there is a significant difference between which groups prioritize racial identity, sexual identity, and those who believe both to be of equal importance. We can also conclude, from the second research question, that there is a difference between racial groups as to which prioritize racial identity versus sexual identity. It can also be concluded that there is a difference across racial groups as to what amount of the respondent's LGBT friends are the same race as them, and the same can be concluded across different sexual identity groups. These results showcase how one's social identities affect different aspects of life, and aid in individuals determining what they believe to be the most important issues within their communities. Further research can dive deeper into other aspects of social identity, such as socioeconomic status, and how it relates to racial and sexual identities to see if there is a significant relationship between them. Exploring as to whether one's socioeconomic status plays a role in whether they prioritize racial or sexual identity would make for deeper analysis of social identity. A research question that can be formed from this idea is as follows: "Does socioeconomic status affect an individual's view of whether sexual identity or racial identity is more important?"