

While You Probably Think Same-Sex Attraction Is Fixed, Researchers Don't

'They've already lost the scientific battle, and so they've taken it to the legislative front to enforce their views.' Jordan Peterson's comment applies generally to sexual orientation.

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By [Jeremiah Keenan](#) APRIL 5, 2018

Tucker Carlson asked Jordan Peterson last week whether his views on sex and gender were rare in academia. "You can't be one of many people who has these views where you live and work," Carlson said.

Carlson was inviting Peterson to complain about leftist homogeneity in the ivory tower, but as usual Peterson refused to take the bait. "I think they're more common than you think," he said. "My views on gender, for example, and sex – they're shared widely among people in the psychometric personality community.... This isn't contentious; the only people it's contentious around are gender ideologues. They've already lost the scientific battle, and so they've taken it to the legislative front to enforce their views."

Of course, in Canada, where Peterson lives, the most famous example of this is probably bill C16, a law that compels people to verbally support the idea that men can turn into women and vice versa. But Peterson's comment has general applicability to issues of gender and sexual orientation.

Take, for instance, what is probably still the most prominent accomplishment of the LGBT movement in the United States: the redefinition of marriage in *Obergefell v Hodges*. In this decision, Justice Anthony Kennedy declared that the plaintiffs' homosexual "sexual orientation" could not change. Homosexuality was, to borrow Kennedy's words, "their immutable nature." As a result, practicing homosexuals were only capable of marrying members of their own sex.

The Evidence Says Same-Sex Attraction Frequently Changes

While many doubt the truth of Kennedy's statement, almost everyone I meet, liberal or conservative, tends to assume, like Carlson, that the majority of expert opinion somehow backs Kennedy's claim. Indeed, Kennedy did cite a [partisan brief](#) put together by politically active members of the American Psychological Association.

But although this brief confidently combated "stereotype-based rationales that the Equal Protection Clause was designed to prohibit" and was at pains to point out that "most" of the studies and literature

reviews it cited had been published in “reputable, peer-reviewed academic journals,” it did not dare to assert that sexual orientation was immutable.

The reason was very simple. There is not only no scientific evidence that sexual orientation is immutable, there is conclusive scientific evidence that most people who experience exclusive same-sex attraction end up developing an interest in the opposite sex over time.

This is so well established by now that scholars are busy [publishing methods](#) to measure *frequency* of sexual orientation change in massive longitudinal studies of youth and young adults. (I.e., How many times in nine years can we expect a homosexual sexual orientation to change? Is the change [associated with lifestyle habits](#)? Who changes more frequently: males or females?)

That basic fact was already settled science when *Obergefell* came before the Supreme Court. Half a dozen rigorous studies could be cited from the late 1990s and early 2000s, but the most noteworthy probably remains a [Cornell-led study](#) published in 2007.

A 1 Percent Chance of Consistent Same-Sex Attraction

In this study, Dr. Rich Savin-Williams examined a representative sample of more than 12,000 American youth, following each from the age of 16 to 22. Rather than rely on an individual’s reconstruction of his or her past based on current identity, researchers met with subjects three times throughout the six-year period. Each time, they asked individuals (via a computer, to protect privacy) whether they had had a romantic attraction to a member of the opposite or same sex since their last interview.

For instance, 17-year-old males were asked if, in the past year, they had had a romantic attraction to another male or female. About 1.5 percent reported *only* having a romantic attraction to other males. Five years later, when that 1.5 percent were asked about their romantic attractions since last interview, the overwhelming majority (70 percent) reported a 180-degree flip in their sexual orientation—they *only* had romantic feelings for women.

Similarly, among females, about 40 percent switched from exclusive same-sex attraction to exclusive opposite-sex attraction. Most of the rest (45 percent of the total) reported they had feelings for both men and women. Only 1 percent of women who, at 17, reported a full year of exclusive same-sex attraction reported a similar experience in the five years that followed.

Leftist judges have been bamboozled into basing their legal analysis on the assumption that if an 18-year-old woman has exclusive same-sex attraction, some form of same-sex commitment is her *only* path to “marriage” because her condition is “immutable.” But, on expert evidence, her condition has only a 1 percent chance of lasting five years!

Instability of Sexual Orientation Persists

Now, one might argue that this extraordinary instability of sexual orientation is only true for young people. This is a weak objection, considering that court decisions must be understood to apply to people at least as young as 18. Besides, an immutable characteristic does not fluctuate wildly in early adulthood (“Oh, at 17 I was white; by the time I was 22, definitely black, now quite settled into brown...”).

But such objections can also be answered by empirical data on older populations. While no study I am aware of can come close to the Cornell-led study cited above for rigor and sample-size, the data that exists on older populations roundly excludes the possibility that sexual orientation is truly immutable. [A 2011 study](#), for instance, found that a little under 30 percent of those who identified as homosexuals at 46 identified as bisexual or heterosexual by the time they were 56.

Similar studies abound. But what can't be found is a peer-reviewed study with an even half-way credible sample that confirms the LGBT movement's dogma on the immutability of homosexuality. To borrow Peterson's words, they lost the battle on the scientific front, and no one familiar with the literature takes their propaganda seriously. But they've been quite successful on the judicial front at enforcing their views. There, after all, a judge need only make a statement to make that “true.”