

TITLE: Ethnography of a Genderqueer Community

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Abstract: Ethnography is the formal research approach used to come to an insider's understanding of a social group. The description is used to convey information about the group's culture to a larger audience. Naïve realism is the unconscious belief that the way we culturally see the world is actually the way it is. This ethnocentric view of the world is dangerous because there are members of other cultural groups who have learned from a different culture and see the same world but in a different perspective. The goal of this study was to find a cultural informant of the Genderqueer community, perform ethnography with their microculture, and create taxonomies from the extracted language that is relevant to their culture and their perception of the world.

I began my study by conducting two participant observations and two interviews of my informant. After conducting the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed. What was discovered is that gender and sexuality do not intersect in this community, they are separate entities expressed differently. Through the interviewing process I found out that in literature Genderqueer is a progressive term, however it is used as an umbrella term for people who do not conform to the male or female gender. There are many different terms catering to more specific cases of this phenomena and my informant preferred to be addressed as Gender fluid and not Genderqueer as they do not carry the same meaning within the community. The media presence is dominant in the United States. My informant expressed how the media affects them and their identity of being Gender fluid. They identified with celebrities like Ruby Rose and Caitlyn Jenner, who do not identify with the genders they were assigned at birth. This showed how powerful media influence is in the U.S. and the importance of media representation of marginalized groups. It was expressed by my informant that they experience aspects both genders, but it can vary depending on their mood, but certain physiological differences hinder them in their full expression of their femininity.