

## **Evaluating the Social Pressure Theory of Sexual Orientation (SPT) with Data from a Large Non-English-Speaking Sample**

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### **Abstract**

A study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* in 2023 analyzed data from 1,150,938 English-speaking people from 215 countries and territories who had completed the ESOI, a new English-language test of sexual orientation. The study found support for a formal “social pressure theory” (SPT) of sexual orientation. Freud, Kinsey, and others theorized that bisexuality was the natural human norm, and SPT suggests that social pressure to act only on opposite-sex inclinations obscures natural bisexual tendencies. SPT might explain why bisexuality is so infrequently expressed among humans, even though it is universally expressed among bonobos, with whom we share 98.7% of our genes. In the present study, we expanded this research to include an analysis of data from a sample of 310,146 people in 158 countries who had completed translations of the ESOI into their native language. The present study confirms findings from the earlier study that (a) sexual orientation inclinations are not categorical but rather are best characterized as existing on a continuum from exclusive opposite-sex to exclusive same-sex inclinations, (b) same-sex and opposite-sex inclinations are not mutually exclusive but rather co-exist, (c) categorical labels for sexual orientation are often inaccurate, and the greater the mismatch between the label and a person’s actual sexual inclinations, the greater the distress that person feels. In the new study, we have expanded this work as follows: (a) We have developed a credible way of quantifying heteronormative social pressure (a variable we call S) in different countries worldwide, with computed values varying from 0.0 to 1.0 on a scale from 0.0 to 1.0. (b) We have shown patterns in how S varies by geographical region. (c) We have been able to validate SPT by successfully using S to predict how sexual orientation inclinations are distributed in different countries. We conclude that SPT is a useful tool for understanding how social pressure might be suppressing bisexual tendencies, which, as Freud asserted, might indeed be the norm for human beings.