# Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review

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**Aims and scope**

The Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review ('the Review') is a peer-reviewed publication that is available online through the Australian Psychological Society. Its remit is to encourage research that challenges the stereotypes and assumptions of pathology that have often inhered to research on lesbians, gay men, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) people. The aim of the Review is thus to facilitate discussion over the direction of LGBTQ psychology both within Australia and abroad, and to provide a forum within which academics, practitioners and lay people may publish.

The Review is open to a broad range of material, and especially welcomes research, commentary and reviews that critically evaluate the status quo in regards to LGBTQ issues. The Review also seeks papers that redress the imbalance that has thus far focused on the issues facing white lesbians and gay men, to the exclusion of other sexual, gender and racial groups. The Review encourages the elaboration of an expansive approach to psychological research on people of a diverse range of sexual and non-gender normative groups, and publishes articles from across a range of disciplines including (but not limited to) psychology, social work, cultural studies, sociology, gender studies, politics, history and legal studies.

All submissions or enquires should be directed in the first instance to the Editor. Guidelines for submissions or for advertising within the Review are provided on the final page of each issue.

## Disclaimer

Work published within the Review does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Australian Psychological Society. Whilst the APS supports the work of the Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Interest Group, it also adheres to its own standards for practice and research that may at times conflict with those of the Review.


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The Review is eligible for DEST points and is recognised on the Australian ERA journal rankings as a level C journal.

# Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review

**Volume 9 Number 1**

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# EDITORIAL: RETROSPECTIVE

DAMIEN W. RIGGS

As many readers may already be aware, in 2012 an agreement was made to cease publication of *GLIP Review* as a stand-alone journal, and instead for it to be published as a 'desk' of the existing journal *Australian Psychologist.* This was a difficult decision to make, primarily because the Review has been so successful and has provided such an important, and relatively independent, outlet for research in the field of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender psychology (LGBT) in both Australia and abroad. Nonetheless, the move to take up a place within the *Australian Psychologist* brings with it many advantages. These include the wider reach of the journal (many members of the Australian Psychological Society receive a copy of the *Australian Psychologist* for free as part of their membership), which means that potentially more people will be exposed to and read articles published under the GLIP desk. Being a part of *Australian Psychologist* will also mean that GLIP articles are published in an impact factor journal, which is increasingly an important concern for academics. And of course, with the full support of the publishing company, being a part of *Australian Psychologist* makes the GLIP content more sustainable and manageable.

In celebrating this move, it is a good time to acknowledge what has been achieved. Over its nine years of publication the *GLIP Review* was indexed by major databases EBSCO and Proquest, it was ranked in the first journal listing of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative, and currently the journal has an h-index of 5 (by comparison, *Australian Psychologist*, which has been published for almost 50 years, has an h-index of 19). Since its inception in 2005 - as an official APS journal that developed from the newsletter that predated it - *GLIP Review* has published an ever-increasing number of international articles, and indeed has become an important outlet for work in the field. The intention is that we will continue to build on the foundation already established over the past nine years, in addition to exploring new avenues (such as virtual journal issues that bring together articles from across issues to form packages of content that focus on specific themes).

The journal has published the work of leading scholars from across the globe, including Vivienne Cass, leading Australian researcher and practitioner in the field who developed a first model of homosexual identity formation, Esther Rothblum, editor of *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, and Celia Kitzinger and Sue Wilkinson, leading figures in lesbian and gay psychology and Sue as the founding editor of *Feminism and Psychology,* amongst many others. Special issues of the journal have included multiculturalism, ageing, transgender issues, and parenting, to name but a few.

The current and final issue of the journal in its current format includes an equally exciting range of papers. The issue begins with a highly insightful and interesting paper by Chadwick, who examines how heterosexuality is legitimated in the case study of a woman working in a sexual violence crisis centre. Through rhetorical analysis Chadwick deftly demonstrates how, through particular constructions of rape and feminism, the woman is able to legitimate and thus normalise her heterosexuality.

The second paper by Guadalupe-Diaz explores help-seeking behaviour amongst LGBQ victims of crime. Guadalupe-Diaz' findings point to-

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wards the importance of an intersectional approach when engaging with LGBQ communities, so as to ensure that differences on the basis of a range of identity categories are acknowledged, and how these impact upon beliefs and behaviours.

In the third article in the issue, Wilson provides a critical discourse analysis of a key text on lesbian and gay parenting. Wilson's findings suggest that whilst the growing body of research on lesbian and gay parents is important for the recognition it accords to such parents, it must nonetheless be mindful of instantiating new norms that do very little to challenge dominant norms in relation to families and parenting.

The fourth paper by Day provides a very practical reflection upon how public libraries can serve as an important and welcoming space for LGBTIQ people. Day outlines both the challenges to utilising libraries in this way, as well as strategies for combating institutionalised forms of marginalisation.

In the final paper in the issue, Smith, Oades and McCarthy provide a comprehensive review of published empirical research on workplace discrimination. Their review points to both the strengths and limitations of existing research, in addition to highlighting the consistency of previous findings in terms of the negative effects of discrimination upon LGBT people in the workplace.

As has been the case for nine volumes now, this final issue of *GLIP Review* demonstrates the vital importance of this field of psychology. Since its inception over two decades ago, LGBT psychology has increasingly become recognised as an important field of study, with a first international conference on the topic being convened in 2013 in Lisbon, the American Psychological Association planning to launch its own journal for the field, and an ever-increasing number of courses and workshops run by those working in the area. *GLIP Review* has played an important role in the development of the field, and will continue to do so well into the future through its new space within the *Australian Psychologist*

## Acknowledgements

Thanks must go to Trang Thomas, for seeing the merits in the original proposal for this journal. More recently, thanks are due to Simon Crowe, Nicholas Voudouris, Sabine Hammond, and all members of the APS periodicals review committee for undertaking the challenging task of making decisions about the future of APS journals. Thanks are due to all members of the editorial board and the international advisory committee, for reviewing papers, editing issues, and ensuring that the journal is successful. Thanks are due to all those people who have reviewed manuscripts for the journal. And finally, the journal would not exist without all of the inspiring and exciting manuscripts published in its pages.

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# QUEERING HETEROSEXUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACTIVISM: A RHETORICAL CASE STUDY

RACHELLE JOY CHADWICK

## Abstract

*Since the 1990s, a large body of feminist research has problematized normative heterosexuality. Few studies have, however, explored the ways in which women's investment in normative heterosexuality is implicated in the reproduction of anti-feminist and gender oppressive discourses. This paper explores the ways in which sexual violence feminism collides with heterosexuality through a rhetorical case study of one volunteer working in a sexual violence crisis centre in South Africa. The analysis outlines a series of rhetorical strategies that are used to reproduce normative heterosexuality as unchanged, even in the context of sexual violence feminism. These strategies include: 'othering' the problem of rape, using a discourse of trauma and pathology to account for sexual violence, constructing rape as a communication failure, repositioning women as 'essentially' nasty and dangerous, and discrediting feminism by arguing that it cannot account for the problem of women's violence against women.*

**Keywords:** heterosexuality, sexual violence activism, feminism, rhetorical analysis

> Heterosexual (like 'white', 'male' or 'ablebodied)' is always a silent term (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1993, p. 3).

## Introduction

Heterosexuality has been problematised in the last twenty years, with feminist work featuring prominently in this critique (e.g., Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1993; Hollway, 1995; Jackson, 1995; Gill & Walker, 1992; Frith, 1994). The critique of heterosexuality has been centrally concerned with explicating and deconstructing oppressive power relations, arguing that the 'taken-for-granted' and naturalised status of heterosexuality needs to be challenged. Feminists have theorised naturalised heterosexuality as intimately interwoven with capitalist patriarchy, women's oppression, and normative gender relations (Ingraham, 1994). A series of feminist studies and books have thus been published aiming to deconstruct the privileged silence that accompanies naturalised heterosexuality (e.g. Richardson, 1996; Jackson, 1999; Potts, 2002; Johnson, 2005; Ingraham, 2008). A key part of this privileged silence is that individuals are rarely called upon to make an explicit story of their heterosexuality within wider society. Often being heterosexual remains a kind of invisible 'non-identity' that is never challenged or questioned.

Within this paper, I am interested in exploring how heterosexuality is negotiated in a context in which it is made 'queer'. Investigating the lives of sexual violence activists and counsellors afforded an opportunity to explore how 'sexual violence feminism' intersects with women's (hetero)sexual lives. I found that a 'collision' with discourses of 'sexual violence feminism' led to various strategies being 'taken up' by heterosexual women in their efforts either to discard their heterosexuality or sustain and reproduce it. This paper asks: what happens when heterosexuality is made 'queer'? How do individuals negotiate their sexuality in a context in which heterosexuality becomes that which requires explanation and justification?

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## Critical Studies of Heterosexuality

While several studies have explored women's talk about their heterosexual relationships and practices of heterosex (e.g., Gavey 1996; Jackson 2001; Jackson & Cram 2003; Tolman et al., 2003; Harris, 2005; Curtin et al., 2011; Doull & Sethna, 2011; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2012; Renold & Ringrose, 2012), few studies have asked women to reflect on or provide a rationale for their heterosexuality. The naturalisation of heterosexuality is probably at play in this silence, particularly given that lesbian and bisexual women are often asked to account for their sexuality in research studies (e.g., Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995; Esterberg, 1997; McDermott, 2004). The ways in which women's investments in heterosexuality might lead to collusion with or reproduction of homophobia, gender conformity and anti-feminist sentiments has also received scant attention. Notable exceptions include the work of Hamilton (2007) and Scharff (2010). Hamilton's (2007) ethnography of a women's floor in an American college residence hall shows the workings of an 'erotic hierarchy' in which heterosexual women exclude, marginalise and distance themselves from lesbian women in the interests of protecting and boosting their own heterosexual status and reproducing gender conformity and traditional forms of femininity. She shows also that women's investments in gender heteronormativity is closely intertwined with women's practices of homophobia and heterosexism. Drawing on 40 interviews with young German and British women, Scharff (2010) shows that women's discursive negotiation of feminism is refracted through heteronormativity and investments in normative femininity. Women were hostile towards feminism, which they equated with being anti-femininity, anti-men and lesbian. Feminism and heterosexuality were thus constructed as incompatible and the rejection of feminism was closely intertwined with women's investments in normative heterosexuality.

This paper focuses on a case study of one sexual violence counsellor and explores the discursive and rhetorical strategies she uses to negotiate the tensions between sexual violence feminism and heterosexuality. Rhetorical devices drawn from classic rhetoric (such as enthymeme, opposition and exemplar) are used as a means of exploring the hidden and implicit subtexts of discourse. Through an analysis of these devices, I show the ways in which heterosexuality is discursively constituted as natural assumed via a complex set of rhetorical and discursive moves. The paper aims to contribute to critical feminist psychological work on heterosexuality by showing the potential intersections between anti-feminist sentiments, gender oppressive discourse and heterosexual investment. With this end, I focus on the rhetorical strategies that are mobilised in a context where heterosexuality is made queer or 'troubled'. This forms part of a broader feminist project to disrupt the heterosexual 'right to silence' and problematise heteronormativity.

## Methodology

South Africa has one of the highest rape rates in the world, with more than 55,000 rapes reported annually to the police (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). In order to study the intersections between sexual violence activism and sexual lives and subjectivities, women working in an activist organisation providing counselling and advocacy work around sexual violence in South Africa were recruited as participants. The organisation, which will not be named to protect the confidentiality and identities of study participants, operates within the broader rubric of 'sexual violence feminism'.

Double interviews were conducted with seven women volunteering at this organisation. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two-and-a-half hours. They were all audio-taped, took place either at my office or at women's workplaces, and were fully transcribed by me. Two of the women interviewed identified as heterosexual, three said they were gay/ lesbian, and two labelled themselves bisexual. Four of the women were white and three were black. They ranged in age from 22 to 44 years. The first interview involved an open-ended sexual relationship history, while the second probed more directly the meanings of sexual violence volunteer work and its impacts upon the personal lives, identities, and sexualities of participants. Within the wider 'analysis' it was found that a 'collision' with sexual violence work meant that heterosexuality in particular became 'troubled'. Heterosexual volunteers took up various strategies to negotiate this 'collision'. Two women narrated sexual identity shifts (from heterosexual to lesbian and bisexual respectively) as a direct result of involvement with sexual violence activism. Two other women remained 'heterosexual' but used different discursive strategies to sustain and reproduce their heterosexuality.

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town and standard ethical principles of anonymity, informed consent, the use of pseudonyms and confidentiality were adhered to. The full set of interview data was analysed via a narrative methodology, which emphasised the production of recognisable stories or case studies (Polkinghore, 1995; Reissman, 2008). In the case study analysed in this paper, I found that a narrative methodology was not sufficient in analysing the interview material. Instead of narrating a story (as most of the other participants did), Sandra[1] was concerned with presenting arguments that would justify and explain the personal position she took up. I realised that this called for a rhetorical analysis (Billig, 1987, 1989, 1991). According to Billig (1991, p.17), argumentation is not restricted to contexts "when tempers are lost and doors are slammed" but is "spread throughout social life". It is often through rhetorical devices that discourses are justified and re-entrenched.

In the second interview with Sandra, I found that focussing on how sexual violence volunteer work had impacted on her personal life generated a series of arguments from her. I was interested in the collision between heterosexuality and sexual violence work.[2] Sandra, however, was not interested in pursuing the interview in this way and devised a complex dance of argumentative moves that deflected attention away from the issue of heterosexuality. Instead the central problems of the interview became (a) how to explain rape in South Africa and (b) women's violence against other women. Various arguments were used to address these problems. After careful repeated readings of the transcript I realised that these 'new' problems and the arguments presented to 'solve' them were in actual fact all complicated moves which reproduced an unchanged heterosexuality. I puzzled: how to think through and demonstrate in an analysis that that which is directly un-stated or implied in the text/argument holds the key to its hidden (and highly persuasive) subtext? By sheer luck I stumbled upon an incredibly useful concept that promised to resolve some of these impasses. Feldman and Sköldberg (2002) show (remarkably) how a concept from classic rhetoric – the enthymeme – can assist in revealing the implicit and hidden aspects of discourse.

An enthymeme is an incomplete logical inference or syllogism where the major premise is usually absent. The missing piece(s) are left to the listener to fill in for themselves and serves to make the enthymeme one of the most effective tactics of argumentative persuasion. An example of an argument in the form of an enthymeme would be something like: 'Lucy never attends philosophy lectures, so Lucy will not pass the exam' (adapted from Feldman & Sköldberg, 2002). In the classical version of syllogism (e.g. 'All humans are mortal. Socrates is a human. Hence, Socrates is mortal') both premises are included and the conclusion

1 This name is a pseudonym. 'Sandra' was a white, middle-class heterosexual woman.

2 My research agenda was heavily shaped by my own experience and the difficulties I experienced in trying to reconcile my own heterosexuality with sexual violence activism and feminism.

is drawn by logical necessity. In the enthymeme however, the (major) premise is often absent and the conclusion only follows probabilistically from the premise(s) given. Thus, in the enthymeme above, the implicit and missing (major) premise of the argument is: 'Students who do not attend lectures will not pass their exams'. All that is stated explicitly is the minor premise, 'Lucy never attends philosophy lectures' and the conclusion that 'Lucy will not pass the exam'. Stating the major premise ('Students who do not attend lectures will not pass their exams') directly, would, in fact, make the argument less convincing, because we know, of course, that there are students who never attend lectures and who do in fact pass their exams (either because of sheer genius or use of other students' lecture notes). So, in an enthymeme, the argument is only probable or likely, it is not logically binding. Leaving it to the listener to 'fill in' major chunks of the rationale however makes the overall argument more persuasive and compelling.[3]

Feldman & Sköldberg (2002) also mention various other rhetorical devices that support enthymeme, including opposition, sign and exemplar. Opposition refers to the construction of meaning through implicit attention to opposites – for example, if one thing is right then its opposite should be wrong and visa versa. According to Feldman & Sköldberg (2002, p.277-278) the use of this device, 'can create a sense of what is right (or wrong) about something without ever talking about it'. Exemplar is the use of an example as a concrete illustration that serves to reinforce an argument and sign is a rhetorical feature in which one thing stands for another. Feldman & Sköldberg (2002) also discuss the dialectical 'reflexive play' often occurring between a manifest story and its hidden subtext as that which makes the rhetorical process 'work'. They suggest intriguingly that:

> There is another story told implicitly than the one that is superficially told, but the one that is told implicitly is not the one that can be told explicitly, for it would not be convincing… thus paradoxically and ironically, the "real" story told is not the story really told; and the story really told is the one that must be told, for the "real" story would not work (pp. 288).

Through an analysis of Sandra's arguments, using concepts such as enthymeme, opposition and exemplar, I attempt to show how the story told and the arguments used are not always directly or explicitly about heterosexuality, but that the hidden subtext, assumptions and common-places of the arguments all work together to construct another story which justifies, exonerates and reproduces heterosexuality (while maintaining its right to privileged silence).

## Reproducing Naturalized Heterosexuality through Arguments

The following analysis proceeds by examining the two central problems constructed by Sandra in her efforts to negotiate the tensions between normative heterosexuality and sexual violence work, that is: the problem of rape in South Africa and women's violence against other women. The analysis shows how particular discursive and rhetorical strategies were employed to reproduce an unchanged heterosexuality and discredit feminism. These strategies included: distancing herself from the problem of rape via othering and pathologisation and discrediting feminism via an essentialist discourse of female 'nastiness' and violence.

### *Explaining Rape in South Africa*

#### *Rhetorical Strategies of Othering*

A key rhetorical move made by Sandra in efforts to reproduce an unchanged heterosexu-

3 This 'filling in' is of course heavily reliant on 'commonsense' knowledge and shared sociocultural understandings (see Schutz, 1953).

ality was distancing herself from the problem of rape via a process of discursive 'othering. For example:

> Interviewer: So you don't feel like you've got any anger (about sexual violence)?
>
> Sandra: No, no, I also, I try and understand, though this may be contentious, I try and understand how such events occur, I mean people often ask me, why, why is rape so high in South Africa, so you do try and understand it, even though it's not excusable, you try and understand it.
>
> Interviewer: And how do you understand it?
>
> Sandra: The only way I can understand it is that rape in South Africa is a function of the past, and a brutalized group of people is waging a war on itself, if you like, this happens because the men, it's a very patriarchal society, and the men in the, from the normally disadvantaged people, before apartheid, I think the men had to live in such conflict with themselves and such physical violence that they were traumatized, and it sort of gets perpetuated, it's like a whole generation's been traumatised and then the children get traumatized and the children's children get traumatized and they're abandoned and all of those problems as well to do with poverty are exacerbated.

In response to being asked whether she has any anger about sexual violence, Sandra sidesteps the question by focussing on the need to understand why rape is such a big problem in South Africa. Trying to resolve the problem of rape becomes one of the major dilemmas that Sandra grapples with throughout the interview. In the extract above, Sandra argues that it is traumatised men (and not 'normal' men) who rape. She does this indirectly or 'between the lines' so to speak; the major premise of her argument (that *traumatised* men rape) is left to the reader to fill in. Her argument that it is traumatised men who rape is of course antithetical to the position taken up by sexual violence feminism, which would claim that rape is 'normal' under conditions of patriarchy and is tied to the control and oppression of women rather than individual deviant sexual impulses (Brownmiller, 1975; Kelly, 1988). Sandra's acknowledgement that her argument '*may be contentious'* could be seen as recognition of the feminist counterargument.

Sandra is also active in a process of 'othering' the rape problem so that it becomes the problem of '*normally disadvantaged people'*. Using the phrase '*normally disadvantaged people'* is itself a strategic move that obfuscates the implicit racial basis of the argument. If Sandra had directly used the words 'African' or 'Coloured' her argument would immediately be open to greater contestation. Later in the interview, '*to be very honest'*, she does indeed use these words:

> …It's the looking at why that people don't want to do, because it means you have to look at trauma and it means you have to look at the past and everybody wants to forget about the past and people, I think also the African and Coloured communities have a very big problem with actually acknowledging that they're fucked up, *to be very honest*… (emphasis added)

According to Sandra's argument, to understand the 'why' of rape (among African and Coloured men), one has to look at trauma and the (apartheid) past. It is (traumatised) African and Coloured men that rape. There is an implicit opposition at play here between previously 'disadvantaged' men (African/Coloured) and privileged, white men. In the argument, rape is not the problem of white, privileged men (her own group); this is never actually stated or 'put into words' but is constructed via rhetorical opposition.

For an analysis of arguments to retain a critical focus we need to ask: what does this argument 'do'? Arguments are used to justify standpoints and positions (Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson & Jacobs, 1997) and counterpose alternative views (Billig, 1989). The argument used above enables Sandra to locate rape as the deed of 'other' kinds of men (not the kind she is intimately involved with). 'Traumatised' men rape; men of other race groups rape. The problem of rape is projected elsewhere and thus does not have to challenge Sandra's personal life or threaten her heterosexuality. By dismissing a feminist explanation of rape and insisting upon a psychological 'trauma' type model, Sandra avoids having to deal with the logical implications of a feminist analysis. That is: if rape is 'normal' within heteropatriarchy and so-called 'normal' men rape, then how can one avoid problematising normative modes of heterosexuality?

### *Individualizing Rape: 'It's a Dysfunctional Means of Communication'*

> Sandra**:** Rape is a symptom sometimes of the perpetrator's inability to communicate with anybody, maybe not just with women but with anybody, I think that, I don't know it's something I maybe speculate about, but I don't think, I think that sort of thing is a symptom, I think it's to do with being traumatized, I think it's a way men deal with trauma and um, it's, it's a behavioural thing sometimes, I think it's a behavioural thing you know, if guys could try, if rehabilitation programmes could focus on effective **c**ommunication skills, on making themselves heard, I wonder whether that would not help
>
> Interviewer: So you don't see any continuity between the men that you're friends with, surrounding you…?
>
> Sandra: No.
>
> Interviewer: And what, I mean about the argument thing, how was that..?
>
> Sandra: I just don't think it's necessary, you know I think, I, maybe it's on one extreme having an argument and the other extreme is murdering somebody, and a little bit in from murdering somebody is raping somebody, it's something that two people do together, they are communicating something, but I think that both of them are dysfunctional, it's a dysfunctional means of communication, it could be symbolic in the sense that a rapist chooses an unknown woman to take out his aggression on but I think it's symbolic of a communication failure, of an expressing the self failure…

The second rhetorical move that Sandra makes is repositioning rape as a communication failure. This argument is interlinked with the preceding argument that trauma is the reason for high rape rates. According to this argument, trauma causes dysfunctional communication and dysfunctional communication between two people ("both of them are dysfunctional") leads to rape. As a result, the unstated but implied conclusion is that rape is something that two dysfunctional people do together. This conclusion, when stated explicitly, is immediately disturbing. The notion that rape is something that "two people do together" is deeply anti-feminist and once again puts the blame on women for being the recipients of sexual violence. Miscommunication theory, which claims that rape can be solved through 'better' communication is used (rather worryingly) not only by social scientists but also by young women to explain rape and sexual coercion. Frith & Kitzinger (1997) argue that miscommunication theory is a 'useful' explanation for sexual violence for heterosexual women in particular because it avoids blaming men, gives women a sense of control and obfuscates institutionalised power relations.

Why is an individualistic psychological model mobilised to explain sexual violence? First, locating the argument within a psychological discourse gives a certain amount of persuasive power as it is based not just upon personal views but is situated within a (culturally sanctioned) professional field of 'expertise'. Second, embracing a psychological model eases (some of) the contradictions present between a normative heterosexual identity and a feminist analysis of rape/sexual violence. Within a mainstream psychological model, rape is an extra-ordinary event performed by a damaged individual or a result of inefficient communication between two individuals. Within such a frame, gender analysis becomes invisible – it is 'the individual' devoid of sex and gender that rapes. Such a model potentially allows Sandra to separate the men that rape from the men that she has relationships with and the men that she loves. Explaining rape through miscommunication theory and individualistic pathology helps to distance sexual violence from the personal and intimate space of heterosexual lives.

## *Women's Violence Against Women*

The second major preoccupation of Sandra's talk was the issue of women's violence against other women. Sandra was determined to make this a major focus of the interview and in so doing minimise or deflect the problem of men's violence against women. Via the set of rhetorical moves outlined below, Sandra constructs women as essentially nasty and dangerous and discredits feminism because of its inability to deal with the issue of female violence.

### *Positioning Women as Essentially Nasty and Dangerous*

> Sandra: …women attack you, women are not nice, I'm actually, I feel much safer with men than I do with women and that's why going to [the sexual violence centre] was such a big deal for me, I was very wary of going to an organization full of women, I wasn't too sure that this was going to work… and it's often done by women, men don't often tend to say something, but it's the women who give dirty looks, it's the women who come up to them and beat them up cause it's their boyfriend who's in prison, um, or it's the mother…
>
> Interviewer: They actually beat them up?
>
> Sandra: Oh ja, oh ja, I, I got a telephone call while I was on cell phone duty, um, she was 14 and she was gang-raped by some guys, young guys in her neighbourhood, and she was out walking with a friend a couple of days afterwards, the guys had been picked up and put in prison, they were denied bail cause it was a very brutal rape, and the girlfriends of these guys, they beat her up to such an extent that they broke her nose, they dragged her by the hair across the road, they bashed her on the head with a brick, you know she had severe injuries from these girls… Every single client I've seen so far has told me about it, about verbal attack and cruelty from women, and even physical attack, the girlfriends or the women in the family attack the victim because she somehow sexually lured him, one client of mine told me – today – how she'd been blamed for being raped because she was wearing tracksuit pants and tracksuit pants are easy to pull down and women say this sort of thing all the time…yes, if I don't wear that dress, I mean it's ludicrous, the whole 'what I was wearing' issue for women is unbelievable, you know the women who, who get raped and the women who then talk to the women that have been raped, they always blame them for what they were wearing, I mean you could be wearing a space suit and they would still blame what you were wearing
>
> Interviewer: That's bizarre
>
> Sandra: It really is, it gets actually totally ludicrous…

According to the above argument, women are attacking and nasty and therefore Sandra claims to feel safer with men than with women. The unstated premise of the argument is that women are more dangerous than men, therefore she feels safer with men. When set out in its simplified form, this argument is not convincing. Overwhelming international and cross-cultural evidence suggests that it is men, and not women, who are responsible for the majority of violent crime. However, the argument is strengthened by the inclusion of various exemplars. Sandra invokes various dramatic illustrations, drawn from her counselling work, to show how nasty, violent and attacking women can be towards other women. She makes use of two concrete exemplars in her argument: firstly, a shocking description of a 14 year old gang-rape survivor being beaten up, 'bashed on the head with a brick' by girlfriends of the perpetrators and second, the case of a client being blamed by other women for being raped because of wearing tracksuit pants that are 'easy to pull down'. Exemplars are often hard to argue against, and therefore are highly effective means of strengthening the overall argument (Feldman & Sköldberg, 2002). The problem with this argument is its tendency to ignore the contributions of patriarchal and heterosexual relations in woman-to-women violence. The role of heterosexuality in the violent exemplars put forward is neatly sidestepped so that Sandra avoids noting that the women attacking in these examples are often protecting men and heterosexual relationships.

It is also interesting to note the different ways in which Sandra deals with the problems of male and female violence, that is: male violence (rape) is the result of trauma whereas female violence is the result of women being essentially 'attacking'. She concludes that 'women are not nice', suggesting that there is some kind of innate tendency for all women to be nasty. When talking of men and violence she drops the essentialist argument and maintains an individualistic angle, '*I like men and I always have…I've never sort of blamed the species, I'd like to blame the person rather, you know it may be more effective'.* Sandra herself notes that this strategy '*may be more effective'* – it is certainly effective as a rhetorical device easing the conflict(s) between a heterosexual identity and the ugliness of male violence. Arguments rooted in 'the individual' allow Sandra to explain sexual violence and at the same time sustain her heterosexuality.

### *Feminism is Irrelevant*

Sandra: I never felt I had to 'bang my drum' as a woman ever, so that's not something I identify with terribly much, I know about feminism and that's okay

Interviewer: But you don't identify with it more now?

Sandra: No, no, I don't feel any differently as a woman because of it, it's not like I've had some sort of epiphany and I just put the two pieces together… I think the problem I have with feminism at the end of the day is that we should not need it, **y**ou know, to get beyond it, and maybe when we get beyond it we can understand why women attack women so much, I have to say I've experienced quite a lot of that

Interviewer: Not physically though?

Sandra: No, but trying to do harm, to do emotional and psychological harm, so ja.

Interviewer: Do you feel feminism has been rammed down your throat at [the sexual violence centre]?

Sandra: No, I mean men are around, but that's only in the counselling section, I think the permanent staff are more 'full on' about that…

Interviewer: What do you mean men are around?

Sandra: Well, its like [this woman] has a husband, a partner and people have boyfriends.

Sandra is clear in this extract that the feminism circulating at the sexual violence centre has made no difference to her life. She says; '*I don't understand myself differently because of it, it's not like I've had some sort of epiphany'.* Sandra would have heard many such 'epiphany-style' stories at the sexual violence centre, and is careful to situate herself against them[4]. The arguments that she puts forward in the above extract are intertwined with her

4 As myself a volunteer at the sexual violence centere referred to here, I am drawing on my own personal experience in hearing countless 'epiphany' style stories of life-changing feminist transformations (over informal tea and coffee breaks) linked directly to participation in the work of the centre. A feminist discourse of sexual violence pervades the centre and Sandra would have most likely have come into direct contact with it.

earlier argument regarding the innate 'nastiness' of women. She uses the dilemma of 'women's violence against other women' to discredit feminism. In a clever set of rhetorical moves, feminism is constructed as 'lacking' and as unable to look at issues surrounding female violence. Because 'the problem' is shifted elsewhere, feminism is suddenly easily dismissed as irrelevant and obsolete. Obviously the argument wouldn't work as well if the major missing premise was explicitly stated, namely the notion that 'female violence is a bigger problem to solve than male violence', as it is unconvincing. However, when constructed as an enthymeme the argument carries far more persuasive power.

It is also within this extract that Sandra comes closest to talking directly about heterosexuality. Her brief remarks relating to heterosexuality give some important clues as to 'why' she put forward the various arguments discussed. When asked, '*Do you feel feminism has been rammed down your throat?'* Sandra replies, '*No, I mean men are around'*. This hints that for Sandra, 'taking-up' feminism is incompatible with active heterosexuality. There is also a lively opposition at play in the extract between so-called 'full-on' feminists (the permanent staff) and more 'balanced' heterosexually-inclined counselling staff. In this opposition 'men are around' (i.e. women are heterosexual) among the counselling staff but in the sphere of 'the full-on feminists', heterosexuality (and men) are outlawed. The hidden subtext of this extract (that provides the clues for Sandra's entire set of argumentative positionings) is that heterosexuality is incompatible with 'full-on' or radical feminism. As a corollary, radical feminist explanations for sexual violence are also incompatible with being comfortably heterosexual. In the light of this subtext it becomes more understandable why Sandra repeatedly refuses feminist explanations and makes the series of rhetorical moves already outlined.

## Synopsis of Rhetorical Moves

The following implicit arguments and their corollaries were identified in the analysis:

1. Traumatised men rape ('*normal' men do not rape*)
2. Men from 'previously disadvantaged' groups rape ('*white' privileged men do not rape*)
3. Dysfunctional communication leads to rape (*rape can be avoided via effective communication*)
4. Rape is something that two (dysfunctional) people do together
5. Women are more dangerous than men

What kind of reality do these arguments add up to? And what purpose do they serve? First, by mobilising these arguments, Sandra is able to reproduce a version of the world where rape becomes a problem located in other peoples' worlds. Rape is thus a problem of traumatised communities (read 'African' and 'Coloured' communities). It is not a problem in her group/community.

Second, rape is constructed as an event that can be avoided through effective communication. Rape only happens to people with 'communication problems', that is so-called 'dysfunctional' people. Stretching this argument to its logical conclusion means that rape becomes an event that 'two people do together' – this version allows women a greater measure of agency (in the sense that they are can 'do' something to prevent rape from happening to them) but at the same time implicitly blames victims for being raped. This is not a far cry from misogynist discourses that characterise rape victims as somehow "asking for it". The arguments put forward concerning women's violence against other women cleverly divert attention away from the problematic fact of male violence and discredit feminism as irrelevant and unnecessary.

Taken together, these arguments enable Sandra to forge a position where heterosexuality can remain unchallenged and intact. It must be remembered that the interview was initially framed as an exploration of heterosexuality and sexual violence work; it was only via a creative and deft set of argumentative moves that Sandra made the interview about something else. And yet, in another sense, the interview and arguments were actually about 'doing' heterosexuality all along. Sandra is actively 'doing' heterosexuality by reproducing it as the site of privileged silence, beyond justification or explanation.

## Conclusion

Feminist research has provided compelling critiques of the institution of compulsory heterosexuality and worked hard to destabilise the privileged silence that accompanies naturalised heterosexuality. The intersections and tensions between feminist/activist identities and investments in heterosexuality has however not been widely explored apart from the edition of *Feminism and Psychology* in 1993 in which feminist psychologists reflected on the intersections between their feminism and heterosexuality (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1993). Moreover, the ways in which women's investments in heterosexuality are potentially implicated in the reproduction of gender oppressive ideas about feminism, women and sexual violence, has been given scant attention. As a result, there is no direct literature that I am aware of that can be used to extend the findings of this investigation into the intersections between sexual violence activism and normative heterosexuality.

In this paper, I have attempted to address these gaps by focusing on the rhetorical devices that one woman used to negotiate the tensions between sexual violence activism and heterosexuality. While the analysis is admittedly limited by the use of only one case study, the case is nonetheless sufficiently rich to provide some broader insights into the discursive/rhetorical work that potentially goes into negotiating the tricky intersections between heterosexuality and feminism.

The analysis shows that the heterosexual 'right to silence' is not automatic, but rather is effected through the use of a variety of arguments and rhetorical positions, many of which are based on conservative, racist and sexist discourses. Thus, for example, Sandra ameliorates the problem of rape and sexual violence in South Africa by engaging in discursive techniques of 'othering' and by employing a discourse of trauma and pathologisation as an explanatory framework for rape. Rape is also individualised and cast as a failure in communication (between two people), effectively rendering a gendered analysis of rape invisible. These rhetorical devices serve to explain rape and simultaneously leave heterosexuality untroubled by obfuscating patriarchal power relations, avoiding blaming men (it's just a few 'bad' men that rape) and blaming the victim (rape is a communication failure). The analysis further shows the tensions between normative heterosexuality and feminism; Sandra makes every effort to discredit and distance herself from feminism which she constructs as incompatible with heterosexuality and irrelevant (unable to deal with the problem of women's violence against women). Positioning women as essentially nasty and dangerous through the use of vivid exemplars further worked to deflect from the problem of sexual violence against women and discredit feminist activism.

Sandra's case study illustrates the ways in which investment in normative heterosexuality is implicated in the reproduction of problematic and anti-feminist notions of sexual violence and women. The discursive/rhetorical strategies taken up by Sandra in her efforts to reproduce an unchanged heterosexuality differed from the ways in which other women interviewed negotiated heterosexuality and sexual violence work. Of the seven women interviewed, four were heterosexual when they started volunteer work at the centre. Of these four women, two narrated sexual identity shifts (to lesbian and bisexual respectively) as a direct result of their work at the centre. The other two heterosexual women (of which Sandra was one) used different discursive strategies to sustain and reproduce their heterosexuality. While Sandra rejected feminism, Louise reluctantly identified as heterosexual and as a feminist and strategically positioned herself as outside of 'hegemonic heterosexuality'. According to her, heterosexuality was constantly a process of negotiation and questioning which she labelled 'heterosexuality on the margins'. It is clear, therefore, that there are different strategies and processes involved in negotiating sexual violence work, feminism and heterosexuality. More work is needed to explore these strategies with larger samples of women.

This paper also showed the usefulness of a rhetorical concept like enthymeme, which allowed for an analysis of the silent subtexts and hidden pieces of argument which enabled the reproduction and reiteration of normative heterosexuality in the context of sexual violence activism. More studies are needed which attempt to further 'trouble' heterosexuality and disrupt its dominant story line of being essentially a 'naturalized non-story' beyond the realms of justification or explanation.

## Author Note

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# AN EXPLORATION OF DIFFERENCES IN THE HELP-SEEKING OF LGBQ VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE BY RACE, ECONOMIC CLASS AND GENDER

XAVIER GUADALUPE-DIAZ

## Abstract

*Too often, lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer (LGBQ) communities are studied as a whole without consideration for varying experiences across diverse social locations. The study reported here explored differences in the decision to seek help across and between groups of victims of intimate partner and hate-motivated violence within LGBQ communities with a specific focus on the influence of race, class, and gender. Utilising the Community Violence Survey data (n=993) from the Virginia Anti-Violence Project (VAVP), significant findings demonstrate a disparity in help-seeking between LGBQ victims of violence within lower and higher economic classes. Furthermore, the findings illustrate that men within LGBQ communities may be least likely to seek help for intimate partner violence while women may be least likely to report hate-motivated violence to the police.*

**Keywords**: intimate partner violence; hate violence; reporting; victimisation; victim resources

## Introduction

Intimate partner (IPV) and hate-motivated violence are among the most common forms of violence affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) communities (NCAVP, 2011). In terms of the former, a now substantial body of research indicates that intimate partner violence affects the LGBQ population at rates similar to those of heterosexual women (Cruz, 2003; Cruz & Firestone, 1998; Hamberger, 1996; Island & Lettellier, 1991; McClennen, Summers, & Vaughan, 2002; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Owen & Burke, 2004; Renzetti, 1992; Renzetti & Miley, 1996). In a probability based sample of men who have sex with men, it was estimated that 2 in 5 will experience intimate partner violence (Greenwood, 2002). Similarly, in non-randomised national surveys, lesbian women have been reported to experience intimate partner violence at rates of up to 50% (NCAVP, 2006). In terms of hate-motivated violence, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) 2007 annual *Hate Crimes Report* indicated that hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals were among the fastest growing type of hate crime in the United States, and recently nearly tied second with religious bias for most common hate crime in the country (FBI Hate Crimes Report, 2009). Furthermore, Herek (2008) estimated that approximately one-fourth of men and one-fifth of the women in his study of gay men and lesbians had experienced criminal victimisation as an adult at least once on the basis of their sexual orientation. Overall, he estimated that one in every five non-heterosexual people has experienced a hate-motivated crime on this basis.

Domestic and sexual violence shelters, along with anti-violence programs and

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services across the United States, continue to struggle with providing inclusive services to historically marginalised communities. While progress has been made in the development of resources that address issues of gendered violence, a major challenge that is yet to be overcome is moving beyond simply establishing resources, and toward making them accessible, available, and useful. This is exacerbated by the fact that of what shapes and influences victims' help-seeking decisions is still an under-researched area in LGBQ studies. Dunbar (2006, p. 325) defines help-seeking as "the process by which individuals resolve problems that compromise their level of functioning via utilization of legal, financial, community and institutional resources". Understanding help-seeking behaviors informs providers on the needs, perceptions, and experiences of victims of violence. While experiences of IPV and hate-motivated violence present different barriers, it is imperative to examine what informs the decision to seek help for those who are victims of such crimes.

Taking the opportunity to examine both prominent manifestations of violence that affect the community, along with the potential influences of help-seeking decisions, the study reported here fills a much-needed area within the literature. While a variety of factors may contribute to the shaping of help-seeking patterns, the study emphasises the importance of exploring how social structures shape the ability of members of LGBQ communities to seek help. While previous studies have emphasised how homophobia and heterosexism shape victims experiences and thus informs their decision to seek help, it is essential to consider diversity *within* LGBQ communities. Through an analysis of the Virginia Anti-Violence Project (VAVP) Community Violence Survey, this study explored how race, class, and gender may shape the help-seeking behaviors of LGBQ victims of intimate partner and hate-motivated violence. A specific focus is placed on examining how these varying social localities influence whether or not victims seek help. While experiences of intimate partner and hate-motivated violence are of course different in dynamics, these are two majorly prevalence violent issues faced by LGBQ communities.

## Literature Review

The areas of intimate partner and hate-motivated violence have been widely researched over recent decades. Though most of the theorising and empirical studies available focus on heterosexual women and their experiences, there have been significant contributions made in the area of LGBQ intimate partner violence. Similarly, hate-motivated violence research has mainly focused on race-based victimisations. Much of the emphasis present in the literature focuses on gauging the prevalence or rates of these violent experiences within LGBQ communities.

However, when moving beyond prevalence, the literature is scarce when focusing on the help-seeking behaviors of victims in this population. The available research on help-seeking patterns for this specific community emphasises the influence of homophobia and heterosexism, the perceived lack of resources, and lack of trust in law enforcement. While these factors provide valuable information on what shapes help-seeking, many of these studies fail to focus on the diversity *within* the LGBQ communities that not only shapes perceptions around different avenues of help-seeking, but may influence the decision to even seek help from the start.

## *LGBQ Help-Seeking Behaviors and Intimate Partner Violence*

Prominent studies on intimate partner violence within LGBQ communities have illustrated common patterns of help-seeking behaviors, however they have been limited to gay and lesbian experiences. For example, examining the dynamics of same-sex partner abuse, McClennen, Summers & Vaughn (2002), reported that the most common form of help-seeking among gay and lesbian victims was from friends. In similar studies, Merrill and Wolfe (2000), Renzetti (1992; 1996), and Scherzer (1998) also found that seeking help from friends was the most common form of help-seeking among gay and lesbian victims of intimate partner violence.

Influential in shaping help-seeking behaviors are the perceptions of law enforcement within any community. The lack of trust in the criminal justice system is a well-documented sentiment across diverse communities. Pattavina, Hirschel, and Buzzawa (2007) examined police responses to both same-sex and heterosexual domestic violence situations and discovered that negative perceptions amongst community members are rooted in reality. Studies have continued to show that seeking help from the police is the least likely form of help sought by survivors of intimate partner violence across sexual orientations (Pattavina et al., 2007; Renzetti, 1992; Merrill, 1998; Renzetti, 1998). In fact, some studies have demonstrated that seeking help from the police is the least likely form of help sought by victims of same-sex intimate partner violence (Pattavina et al., 2007; Renzetti, 1992; Merrill 1998; Renzetti, 1998). The perception of extreme homophobia by law enforcement against gay and bisexual men in particular has been found to prevent them from reporting victimisation to police (Kuehnle and Sullivan, 2003).

Few studies have examined the influence that diverse social locations may have on the help-seeking behaviors of LGBQ victims of violence. Studies that have observed varying experiences, dynamics, or help-seeking behaviors across diverse social categories have only been done so in the context of gay or lesbian relationships (Butler, 1999; Kanuha, 1990; Mendez 1996). These studies have demonstrated support for an intensified lack of trust in the police among gay and lesbian victims of color and gay and lesbian victims of lower socioeconomic statuses. Considering these differences within the community, these researchers suggest further investigation into how gender, class and other social categories influence the decision to seek help.

Critical in expanding how help-seeking within the community is studied, Turrell (2000) suggested that most research available was limited to the experiences of white middle class lesbians, and that previous studies had largely disregarded bisexual and transgender victims as well as men and those of lower incomes. Utilising a diverse sample, Turell reported that just over half (54%) of the LGBT population sought support related to their abusive relationship experiences. As found in other studies, LGBT victims sought help from friends, counselors, and relatives over more formal structural sources such as the criminal justice system or domestic violence agencies (McClennen et al. 2002; Merrile & Wolfe 2000; Renzetti 1992 1996; Scherzer 1998). Not only were these methods more common, but they were the most helpful (Coleman, 1990; Dutton, 1994; Hamberger, 1996; Hammond, 1988; Leeder, 1994; Letellier, 1994; McClennen et al., 2002; Merrill and Wolfe, 2000; Sherzer, 1998).

In regard to lesbian women, Turell's (2000) findings illustrated that this population were more likely than gay men to seek any help at all. She explained this as reflecting a long-standing history of the involvement of lesbian women in domestic violence and feminist movements. However, rigid cultural expectations of independence and self-reliance in masculinity may also explain the gap in help-seeking between lesbian women and gay men. Additionally, she found younger respondents and those of lower incomes seeking help from informal avenues such as friends and family. Turell interpreted these differences as being heavily reliant on being economically independent. Those who are younger typically have fewer economic resources and stability and of course those who report lower incomes do as well.

Significant contributions in expanding Turell's pioneering explorations in help-seeking within this community have not been made. This gap in the literature is one of the main highlights McClennen (2005) proposes in what researchers should seek to explore in same-sex domestic violence studies. Specifically, he states that "within the next 10 years, the most important thing professionals and laypersons need to learn about same-gender IPV is increased empirically based data about a plethora of issues including the dynamics, help-seeking behaviors, correlates, and interventions" (p. 152).

### *LGBQ Help-Seeking Behaviors and Hate-Motivated Violence*

Despite the increased attention to hate-motivated violence in academic research, less emphasis is present in studies of the victims (Meyer, 2008). This leaves little knowledge about how victims experience hate-motivated violence – specifically in this case, anti-LGBQ violence. Taking into account the importance of the decision to seek help for these victims, several studies have examined whether or not they report to the police. Herek (1996; 2008) has conducted several research initiatives that have illustrated that a vast majority of gay and lesbian victims of hate crime do not report to the police. While these studies have explained fear of homophobia as the primary help-seeking deterrent, they have not thoroughly examined what other factors influence the decision. Dunbar (2006, p. 324) argues that examining what influences help-seeking decisions for LGBQ victims of hate-motivated violence, specifically police reporting, is a "largely unexplored" issue.

In examining the influence of diverse factors on help-seeking behaviors among LGBQ people, Liu (1995) found that help-seeking varied most by the victims' race/ethnicity, stating that African Americans relied more in self-help through prayer, friends and family than whites, though this racial difference disappeared after controlling for income. Similarly, Garnets et al (1997) argued that a victim's multiple social categories such as race, class, and gender shape the ability and avenues to seek help. Garnets et al added that victims with multiple minority identities may also face more severe violent experiences.

Expanding upon these ideas, Meyer (2008) claimed that the study of the influences of race, class, gender and sexuality on how victims experience violent encounters has remained mostly absent from studies of hate crime victims. Meyer explored how LGBQ victims perceived whether the violence was based on their sexuality. Among the respondents, LGBQ people of color experienced violence directed against their racial identities while in some way rooted in homophobia as well. An attack against them was not an attack directed towards a distinct identity, but that an attack directed toward all of the identities that they encompass. These findings led Meyer to conclude that queer people of color had the most difficulty in making a clear connection of the violence as directed solely towards their sexuality.

When examining social class, Meyer (2008) found that the income of the victim affected the uncertainty they expressed in determining whether the violence they experienced was directed towards their sexuality or gender identity. Poverty and financial concerns took precedence over respondents' perceptions of what triggered violent attacks. Additionally, Meyer found that many of the lower income respondents began to contemplate during the interview process if their experiences were indeed rooted in homophobia or transphobia. In a sense, they felt as if they had not had the "luxury" to even try to interpret their victimisation. On the other hand, respondents of higher classes came into the interview having already contemplated their victimisation; they came in knowing that their experiences were rooted in homophobia. Essentially, "social class affected the degree to which queer people were willing to determine whether violence was based on their sexuality or gender identity" (2008:26). These external factors shaped how violent victimisation was experienced and ultimately informed the decision to seek help.

## The Current Study

The literature illustrates that help-seeking behaviors do vary across groups within LGBQ communities. While several of these studies have either examined the community as a whole (without consideration of diverse influences), or how varying groups within the community differentially select help avenues, there is a need to explore how the multiple social identities of victims influence the decision to even seek help at all. Given the available studies, the factors of race, class, and gender were of central interest in this project. Further contributions are needed in this area of study that could advance not only our understanding of how LGBQ victims perceive, interpret, and experience violence, but also the prevention and intervention services provided for the community. The literature demonstrates the need for further investigation and merits the central research question of this study, namely: Does a relationship exist between race, class, and/or gender and the decision to seek help for LGBQ victims of both intimate partner and hate-motivated violence?

Based on the reviewed empirical findings, differences are likely to exist across social categories in the perception, experience and help-seeking decisions of LGBQ victims of violence. Meyer (2008) and Turrell (2000) both employed concepts of intersectionality that guided the analysis of their data, and illustrated how the interactions of oppressed identities shaped help-seeking behavior patterns. These and other studies along with theoretical advances reviewed above found significant differences across classes or income levels and genders (Josephson, 2002; Mann, and Grimes, 2001; Rennison and Planty, 2003). Based on the empirical findings and the guiding theory, ten hypotheses were proposed.

1. Respondents of lower economic classes will be less likely than respondents of higher economic classes to have sought help because of violence from a partner.

2. Respondents of lower economic classes will be less likely than respondents of higher economic classes to have reported hate-motivated violence to the police.
3. Women respondents will be more likely than men to have ever sought help because of violence from a partner.
4. Women respondents will be more likely than men to have ever reported hate-motivated violence to the police.
5. Non-white respondents will be less likely than white respondents to have sought help because of violence from a partner.
6. Non-white respondents will be less likely than White respondents to have reported hate-motivated violence to the police.
7. Within respondents of lower economic classes, men will be less likely than women to have ever sought help because of violence from a partner.
8. Within respondents of lower economic classes, men will be less likely than women to have reported hate-motivated violence to the police.
9. Among men, respondents of lower economic classes will be less likely than respondents of high economic classes to have ever sought help because of violence from a partner.
10. Among men, respondents of lower economic classes will be less likely than men respondents of high economic classes to have reported hate-motivated violence to the police.

## Methodology

The Virginia Anti-Violence Project (VAVP) reported here utilised participatory action research theory to develop a community survey that was designed and reviewed by a team of LGBQ-identified participants. Participatory action research allows individuals from within the community to define and develop measures. The staff collaborated with a diverse range of organisations with ties to LGBQ communities such as HIV/AIDS organizations, affirming places of worship, social justice organizations, social support groups, and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. Bars, clubs and multiple other social venues were also targeted as locations to advertise. Through these and many other locations, the community survey was advertised as a paper or online survey using flyers. The surveys were confidential and voluntary.

The VAVP determined eligibility for the community survey based on the responses to the following questions:

1. Are you a resident of Virginia? (If you live in or attend school in Virginia, you will be considered a resident for the purposes of this study)
2. Do you identify yourself as having a non-heterosexual sexual orientation or gender identity or expression not traditionally associated with your birth sex (Or, do you identify somewhere along the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer spectrum?)

### *Dependent Variables*

The two main dependent or outcome variables used for analyses depended first on whether a respondent had either experienced intimate partner violence and/or hate-motivated violence. Whether or not a respondent sought help for either experience was used as the dependent variable. In section IV Part A, respondents were asked the "yes or no" question to having experienced intimate partner violence. Specifically, respondents were asked: "At any point in your lifetime have you ever been in an abusive romantic/sexual relationship?" Additionally, they were given the option to select from a list of tactics of serious abuse they had experienced at the hands of an intimate partner and specify if the offending partner in their experience was of the same gender. Only those same gender experiences were used in this sample. In order to ensure an accurate frequency of IPV victimisation, if the respondent selected any of the listed forms of serious partner abuse experienced (which included the entire list except "yelling"), they were counted as having experienced intimate partner violence even if they had previously selected "no" to having experienced IPV within their lifetime.

For hate-motivated violence, respondents were asked if they had ever been the victim of hate violence based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity. They could select either "no", "yes – on the basis of sexual orientation" or "yes – on the basis of gender identity". A "yes" on either basis was collapsed into one "yes" category.

The survey questions that addressed the dependent variable of help-seeking were the following:

1. Have you ever sought help because of violence from a partner?
2. Were any of these incidents reported to the police? [regarding hate violence]

At the end of the survey, the participants were given the option to add any comments or reflections about the information and experiences referenced in the questionnaire. Those responses were not analysed for this paper.

## *Independent Variables*

### *Economic Class*

The participants' responses to a question about income have been used to categorise them into economic classes as defined by Marger (2005). Class may encompass the economic and the social, which if combined, provide the definition for socioeconomic status which encompasses both the economic and social aspects of class. In an analysis of class, Marger's justification for defining class on the basis of income level was utilised. He states that "there are three aspects to class - income and wealth, occupational prestige, and educational level" all of which he argues are "closely intertwined and together create economic commonality" or a "class" (2005, pp. 52-55). He then conceptualised an American class model in which he defines the underclass, working poor, working, lower-middle, upper-middle and upper-capitalist all on the basis of individual income (p. 57). Marger utilised U.S. census data to create a breakdown of individual income and categorised them by the following: Underclass (12% of the population) $0-$11,999, Working poor (13% of the population) $12,000-19,999, Working class (30% of the population) $20,000 to $39,999, Lower Middle class (30% of the population) $40,000 to $59,999, Upper middle class (14% of the population) $60,000-<$1 million, Upper-Capitalist class (1% of the population) 1 million or more. Utilising this conceptualization of economic class, the present paper identified the underclass, working poor, and working classes as low economic classes for the purposes of my analysis. Due to the original entry and coding of the income variable, a total recode into the income classifications proposed by Marger was not possible. Instead, the coding of 1-10 representing the following income breakdowns: 1 – no source of income, 2- $1-9,999, 3- $10,000-19,999, 4- $20,000-29,999, 5 - $30,000-39,999, 6- $40,000-49,999, 7- $50,000-59,999, 8- $60,000-79,999, 9 - $80,00-99,999 and 10 - $100,000 and up was maintained. Values 1 through 5 encompass the underclass, working poor and working classes and have been recoded into lower economic classes and values 6-10 encompass the lower-middle, upper-middle, and upper-capitalist have been coded into higher economic classes for the purpose of analysis. Both Marger and the survey question address individual and not household income. This may be limiting when considering that some respondents may have partners who earn more than they do, thus improving their access to resources.

### *Gender Identity*

Respondents had the opportunity to identify a physical, assigned birth sex, and a gender identity. The options for assigned sex at birth were male, female and intersex, while the options for gender identity were male, female, transgender, androgynous, genderqueer, transgender, female-to-male, male-to-female or other (please explain). For the purposes of this investigation, I was interested in looking at how a respondent's gender identity may influence the decision to seek help. Because gender identity is the gender that an individual most identifies with, it is this identification that constructs their gendered personal and social self. In an effort to more efficiently utilise the responses to gender identity, I collapsed androgynous, genderqueer, female-to-male, and male-to-female and other gender variant responses that far too few responses in each into the larger category 'transgender'. Transgender is an umbrella term that captures all gender identities beyond the scope of the dichotomous gender constructs of the feminine and the masculine (Blackless et. al, 2003). Even after the collapse, given the spread and very few respondents that identified as a gender other than male or female, these could not be utilised in the analyses. Additionally, because the VAVP offered six different gender identification options other than male/female, it is not a consistent identification of transgender. For example, to assume that those who identified as androgynous or genderqueer were transgender may not be consistent with their actual gender identification. The distribution of gender by the collapsed transgender category is still reported but not included in the final bivariate or multivariate analyses. Furthermore, the hypotheses derived from the literature suggested variations between men and women.

### *Race*

While a major strength of this sample was its size relate to many LGBQ studies, the number of non-white respondents was small and spread through six racial or ethnic groups. To efficiently utilise the responses, race was dichtomised into white and non-white groups. African-American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Bi/Multi Racial, and Caribbean were classified as non-white.

## *Statistical Analyses*

After the variables were recoded and collapsed as necessary, crosstabulations of the independent variables were performed with having sought help for intimate partner violence and the independent variables with having sought help for hate-motivated violence. For each crosstabulation, a Gamma value was reported that ranges from -1 to +1 measuring both strength and direction.

A Gamma value of 0 indicates no relationship present. Finally, in order to analyze the simultaneous relationship of race, class, and gender identity to help seeking and reporting behaviors, logistic regression analyses were conducted.

With permission of the VAVP and the Internal Review Board of Virginia Commonwealth University, a secondary data analysis was performed on the community violence survey. The sample was first described in terms of social demographic variables through frequencies of the responses to race, income and gender identity. Next, the sample was described in terms of their experience with intimate partner violence and/or hate-motivated violence by race, class, and gender.

## Results

### *Demographic Characteristics*

A total of 993 LGBQ identified participants completed the survey, however each survey item varied in size as respondents could skip any question. Most respondents, 84.2%, identified as White ($n$=785). The majority of respondents, 63%, were residents of Central or Northern Virginia ($n$=584). A diverse range was present in sexual orientation, with the majority of respondents identifying as either lesbian ($n$=278) or gay ($n$=302), with half of the sample identifying as female ($n$=466). When considering economic class as conceptualised by Marger (2005), the sample was just over half "upper economic class" ($n$=496). Table 1 represents the spread of demographics across participants.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

| Variable | % | *n* |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Female | 50.20% | 466 |
| Male | 35.60% | 331 |
| Transgender | 13.30% | 132 |
| **Total** | | $n$ = 929 |
| **Sexual Orientation** | | |
| Lesbian | 32.80% | 278 |
| Gay | 30.20% | 302 |
| Bisexual | 14.10% | 130 |
| Queer | 14.30% | 132 |
| Questioning | 2.20% | 20 |
| No Label | 6.50% | 60 |
| **Total** | | $n$ = 922 |
| **Race** | | |
| White | 84.20% | 785 |
| African American | 5.20% | 48 |
| Native American | 3.90% | 36 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 3.50% | 33 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 1.90% | 18 |
| Bi/Multi Racial | 0.90% | 8 |
| Caribbean | 0.40% | 4 |
| **Total** | | $n$ = 932 |
| **Geographic Location** | | |
| Central | 38.60% | 358 |
| Northern | 24.40% | 226 |
| Eastern | 16.90% | 157 |
| Southwest | 12.20% | 113 |
| Northwest | 7% | 65 |
| Southern | 0.90% | 8 |
| **Total** | | $n$ = 927 |
| **Economic Class** | | |
| Lower Economic Classes | 53.30% | 496 |
| Upper Economic Classes | 46.70% | 434 |

Of the 993 respondents, 45.9% (*n*=456) had reported having experienced intimate partner violence or having experienced a more serious kind of partner abuse (see Table 2). Participants were asked, "Have you ever been the victim of hate crime violence or harassment based on your actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity/expression?" Of the 993 responses to the question, 42.8% (n=425) reported having experienced hate-motivated violence.

The analysis that follows utilises the segment of the sample that has experienced intimate partner (*n*=456) and/or hate-motivated violence (*n*=425) but also responded to the demographic questions utilised. As Table 2 illustrates, experiences of intimate partner violence were nearly split according to race and economic classes. However, within gender, 49.40 % of females (*n*=228) experienced victimisation by an intimate partner – substantially higher than males. When examining hate violence victimisation, most respondents having been victimised identified as White males and were classified in lower economic classes.

Help-seeking was defined as either formal help-seeking, which included resources such as shelters, organizations, law enforcement and mental health professionals or informal help-seeking

Table 2. Experiences of Violence by Race, Economic Class, and Gender

| | Experienced IPV | | Experienced Hate Violence | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | *n* | % | *n* | |
| **Race** | | | | | |
| White | 45.10% | 431 | 51.70% | 406 | |
| Non-White | 42.90% | 63 | 44.20% | 65 | |
| **Total** | | 494 | | 471 | |
| **Economic Class** | | | | | |
| Lower Economic Classes | 44.60% | 221 | 52.20% | 259 | |
| Upper Economic Classes | 44.20% | 192 | 48.80% | 212 | |
| **Total** | | 413 | | 471 | |
| **Gender** | | | | | |
| Female | 49.40% | 228 | 41.30% | 191 | 191 |
| Male | 38.70% | 128 | 58.30% | 193 | 193 |
| **Total** | | 356 | | 384 | 384 |

which included friends and family. Only those who had reported experiencing intimate partner violence or one of the listed serious forms of partner abuse were counted. Of those who had experienced intimate partner violence (*n*=456), 57.1% did not seek any form of help, 65.9% did not seek any formal help, and 65.5% did not turn to friends and family. Of those who had experienced hate-motivated violence (*n*=425), 73.9% did not report the incident to the police. Table 3 illustrates the analyses of the independent variables influences on whether or not a respondent sought help for either form of violence. Only the statistically significant results of the tested hypotheses are reviewed in the following section. Given the exploratory nature of this project, if the Gamma value yielded a p-value of at least p<0.10 it was considered significant.

### *Differences in Help-Seeking*

First, hypotheses #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 revealed no significant findings (see Table 3 for a summary of responses). In this sample, there was no significant relationship between a respondent's economic class or gender and reporting hate violence to the police. Further, among men, economic class had no relationship to reporting hate violence to the police. When considering help-seeking for IPV experiences, there was no relationship between a respondent's gender and the decision to seek help.

Table 3. Help-Seeking by Race, Class and Gender

| | White | Non-White | Γ[c] | Female | Male | Γ | Lower EC[a] | Higher EC | Γ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *n* = 446 | *n* = 80 | | *n* = 167 | *n* = 177 | | *n* = 203 | *n* = 144 | |
| **Sought Formal Help for IPV[b]** | | | | | | | | | |
| No | 64.30% | 73.80% | | 68.30% | 63.70% | | 72.20% | 59% | |
| Yes | 35.70% | 26.30% | | 31.70% | 36.30% | | 27.80% | 41% | |
| | | | .218† | | | .102 | | | .288*** |
| **Sought Informal Help for IPV** | | | | | | | | | |
| No | 64.80% | 68.80% | | 70.70% | 64% | | 65.50% | 66.80% | |
| Yes | 35.20% | 31.30% | | 29.30% | 36% | | 34.50% | 33.20% | |
| | | | -.089 | | | .15 | | | -.03 |
| | *n* = 429 | *n* = 33 | | *n* = 192 | *n* = 187 | | *n* = 255 | *n* = 209 | |
| **Called Police for Hate Violence** | | | | | | | | | |
| No | 84.40% | 81.80% | | 50.90% | 49.10% | | 85.90% | 82.80% | |
| Yes | 15.60% | 18.20% | | 41% | 59% | | 14.10% | 17.20% | |
| | | | .091 | | | -.199 | | | .117 |

a.EC=Economic Class; b.IPV=Intimate Partner Violence; c. Gamma Statistic; *** p<0.001; † p<.10

While when examining formal help-seeking for IPV race illustrated a marginal significance ($p<.10$) indicating that whites may be more likely to seek help, its low significance level in addition to the small non-white sample size do not present acceptable support for the hypothesised direction. This is not to say that these factors are not important when considering barriers to help-seeking, but rather that within this sample, no statistically significant relationship could be found.

Hypothesis #1: Respondents of lower economic classes will be less likely than respondents of higher economic classes to have sought help because of violence from a partner.

When comparing the decision to seek formal help for intimate partner violence between two economic class groups, gamma was found to have a moderate relationship at 0.288. This relationship was in the hypothesised direction and illustrated a relationship between being of lower economic classes and not seeking formal help for intimate partner violence ($p<0.001$). See Table 4 for a summary of responses.

Table 4. Help-Seeking within Groups of Economic Class and Gender

| | **Lower Economic Class By Gender** | | | **Economic Classes By Males** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lower EC[a] Males | Lower EC Females | Γ[c] | Lower EC Males | Higher EC Males | Γ | |
| | *n*=69 | *n*=143 | | *n*=56 | *n*=67 | | |
| **Sought Formal Help for IPV[b]** | | | | | | | |
| No | 78.30% | 70.60% | | 73.20% | 49% | | |
| Yes | 21.70% | 29.40% | | 26.80% | 51% | | |
| | | | .288 | | | .370* | .370* |
| | *n*=52 | *n*=89 | | *n*=56 | *n*=67 | | |
| **Sought Informal Help for IPV** | | | | | | | |
| No | 75.40% | 62.20% | | 69.60% | 58.20% | | |
| Yes | 24.60% | 37.80% | | 30.40% | 41.80% | | |
| | | | .3* | | | .437 | .43 |
| | *n*=81 | *n*=109 | | *n*=247 | *n*=75 | | |
| **Called Police for Hate Violence** | | | | | | | |
| No | 80.20% | 89.90% | | 80.60% | 85.40% | | |
| Yes | 19.80% | 10.10% | | 19.40% | 14.60% | | |
| | | | -.374† | | | .307 | .30 |

[a.]EC=Economic Class; [b.]IPV=Intimate Partner Violence; [c.] Gamma Statistic; * p<.05; † p<.10

Hypothesis #7: Within respondents of lower economic classes, men will be less likely than women to have ever sought help because of violence from a partner.

When considering informal help-seeking among men and women in lower economic classes, a strong relationship was found with a gamma statistic of 0.300 ($p<0.05$), illustrating that men of lower economic classes were less likely than women of lower economic classes to seek informal help.

Hypothesis #8: Within respondents of lower economic classes, men will be less likely than women to have reported hate-motivated violence to the police.

When considering the influence of gender within lower economic classes and reporting hate violence the police, Gamma indicates a strong and negative relationship at -0.374, not in the hypothesised direction. This illustrated that women of lower economic classes were less likely to report hate violence to the police than men of lower economic classes ($p<0.10$).

Hypothesis #9: Among men, respondents of lower economic classes will be less likely than respondents of high economic classes to have ever sought help because of violence from a partner.

When considering men between the two economic classes, Gamma indicated a strong and positive relationship at 0.370 in the hypothesised direction, indicating that men of lower economic classes were less likely to seek formal help for intimate partner violence than men of higher economic classes ($p<0.05$).

### *Binary Logistic Regressions*

To analyse the simultaneous relationship of race, class, and gender identity to help-seeking and reporting behaviors, I conducted three binary logistic regression analyses. The analyses in Table 6 relating these independent variables to seeking informal help did not result in any statistically significant relationships at $p<.10$, and the chi-square tests of model coefficients were not significant at this level either ($\chi2=1.903$, df=3, Nagelkerke $R^2=.005$). Specifically, the explanatory variables of race, gender, and economic class did not significantly predict whether a respondent sought informal help for IPV. The analyses in Table 7 relating the independent variables to reporting hate violence to police also yielded no statistically significant results at $p<.10$, and the chi-square tests of model coefficients were not significant at this level either ($\chi2=1.39$, df=3, Nagelkerke $R^2=.005$). Again, the explanatory variables of race, gender, and economic class did not significantly predict whether a respondent reported hate violence to the police.

However in Table 5, as in the crosstabulation analysis, economic class was a significant predictor ($p=.003$) of formal help-seeking behavior for IPV, controlling for both race and gender identification. Increasing economic class from low to high approximately doubled the odds of seeking formal help for abuse (OR=1.755). This equation was statistically significant ($\chi^2= 11.653$, df=3, $p=.005$), though pseudo-estimates of explained variance were still low (e.g., Nagelkerke $R^2=.041$).

## Discussion

Differences between and within the groups of class and gender are evident in this sample. When considering the influence of gender, this sample illustrated that men may be less likely to seek informal help avenues such as friends and family than women. These

Table 5. Logistic Regression Predicting Formal Help-Seeking Behavior for IPV

| Variable | β | SE | Odds Ratio | $\chi^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Non-White | -0.3 | 0.3 | 1.273 | 0.961 |
| Lower EC | 0.6 | 0.2 | 1.755** | 8.658 |
| Female | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.76 | 1.521 |

* p<.01, χ2=11.653, df=3, -2 Log Likelihood= 647.7, Nagelkerke R2=.041

Table 6. Logistic Regression Predicting Informal Help-Seeking Behavior for IPV

| Variable | β | SE | Odds Ratio | $\chi^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Non-White | -0.2 | 0.3 | 0.824 | 0.516 |
| Lower EC | -0.1 | 0.2 | 0.907 | 0.264 |
| Female | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1.237 | 1.2 |

* p<.01, χ2=1.903, df=3, -2 Log Likelihood=657.4, Nagelkerke R2=.005

Table 7. Logistic Regression Predicting Police Reporting for Hate Violence

| Variable | β | SE | Odds Ratio | $\chi^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Non-White | 0.2 | 0.4 | 1.168 | 1.67 |
| Lower EC | 0.2 | 0.3 | 1.206 | 0.499 |
| Female | -0.2 | 0.3 | 0.811 | 0.635 |

* p<.01, χ2=1.39, df=3, -2 Log Likelihood=393.6, Nagelkerke R2=.005

findings echo previous findings that suggest that men in general tend to solve intimate problems independently and often will not seek help (Cruz, 2003; Meyer, 2008; Turell, 2000). This study expands this by specifying different types of help-seeking; specifically here it shows that at least in this sample, gay men may not have the supportive familiar networks that are crucial in exiting abusive relationships.

When examining police reporting of hate violence, the opposite finding was found, with men being more likely to report hate violence victimisation to the police than women. Previous studies have concluded that gay men are more commonly and severely violently attacked than lesbian women (Herek, 2008). This may make gay men more likely to report to police than women. Further, it could illustrate that women may have less trust in the police. Being more likely to have had previous police interventions for other experiences of violence, perhaps lesbian women do not find law enforcement to be helpful.

While the results show support for the hypothesised statement that both class and gender identity are important factors in the decision to seek help for LGBQ victims of violence, class was especially influential. Respondents that were categorised in lower economic classes were significantly less likely than those in higher economic classes to seek formal help. These sources of help may often be those services that require the most financial resources and may be out of reach. Even, among men, those who were of lower economic classes were far less likely to seek the same formal help for violence by an intimate partner. Additionally, the logistic regression illustrated that class is a strong predictor for the decision to seek any kind of help, even controlling for gender identity and race. Considering the literature that indicate formal structural sources of help for violence experiences such as the criminal justice system or domestic violence are not frequently sought, these findings support those previous conclusions (McClennen et al., 2002; Merrile and Wolfe 2000; Renzetti, 1992; 1996; Scherzer, 1998). While race did not play a significant role in either the bivariate analyses or in predicting help-seeking, a more diverse sample may result in a different finding.

Overall, of particular significance, this study illustrates that the disparities in help-seeking may be very specific to formal avenues; those services that may require insurance or accessed through organisations and agencies whose service areas may not include many lower income areas. This proposes a challenge to existing violence prevention, intervention, and advocacy organizations that serve LGBQ communities. Additionally, it also illustrates that helpful informal help-seeking avenues may not be viable options for gay men. This finding is particularly important as informal avenues are often the most easily accessible and presumably cost-free.

## *Limitations*

Given the constraints of a secondary analysis project, there are a range of methodological and analytical issues present in this study that could not be altered. When collecting data on LGBQ communities, unique challenges shape the methodology and sampling designs. Given the nature of our social climate, it is difficult to access LGBQ communities and obtain representative samples. In general, ideal sampling methods are ultimately unrealistic when attempting to study the LGBQ population; "there is no sampling frame that lists gay and lesbian persons, so all samples are based on self identification of sexual orientation; this makes a random sample impossible to design" (Owen & Burke, 2004, p. 131). Additionally, the available literature does not consistently measure violence, either IPV or hate-violence, in the same way. Here, both IPV and hate-motivated violence questions were constructed by the VAVP, and addressed same-sex relationship violence as well as hate violence victimisation in a lifetime; this may yield higher rates of violence frequencies than questions that are time limited (Waldner-Haugrud et al, 1997). It does not take into consideration that there may have been respondents who experienced IPV by a same gendered *and* opposite gendered offender within a lifetime. These findings cannot be easily compared to other studies as the measurements of violence may vary from study to study. Further, the high rates of IPV and hate-violence in this sample may be due to the nature of the location in which many of the respondents were recruited (which was primarily through an anti-violence agency that assists or advocates for victims of violence). Finally, racial and ethnic diversity was an issue with this sample and did not allow for acceptable analyses of within-group differences utilising the race variable.

## *Applied Service and Future Research Implications*

LGBQ victims of violence within groups of economic marginality may be out of reach for anti-violence organizations, social service providers or other professionals. While most non-profit services provide free resources, structural barriers to access that effect groups within lower economic classes such as geographic isolation, transportation issues, or the inflexibility of work responsibilities place these LGBQ victims at a greater disadvantage. These findings propose a particular challenge to those organisations that serve LGBQ victims of violence to expand advocacy campaigns, service areas, and resources that address the specific needs of those within lower economic classes. Furthermore, many LGBQ community centers are located in the heart of urban and metropolitan areas sometimes hours away from rural populations where those in lower economic classes may often reside.

Traditional masculine expectations that emphasise independence and self-reliance influence the help-seeking behavior of men within LGBQ communities. Within the groups of lower economic classes, men were less likely than women to seek help even from friends and family. In social media campaigns and promotion of services, many organisations may broadly advance services with little attention to groups that may be more difficult to reach. Campaigns challenging the mantra of masculine self-reliance may aid in encouraging male victims within LGBQ communities to seek help whether it be from friends and family or more formal resources. However, within the group of lower economic classes, women were less likely than men to report hate violence to the police. While the literature largely supports the notion that men are characteristically less likely to seek help than women, there may be an interesting dynamic between women and police reporting within the LGBQ community that is worth investigating in future research.

In moving beyond prevalence studies, research is needed to explore how varying social locations within within LGBQ communities influence the decision to seek help for violent victimisation. Future research should attempt to obtain larger and more diverse samples to improve the representation of groups within the community. While studies that examine different help-seeking avenues and groups within LGBQ communities are useful, it is essential to develop a stronger scientific body of literature that examines the first step in help-seeking which is simply whether to or not. This foundational information would help guide future studies into why particular avenues are sought out more or less by varying groups within the community. Finally, these research efforts would help sharpen the focus of educational programs, outreach campaigns, and treatment methods by helping to answer the questions of how they can reach more LGBQ victims and do so more effectively. This study should encourage future research to explore the intersections of the multitude of systems of oppression that propose structural and personal barriers to help-seeking and promote the study of LGBQ communities as encompassing members of diverse races, classes, and genders.

## Author Note

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# DISCIPLINING GAY AND LESBIAN FAMILY LIFE

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## Abstract

*Despite the myriad ways in which family is constituted and performed in the present, the 1950s aesthetic of family life remains commonplace in family studies and popular media. This is problematic, in that it marginalises all of those who do not fit within this very rigid aesthetic composition. With the advent of the "gaybaby" boom and shifting social mores, queer families are becoming more visible in academic literature and society at large. Yet rather than fostering the creative potentiality of queer families, dominant heteronormative discourses are reinscribing the 1950s family aesthetic through the creation of the homonormative family. By conducting a critical discourse analysis of the experience of transition for lesbian and gay parents, the present study investigates how heteronormative discourses manifest in the research on the gay and lesbian family life cycle.*


**Keywords:** lesbian and gay families, critical discourse analysis, biogenetic discourse, coupledom discourse, parental imperative discourse, risk discourse

## Introduction

Discourses about the naturalness of the contemporary family continue to captivate the social imagination of post-industrial societies of the 21st century. Hence, the family remains a principal ideology in governing social life. Two adults, of the opposite gender, engaged in a monogamous love relationship, with the intention of biologically bearing children, is the aesthetic of traditional family ideology. The norm derived from this ideology thus positions families that do not fit within it as deviant, and even dangerous to the prevailing social order. Yet as family sociologists (eg REFS) have long argued, it is problematic to think of the nuclear family as natural and an essential aspect of civil society. Moreover, the nuclear family is no longer commonplace in the 21st century as evidenced by couples without children, and single and multi-parent families (Candib, 1989; Kapinus & Johnson, 2003; Vaccaro, 2010). Yet despite this, the North American imagination remains captivated by discourses about the nuclear family. One unfortunate side effect of this, is that dominant understandings of the gay and lesbian family life cycle rests upon this paradigm, taking the (homo)nuclear family as its model.

The present paper engages with these issues by examining the transition to parenthood experience of gay and lesbian parents as represented in Goldberg's (2009) *Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children: Research on the Family Life Cycle*. It is argued that whilst Goldberg's work represents an important point of progression (by the very fact that books on queer family development exist at all), the text does not necessarily transgress the heterosexual imaginary, as the paradigm it employs mirrors the same essentialist understanding of family life as those before it. It is therefore argued that is imperative that we explore a new paradigm to understand family life, one that is not stage-based, and one that instead positions how queer families create meaning of their relationships, transitions, and distress as central in social work practice.

## Method

I chose Goldberg's (2009) text *Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children: Research on*

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*the Family Life Cycle* because it is a meta-analysis of existing research on gay and lesbian family life. As such, Goldberg's work provided rich data on the social, political, and cultural knowledge claims about queer family life, which allowed me to thoroughly engage in an analysis of the myriad discourses that circulate about queer identity and family life.

Discourse analysis is a framework through which one interfaces with how language and narrative creates systems of possibilities for knowledge. Discourse is more than an theoretical abstraction, but has material effects on people, communities, and societies. Discourse analysis is about the "identification of the place, function, and character of the knowers, authors, and audiences" (Rossiter, 2001, para. 18).

I adapted a method of discourse analysis proposed by Rossiter (2001), wherein one identifies the ruling discourses; the oppositions and contradictions between discourses; positions created by the discourse, which in turn shape perspectives and actions; and the constructed nature of experience. Fundamental to Rossiter's method of discourse analysis is looking for what is left out by the discourse in use; in so doing understanding what views are permitted or inhibited. In using Rossiter's method, I was able to problematize the data on gay and lesbian family life and opened new spaces for exploration.

## Analysis

Several heteronormative discourses are recurrent in the research represented in Goldberg's (2009) text on the gay and lesbian family life cycle. Such discourses are couplehood, the parental imperative, biogenetics, and motherhood. Each discourse is embedded in the data Goldberg cites and they work in tandem to construct a normative gay and lesbian family life cycle. Moreover, there is a pervasive risk discourse, which was unexpected, and rather insidious. The confluence of these discourses within the discursive rationality paradigm leaves the heteronormative family intact, and largely unquestioned.

Problematically, these discourses render single parent, co-parent, and multi-parent families invisible. Moreover, they undermines indigenous notions of kinship. Goldberg (2009) attempts to address the myriad ways in which queer persons constitute family by adopting a strengths and creativity discourse framed within a social constructionist paradigm. However, this perspective is peripheral within her data. Nor did Goldberg meaningfully address these oppositions and contradictions within her data.

The findings from the critical discourse analysis presented below engage with these oppositions and contradictions through discussions about ruling discourses and the discursive formations in which they are embedded. In so doing, we will come to understand their influence on how we come to know what we know about family life.

### *Couplehood Discourse*

The couplehood discourse constitutes cohabiting, two-parent families premised upon a monogamous conception of love as a universal given. There are a number of examples in Goldberg's (2009) text where this discourse is at work. From the outset of Goldberg's discussion of the transition to parenthood, couplehood is privileged, as seen with the following "in this section, I discuss the transition to parenthood experience for same-sex couples. …The transition from couplehood to parenthood has been extensively studied in heterosexual couples" (p. 72). Not only is coupling privileged, but it is also situated within a strengths discourse:

> While studies of heterosexual couples have identified factors that facilitate an easier transition to parenthood (e.g., strong preexisiting martial relationship, social support from family members and friends), such findings cannot be assumed to unilaterally apply to same-sex couples, or single lesbi-

> ans and gay men. Same-sex couples carry with them unique strengths and potential vulnerabilities, which may shape their transition to parenthood (p. 73).

Whilst acknowledging both single and coupled prospective parents, this passage renders the strengths of single gay and lesbian prospective parents unintelligible. In this context, the notion of strengths reinforces the status quo, which is contrary to its premise, as it seeks to identify strengths and resources in all circumstances, even those that we recognize as the most unlikely.

Also, note that the passage above asserts that a strong preexisting marital relationship is a protective factor during the transition to parenthood. Therefore, not only is couplehood privileged, but also having your relationship sanctioned by the state is preferred. Whilst Goldberg (2009) acknowledges that such findings cannot unilaterally apply to same-sex couples, she does not expand on her assertion, thus creating a degree of ambiguity.

Given that same-sex marriage is determined state by state, and is precarious in the United States, this ambiguity opens space for one to draw multiple inferences about the data. In so doing this has the effect of obscuring the power of the couplehood discourse. For instance, if one resides in states where same-sex marriage is legally sanctioned, the discourse of couplehood has space wherein it can extend the discursive influence of heterosexuality. In a Canadian context, such a discursive space is vast and far-reaching in light of same-sex marriage being a constitutional right under the auspices of the federal government.

Another resounding example of the couplehood discourse in the data cited by Goldberg (2009) is in her discussion of couplehood versus single parenting, which unfolds prior to her concluding thoughts. According to the theory of critical discourse analysis as outlined by Jager (2001), the organization of one's text provides insight into the underlying ethos governing one's empirical inquiry. Operating from this assumption, it is my assertion that single parenting is relegated to a less desirable status. Given the larger societal conversation in which this discourse resides, it is plausible that one may draw such an inference. The following exemplifies this well:

> The transition to parenthood experience for lesbians and gay men as well as bisexual women and men who become parents in the context of a same-sex committed relationship is necessarily different from that of single sexual minorities. …No research has systematically explored the transition to parenthood process for single sexual minorities (Goldberg, 2009, pp. 84-85).

Note the use of the word *parent* within the context of a committed relationship and the use of the phrase *sexual minority* in the context of single parenting. The terms "sexual" and "minority" are highly stigmatized words. Thus, the use of *sexual minority* positions the reader in a particular way to the data and to queer single parents. It is my contention that this use of language thus furthers the marginalization of single queer parents.

In thinking about what is left out of the discourse in use, it is striking how the couplehood discourse creates an arbitrary divide between single and coupled parents, as if to say that these are fixed categories. People create family in varied ways. Moreover, families are subject to change through divorce, death, and so on.

The data that Goldberg's (2009) draws from is also detached from a history in which heteronormative discourses constrained queer persons' ability to create family. As social mores changed, queer persons began to feel safe enough to disclose their sexual identities; in so doing, creating radical possibilities in the constitution of family life.

I argue that the couplehood discourse creates fixed boundaries that serve as a discursive space wherein people are taught to perform family. For example, the dyad is a unit that serves to uphold the status quo within a rational capitalist economic system. By representing couplehood as a fixed category, the dyad reinscribes notions of linearity, certainty, and predictability that underlie the enlightenment project, thus rendering the variability in human relationships invisible.

### *Parental Imperative Discourse*

The parental imperative is significant in the data on gay and lesbian family life. Such an imperative suggests that child rearing is essential to human maturation as expressed in the following:

> Much research is needed on lesbian and gay parents' transition to parenthood. In particular, longitudinal research that is initiated preparenthood is needed to understand how lesbian and gay parents' lives, relationships, and well-being change during this key life transition (Goldberg, 2009, p. 85).

There are several examples in her text where Goldberg speaks to the transition to parenthood as a key life event. Whilst the transition to parenthood brings changes to individual lives, representing it as key life event obscures the varied ways in which people come to be parents. For instance, not every person's transition to parenthood is premeditated, albeit many queer families in the contemporary are intentional.

This has not always been the case, however. Historically, lesbians and gay men created families in the context of heterosexual relationships in order to disguise their sexual identities because of pejorative social mores rooted in heteronormativity. This is not to say that these families were instrumental solely for survival. Rather, I present this example to complicate the narratives about the purposes, contexts, and motivations for child rearing. As I mentioned in the aforementioned passage, queer persons also entered heterosexual relationships because of their desire to parent.

Nonetheless, in constituting the transition to parent as a key life event, the parental imperative discourse sets up the expectation that families ought to be intentional, and in so doing, marginalizing those who come to be parents through chance. Therefore, if one becomes a parent through accepted conventions, one has access to a "passport" granting citizenship to the dominant group. Citizenship is a discursive formation that disciplines gay and lesbian parents through the process of normalization as seen in the following passage:

> …Ben-Ari and Livni (2006) studied eight lesbian parent families in Israel and observed that even family members who were openly disapproving of participants' sexual orientation tended to support women's decision to become parents, such that "grandchildren are perceived as 'compensation' for their daughters' sexual orientation" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 527).

Goldberg (2009) cites several other studies making similar claims. In doing so, family creation is about fitting into pre-established norms, which is made possible by exploiting the pain queer persons often experience when being rejected by family members as demonstrated in the abovementioned passage. Citizenship is therefore not about solidarity or social justice, but the re-inscription of the proper liberal subject, notwithstanding its role in upholding the contemporary Western aesthetic of family life.

Aside from its disciplinary influence, the parental imperative discourse divides queer communities through the discursive formation of citizenship, by asserting that there is a fundamental difference between queer persons with and without children. Consider the following:

> Other studies of lesbian mothers and gay fathers also suggest that on becoming parents, some lesbian and gay parents find that they have more in common with heterosexual parents than with their childless gay friends. Becoming parents, then, may prompt changes in lifestyle and community that are somewhat bittersweet (Goldberg, 2009, p. 75).

By employing the heuristic category "childless", the data in Goldberg's (2009) text relegate those who choose not to parent to a marginal status, and in so doing, place greater value on child rearing. For if one does not parent, he or she is then in some way incomplete, at which point heterosexual parents and queer parents are akin to one another as they have a shared purpose often resting on altruism. Altruism and the parental imperative obscure the socially constructed nature of the contemporary family, thereby making it a natural order of things.

In failing to raise children, one becomes a threat to neo-liberal society by defaulting on their duty to produce new workers and consumers. Furthermore, one is failing to contribute to the continuation of the current social order. Thus, relationships premised upon social justice, solidarity, and reverence for human life are secondary to the pursuit for order.

I argue that the parental imperative discourse eclipses the myriad ways in which children are reared, cared for, and supported. Moreover, the parental imperative discourse denies the ways in which children are embedded in culture, society, and politics, all of which contribute to their socialization and pursuits as human beings. To reference the proverb "it takes a village to raise a child," raises important considerations about relationships in one's life that fall outside traditional familial boundaries. The parental imperative discourse renders the role nations, states, and societies play in the care of children through public and social policy invisible. It is my contention that such a reductionist view serves an ideological function, namely to regulate the transition to parenthood. The transition to parenthood is the nodal point where our fear of chaos is manifest. Living within uncertainty in a delimited field of possibility renders us vulnerable to exploitation. Rather than deconstructing the ontological imperatives that contribute to our angst during times of transition, we have constructed a series of instruments that prescribe how we ought to contend with change.

The data Goldberg (2009) cites speaks to several 'techniques' lesbian and gay couples need in order to successfully transition to parenthood (i.e. equality, flexible work schedules, social support, etc.). These techniques reflect the interest of a neo-liberal economic system. The rational, independent, self-governing subject is privileged.

Through construction of the discursive practice of 'transition,' we are able to regulate conduct and to grant, or deny, citizenship. We are also able to justify coercive interventions in order to constitute subjects that fit within existing paradigms about social life. Goldberg's (2009) conceptualization of the transition to parenthood does not fundamentally challenge the heteronormative family; rather, it reinforces it. In defining the transition to parenthood, she creates a narrative about what queer families ought to look like. Thus, the creative potentiality of queer families is co-opted in pursuit of maintaining the heteronormative family.

The family is therefore a social field, which Bourdieu defines as "a patterned configuration of relationships, which are defined by boundaries and rules" (cited in Moffatt, 1996, p. 48). Moffatt (1996) expanded on this concept by asserting social fields are contested spaces wherein we struggle to preserve or change its boundaries.

This concept is relevant in that the transition to parenthood is a nexus wherein boundaries of multiple social fields merge, causing momentary upheaval, and in so doing, compromising the predictability of a rational liberal society. The Western aesthetic of the innocent "American" family renders the discursive influence of the transition to parenthood unintelligible. Thus, theories of human and family development circulate as taken for granted, thus minimizing the role of history, politics, and social mores in structuring family life.

### *Biogenetic Discourse*

Goldberg (2009) draws heavily from research on inseminating lesbian couples to ground her discussion about the gay and lesbian family life cycle. This may be in part due to a lack of research on the experiences of lesbians and gay parents regarding adoption. Yet despite this, research that Goldberg draws from does not meaningfully discuss the gaps in contemporary research on family life. As a result, the importance of a biological connection to one's child remains taken for granted. The following passage affirms my assertion:

> Lesbian couples who inseminate are spared many of the complexities associated with adoption (e.g., a potentially long wait for a child). Additionally, one partner has the perhaps desired opportunity to experience pregnancy and give birth, and the child is genetically related to one of the partners (p. 81).

Thus, the biogenetic discourse creates a hierarchy in which childbirth is valued over other pathways to bringing a child into one's life. In Goldberg's discussion on lesbian and gay parents' routes to parenthood, such a hierarchy is evident in that she begins by discussing insemination followed by adoption then blended families.

Aside from addressing the asymmetries in the relationship between birth and "nonbirth" parents, the data assume a rather affirming position in relation to insemination. Given the larger societal conversation in which the data are embedded, this not surprising. In the contemporary, the construction of the family is about procreation, which is inextricable from biogenetics. Yet this obscures the role heteronormativity plays in appropriating the symbolic significance of biological kinship.

Moreover, kinship tied to biology often denotes ownership over one's child. Goldberg (2009) speaks to this in the following: "This creates the potential for inequality in parental roles, feelings of jealousy on the part of the non-biological mother, and questions and conflicts over who the child "belongs" to" (p. 81). The concept of 'ownership' is a Western phenomena embedded in Victorian mores. By contrast, in many indigenous societies, kinship extends beyond the individual to include the community. I argue, the bureaucratic rationality upon which Western societies rest takes up social phenomena in compartmentalized ways, under the assumption that it leads to order, thus precluding a holistic view of our interdependence. Therefore, biological kinship is imperative to upholding the current social order.

Notwithstanding the role of state bureaucracies in ensuring the welfare of children, adoption fundamentally undermines the bureaucratic rationality upon which we depend. Moreover, adoption challenges the symbolic significance of biological kinship. It is my assertion that adoption triggers our existential angst about unpredictability, inadequacy, and deviance. I also think that blended families elicit the same fears.

There are several examples in the data cited by Goldberg (2009) where the biogenetic discourse constitutes adoption and blended families as precarious. Here is one such example:

> Stepparents–heterosexual or gay – may have unrealistic expectations, believing that the transition to a parenting role will be relatively uncomplicated. As a result, they are often unprepared for the challenges associated with the stepparenting role. For sexual minorities, these challenges may be further complicated by their invisible status as lesbian or gay stepparents (p. 83)

While these issues may be relevant for stepparents, they are no less relevant to those who become parents by insemination or adoption. The data creates fixed boundaries between insemination, adoption, and stepparenting, which may be far more diffuse in "reality". In thinking about what narratives the biogenetic discourse excludes, I think about those who desire to adopt. However, I invite readers to be mindful of the motivations underlying one's decision to adopt, as I do not think one's decision to adopt is always altruistic or innocent.

I also think about how the biogenetic discourse excludes gay men who access assisted reproductive technologies, and in so doing, reproduce the gendered and heteronormative nature of childbirth, as their journey toward parenthood falls outside accepted conventions of conception. This is something that unfolds between two people, ideally a heterosexual couple. Therefore, Goldberg's (2009) discourse about the creative potential of queer families struggles to find expression under the influence of the biogenetic discourse.

### *Motherhood Discourse*

Whilst conservative rhetoric positions queer families as an affront to heteronormative family life, the data reported in Goldberg's (2009) text suggest something different. In her discussion of parental roles, the division of labour, and relational adjustment across the transition to parenthood for queer parents, there is an emphasis on lesbian couples, which suggests that gender and motherhood continues to have a profound influence in constituting family life. Several scholars have commented that our society views lesbian mothers as safer than gay fathers in that womanhood is seen as essential to childrearing (Hicks, 2000; Ripper, 2009).

However, lesbian mothers must fit within accepted conventions of femininity. Hicks (2000) noted in his study of fostering and adoption assessments that lesbian mothers that are "too militant" or are seen as "man hating" are casted as a threat to motherhood. The ideal lesbian mother is nice, private, discreet, and middle class.

The following passage from Goldberg's text attests to this: "…many couples actively worked to minimize potential inequality in their parental roles. Among those nonbiological mothers who perceived the birth mother as the primary parent …experienced feelings of jealousy (p. 76). The data cited in Goldberg's work had a pervasive pre-occupation with equality and egalitarianism.

It is my contention that equality is a discursive practice that obscures the role social inequality plays in shaping the well-being of families, especially for queer women. Ripper (2009) asserts that the emphasis on egalitarianism in lesbian relationships is born of a romanticized notion of femininity, which negates the violence that occurs in same-gender relationships. Womens' failure to comprise, nurture, and to be compassionate is deeply implicated in ideas about gender and motherhood.

Contrary to popular opinion, women, as well as men, rarely adhere to rigid conventions about gender. As such, the appropriation of gendered parental roles is ideological, rather than a reflection of the contemporary family. Nonetheless, they exert a profound influence on family life. Thus, the emphasis on lesbians inadvertently reinscribes the gendered nature of intimate care, and in so doing, perpetuating the heteronormative family.

The confluence of these elements creates the motherhood discourse that keeps intact the notion that motherhood and gender are essential to child rearing and family well-being. Therefore, lesbian and gay parents must negotiate parenthood in a paradoxical space wherein they embody opposing subjectivities, thus rendering them vulnerable to profound shame and angst.

### *The Minority Report: Exposing "Risky" Sexual Minority Parents*

The convergence of the abovementioned discourses creates a contested space wherein in family is performed. To ensure that lesbian and gay parents perform family in a manner that adheres to the conventions of heteronormativity, agents of the state (i.e. social workers) must have justification to intervene in family life. Through the discourse of risk, agents of the state have a framework in which to access, analyze, and make calculations about queer parents.

The discourse of risk achieves its ends through neo-liberal dogmas about individual responsibility (Quinlivan, 2002). As Parton (1999) poignantly stated, risk is used to distinguish between the prudent and imprudent subject by assessing the choices and decisions he or she makes to preclude future misfortune (i.e. when to come out and to whom, safety assessment, do I have enough social support etc.). However, reducing risk to one of mere choice does not adequately address the discursive fields that create oppressive social conditions (Quinlivan, 2002). In so doing, discourses of risk lead social work practitioners to focus narrowly on what one lacks than the entirety of their social existence (Parton, 1999).

Whilst being a hallmark of social work, a person-in-environment analysis without critical lens of risk does not shift the focus from one of individual responsibility to one of social responsibility. In the context of queer parents, discourses of risk have fulfilled its purpose by casting queer sexualities as personal struggle in which social intervention is targeted at the micro level (Hicks, 2005; Quinlivan, 2002). This is a pervasive theme in the data Goldberg cited.

There are several examples throughout the research on gay and lesbian family in which gay and lesbian parents are positioned within the risk discourse. The following passage demonstrates this well "…Lesbians and gay men do not benefit from the societal support that heterosexual couples receive when they become parents, and, thus, relative nonsupport may represent a risk factor for sexual minorities during the transition to parenthood" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 73).

When speaking about the problems, issues, and barriers faced by lesbian and gay parents, Goldberg (2009) uses the heuristic device "sexual minority" to emphasize their marginal status and vulnerability. The application of this heuristic device is pervasive in Goldberg's text. In light of the larger, societal conversation in which we are embedded that constitutes queer sexualities as deviant, Goldberg's analysis reinscribes the "otherness" of gay and lesbian parents. Rossiter (2005) talked about otherness as the space in which one is a threat, or a risk, to the prevailing order of things. Therefore, the gay and lesbian family life cycle is about the management of risk wherein the concern for a family's well-being is secondary.

## Discussion

It was perhaps unsurprising to find the above-mentioned heteronormative discourses embedded in a text about gay and lesbian family life. Family is a vanguard of our modern neo-liberal society (Biblarz & Stacey 2010; Candib, 1989; Drucker, 2009; Folgero, 2008; Kitzinger, 2005; Lehr, 1999; Sullivan & Baques, 1999). As such, it holds an esteemed position that cannot be questioned. The confluence of normative discourses of family thus creates a *homo*normative family script, one that ultimately plays out in Golberg's (2009) text. Duggan (2002) asserts that

> Homonormativity fragments LGBTQ communities into hierarchies of worthiness. LGBTQ people that are the closest to mimicking heteronormative standards of gender identity are deemed most worthy of receiving rights. LGBTQ individuals at the bottom of the hierarchy (transsexuals, transvestites, intersex, bisexu als, non-gender identified) are seen as an impediment to this elite class of homonormative individuals receiving their rights (cited in Nelson, 2002, p. 177).

The centrality of the "elite" queer subject is pervasive in the data Goldberg (2009) utilized. The hegemonic influence of classism, racism, sexism, and heterosexism subjugates other ways of being in, and performing, family. Further, transgender and bisexual prospective parents are regarded as anomalies as they blur the boundaries of gender and sexuality. To countermine boundaries of any sort is unacceptable in a world predicated upon discursive rationality, especially those related to family life. There are several examples wherein transgender and bisexual prospective parents are framed as interesting experiments of the postmodern family. In so doing the centrality of the elite queer subject is reinscribed.

The status assigned to race and class in constitution of family life is problematic as well. The data in Goldberg's (2009) text regards race and class as "risky," as they undermine the bourgeoisie imperative required to participate in family life. Consider the following passages:

> It is likely that the low income and working-class same-sex couples, who tend to have less flexibility in their jobs may experience more challenges in balancing work and child care in the early months of parenthood and may consequently encounter greater barriers to maintaining equality (Goldberg, 2009, p.76 ).

> Moore (2008) interviewed members of 32 Black lesbian stepfamilies and found that biological mothers were often opposed to sharing decision-making authority with regard to child-rearing, viewing themselves as "the mother" and primary caregiver (Goldberg, 2009, p. 83).

Both of these passages call into question whether low-income and racially marginalised parents are able to embody the elite queer subject. The data positions low-income and racialized parents within the risk discourse, as they represent a "threat" to the couplehood, the parental imperative and biogenetic discourses. Not only are transgender, bisexual, low-income, and racially marginalised persons invisible in Goldberg's (2009) text, but also co-parent and multi-parent families. The invisibility of co-parent and multi-parent families is also a result of homonormativity and the discourses that emerge therefrom.

There is, then, a vast disjuncture between my argument presented in this paper and the data represented in Goldberg's (2009) text. It is not my contention that Goldberg's (2009) data is entirely problematic; rather it reflects a particular aesthetic, namely, white, middle class, cisgender gay and lesbian perspective parents. Moreover, Goldberg does not necessarily engage in critical reflexivity, thereby leaving the heteronormative (and indeed homonormative) conception of family intact. In so doing, Goldberg's work renders transgender, gender queer, bisexual, racially marginalised, and working-class prospective parents unintelligible. As a result, the gay and lesbian family life cycle as described by Goldberg serves a disciplinary function that seeks to normalize queer families through the government of risk. Thus, the developmental metaphor employed in the data referenced by Goldberg is more an ideological device than a representation of the unfolding journey in family life *per se*, a technology of the self that over determines how we understand gay and lesbian families. Foucault described technologies of the self as

> …"truth games" though which human subjects aspire to know the truth of their selves and are enjoined to seek this truth through the practice of care. … [They] permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others of a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (cited in Foote & Frank, 1999, p. 161).

However, such truth games and operations often reflect dominant mores of the time, which are not always aligned with justice, but exist for the pursuit of power and control.
Family is, therefore, the site of intense socio-political activity. Such an assertion is congruent with my research findings, in that the gay and lesbian family life cycle described by Goldberg (2009) upholds the importance of biology, gender, chastity, and monogamy. Moreover, I contend that family is the site and context of bio-power, wherein we regulate pro-

creation for the purposes of social control. O'Brien (1999) describes bio-power as

> the administration of life. Bio-power has evolved in two forms, or "poles of development." The first is "anatomo-politics" or "disciplinary power," which operates on the human body as a machine, attempting to optimize its capabilities, efficiency, usefulness, and political docility. The second pole of bio power is "regulation of the population." This from is concerned with biological processes such as births, mortality, and probabilities of life…" (p. 132).

It is the second pole of power to which I refer, and which is enacted in Golberg's text.

Yet despite the strong hold that homonormativity has on gay and lesbian prospective parents, family life is undergoing metamorphosis, as seen with the presence of single, co-parent, and multi-parent families (Hicks, 2005; Epstein, 2009; Vaccaro, 2010). In my practice, I have encountered communities of people rearing children. Radical possibilities for family life are beginning to emerge as people resisting dominant discourses about family life. Hicks (2005) in his study of queer genealogies speaks to the importance of taking up family in complicated ways, as family is not fixed as we all come to family with myriad intentions and motivations. We ought to approach family reflexively, as reflexivity advances justice, as family is then about creativity, solidarity, and intentionality. For if we forget to do so, we are vulnerable to shame, because we will invariability embody contradictory and opposing subjectivities that divide us within ourselves and from others.

## Author Note

This analysis was completed in conformity with requirements for the conferral of the Master of Social Work in the School of Social Work at York University. Blair Wilson now works with Stanford Youth Solutions where he provides foster parent education. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Blair Wilson at 8912 Volunteer Lane, Sacramento, California, U.S.A 95826 or bwilso@alumni.yorku.ca.

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# LIBRARIES AS LGBTIQ VENUES

SUZIE DAY

## Abstract

*Libraries have long been at the forefront of providing free and equal access to information for users. In recent times, this equality has extended to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community, and in some areas, libraries provide a place where people of diverse sexuality and gender (DSG) can freely access resources. In rural and isolated areas of Australia, libraries also provide young people with the opportunity to connect with the wider LGBTIQ community in a way that might not be possible anywhere else (i.e., through the provision of internet access). Above all, libraries are a safe space, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, something many DSG people fail to receive elsewhere. As such, libraries may be seen as an important resource for LGBTIQ communities, an issue explored in detail in the present paper.*

**Keywords**: Library, LGBTIQ, safe spaces, diversity, DSG, bullying, collection development

## Introduction

When this paper was presented at the *Queer Collaborations* conference in 2011, I asked the audience two questions: 1) How many of the audience (who primarily identified as non-heterosexual and/or non-gender normative) were bullied in high school, and 2) how many of the audience sought refuge in a school library. Of the thirty or so people in the room, everyone raised their hand to the first question. About 75% raised their hand to the second. Whilst not necessarily indicative of the broader population, this informal poll shows just why libraries have the potential to be important spaces for lesbians, gay men, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people. Furthermore, the value of libraries likely increases dramatically in areas where there are no other accessible LGBTIQ venues, such as many country areas. Importantly, many Australian libraries are making some effort to become LGBTIQ-friendly spaces, but there is still so much more to be done.

One of the key reasons why libraries (both within schools and within the community more broadly) are so important is the fact that schools can be highly dangerous places for LGBTIQ youth. According to a study by Hillier, Turner and Mitchell (2007), 89% of openly LGBTIQ youth in Australia report suffering abuse, with 74% of that taking place within a school environment. This can have profound impacts, particularly given the fact that lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts (King et al., 2008). The figures are even higher for transgender youth, with almost half attempting suicide at some point in their life (Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006). Thankfully, libraries are perfectly positioned to provide LGBTIQ youth, and the overall LGBTIQ community, with a safe space. By being visibly gay-friendly, libraries can not only give hope to a population that often has very little in terms of support, but can also educate the general public, leading to greater acceptance and tolerance.

In the remainder of this paper a number of library practices will be discussed, which are aimed at including the LGBTIQ community within the library and its culture. A majority of these suggestions have already been success-

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fully trialled either here in Australia, or in libraries overseas. In addition, many of the below practices can be implemented with little or no cost, or simply intergrated into existing programs.

## Inclusive Library Practices

When I was growing up in Kalgoorlie (a small, isolated town in the Western Australian Goldfields), one of the hardest aspects of being gay was the isolation, and the feeling of being 'the only gay in the village'. When I was about 14 or so, I saw a vehicle with a rainbow bumper sticker, and for days I was walking on clouds, just from the knowledge that I was not alone, and somebody else out there was willing to make that public statement.

Similarly for libraries, genre spine labelling is a quick, easy, and inexpensive way to increase visibility of LGBTIQ content within collections, and thus potentially give LGBTQ users a sense of not being alone. Inverted pink triangles or small rainbow stickers make perfect spine labels, and can turn an ordinary novel on a library shelf into a clear sign for those with an interest in LGBTIQ literature.

This approach to collection visibility can be built upon by the creation of reading lists. While this kind of project is subjective from library to library, it is not uncommon for public libraries to have small leaflets, or fliers, which recommend books and authors by genre or subject. LGBTIQ literature can quite easily become a list of its own. In Victoria Park, Western Australia, for example, the public library publishes its reading lists online, and includes a LGBTIQ-resource page on their Facebook account (Town of Victoria Park Library, 2011).

Posters are another method of giving the LGBTIQ community visibility within a library. Every public and school library has a number of posters, especially within the children's and young adult's sections. Such posters can easily include images that will appeal to LGBTIQ community members, and are easily accessed from LGBTIQ community organisations. For example, The Perth Freedom Centre (a drop in centre for DGS youth) provides its users with free posters that state "This is a safe space, where everyone is respected and welcomed" superimposed over a rainbow flag (Wright, 2011). While it may not seem all that significant to most people, in a small country town, where LGBTQ issues are rarely acknowledged, a poster such as this can make a world of a difference to LGBTQ youth who may be held deeply in the closet out of fear. Leaflets can also easily be sourced from Family Planning and similar organisations, which can be displayed in community information racks. Spine labels, posters and leaflets are just three simple ways in which libraries can be visibly LGBTIQ-friendly, and potentially make a huge difference to the lives of a lot of people.

There are of course other ways that individual librarians can make a difference in the lives of LGBTIQ library users. As many readers will no doubt be aware, in 2010 there was a spate of suicides in the USA. Six LGBTIQ teenagers or those questioning their sexuality, within the space of one month, committed suicide as a direct result of being bullied for their supposed, or actual, sexuality (Mckinley, 2010). Two of these young people were just thirteen. Following these events, blogger Emily Lloyd urged people to become more visible as queer-friendly within their libraries (Lloyd, 2010). Sharing her own story of coming out, both to herself and everyone around her, she made a point of expressing how much hope a little visibility can give. Now a librarian, she wears a pride button on her lanyard at all times. All it takes is for one young person to see it, to know they are not alone, and it is worth it, she suggests. Also following the spate of youth suicides, American activist Dan Savage started a video campaign reminding young LGBTIQ people that "It Gets Better". This concept went viral, and within a matter of weeks there were thousands of videos being uploaded to YouTube. In fact, if you search "*It Gets Better library"* you will find a plethora of public libraries who have compiled videos of their own.

Another approach to supporting LGBTIQ library users, that whilst not yet common in Australia, but is in public libraries in other parts of the world, is participating in annual Pride celebrations. In 2008, for example, Oakland Public Library in California held inclusive Story Time, which features gay themed picture books ('Oakland Public Library Celebrates LGBT Pride Month with Lavender Scrolls, Family Storytime', n.d.) They also ran a special project, called the *Lavender Scrolls Project*, which illustrated the lives of eight LGBTIQ elders from their local community, and displayed them in the library for the duration of Pride. This sort of project and activities could be easily replicated in Australia, in any number of libraries.

Another library that is a shining example of how libraries can be as inclusive as possible is the San Antonio Library, in Texas. In the USA, June is Pride month (to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, the beginning of the activist gay-liberation movement), and their various activities include talks from local activists, gay themed movie screenings, writing workshops with LGBTIQ authors, and a community forum about workplace equality (San Antonio Public Library, 2011). They even have a separate web-portal for their gay and lesbian resources, so that users can browse this particular aspect of the library's collection from their own computer, ensuring user discretion and privacy.

## Dealing with Censorship

Of course engaging in inclusive practices is not all that is required in terms of supporting LGBTIQ people in libraries. It is also important that libraries and their staff are aware of both internal policy, and state law, regarding censorship within libraries, particularly relating to LGBTIQ issues. In 2011, for example, a Perth library picture book featuring a same sex relationship was found to have a warning label attached to the front, stating "Readers should be aware this book is concerned with same sex relationships" (Dorrington, 2011). The book, *King and King* (de Haan & Nijland, 2003), is about a king who has to marry, so his mother sends for all the princesses in the world to come and visit. All the princesses bore him, until one day, a princess arrives, accompanied by her brother, and the King falls in love with the brother at first sight. A vibrant, and colourful picture book, translated from its original language, Dutch, there are five copies within the WA library system. There is also a sequel, *King and King and Family* (de Haan, Mijland, & Nijland, 2004), which depicts the two Kings adopting an orphan girl on their honeymoon. There is no sex, no nudity, and no swearing, with the books being wholly appropriate for children. Since then, the label has been removed, and other copies have been checked to make sure they don't have the same label, and attempts were made to trace when the label first appeared. This is an example of how librarians must actively ensure not simply that libraries are inclusive, but that they are not at the same time exclusionary.

Librarians should also be aware that most internet filters (both free and commercial) will block websites with any reference to sexuality (Hodge, 2011). In the US, this has led to lawsuits, such as when it has been discovered that "Ex-gay conversion" websites were classified as religious, yet pro-LGBTIQ websites were blocked (Winerip, 2012). This means that LGBTIQ youth who don't feel safe browsing the internet in their home for LGBTIQ subjects are also unable to do so in their library. This can mean that they are prevented from connecting with the wider LGBTIQ community, or finding out where else they can access information or support services. It can also be dangerous when such filters block information regarding safe sex. Most schools today provide sex education, but very few provide information relevant to gay and lesbian youth, as it is not part of the required curriculum (Hillier et al., 2010) More to the point, allowing these filters to block any reference to sexuality reinforces to vulnerable youth an idea that they are second class or abnormal, which is highly damaging to their self-esteem and mental health.

## Conclusion

As Harvey Milk said, “You gotta give them hope” (Cloud, 1999). Milk inspired thousands of people to stand up for their rights, because he believed that if one person showed the world it could be a better place, this would inspire hope in others that their life could be better too. Libraries are in a unique position to give hope to some of our society’s most at-risk youth. This is even more evident in rural and regional areas, where there is likely nothing else around to remind LGBTIQ young people that they are not alone in the world. Schools in particular can be a dangerous place for LGBTIQ youth, and if we can provide one place, just one, where young people can be safe, and know that they are welcome, then we are making a positive difference in their life. A difference that could well save it.

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# THE AUSTRALIAN CORPORATE CLOSET, WHY IT'S STILL SO FULL: A REVIEW OF INCIDENCE RATES FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION AND GENDER IDENTITY DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

IAN PATRICK SMITH, LINDSAY OADES & GRACE MCCARTHY

## Abstract

*The paper reviews the extant Australian literature on sexual orientation (SO) discrimination within the Australian workplace. In the research, there is variation in organisational workplace and a bias towards health and educational sectors as a research setting, which raises some methodological considerations such as poor generalisability to other organisational contexts. The small body of Australian research into SO discrimination encompasses; (i) varied methodological and theoretical approaches, (ii) disparate authors selecting a varied range of aspects of discrimination thus absenting a unifying framework to guide research and lacking as yet seminal authorship providing focus, iii) limited sampling of participants making comparisons difficult and further indicating the absence of a unifying framework with which to focus the research and iv) limited studies exclusively investigating workplace discrimination. In this paper, the Australian literature is presented chronologically, and where possible, it has linked studies together to indicate the commensurate nature of the studies to illustrate the incidence rates of SO discrimination in the Australian labour market as a rationale for GLBTIQ employees remaining in the corporate closet.*

**Key words:** heterosexism; sexual orientation disclosure/concealment

## Introduction

Self-disclosure - the act of revealing personal information about oneself - often involves unexpected information. One of these is revealing to co-workers that one is gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, intersex or questioning (GLBTIQ). It is estimated that between 4 and 17% of the workforce (Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1999) are gay and lesbian and make up the largest minority group (Lubensky, Holland, Wiethoff & Crosby, 2004). Estimates in other US studies reveal 10 to 14% of the US workforce is composed of non-heterosexual workers (Powers, 1996). Numbers are expected to be much higher than this due to the complex nature of this phenomenon where many GLBTIQ individuals stay in the corporate closet and therefore conceal their sexual orientation (SO) due to the stigmatisation and discrimination associated with disclosure, with individuals more likely to conceal their SO when they have witnessed or experienced workplace discrimination (Morrow & Gill, 2003). Sexual orientation disclosure and concealment have thus been conceptualised as strategies that GLBTIQ employees use to manage their identities in the face of cultural and organisational stigma against non-heterosexuality (Croteau, 1996; Fassinger, 1996; Woods & Harbeck, 1992). Disclosing one's SO is one of the toughest issues that GLBTIQ employees face because it involves considerable turmoil and a fear of retaliation, rejection (Bohan, 1996; Ellis & Riggle, 1995) and stigmatisation (Button, 2001). At the same time, employees who remain in the corporate closet report lower levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction as a result of covering up their stigmatizing identity (Button, 2001; Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Ragins & Cornwall, 2001). Empirical evidence suggests that heterosexism is a par-

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ticularly strong and persistent cause of these problems, with a need to further address these deleterious outcomes as they occur in minority groups such as GLBTIQ employees. Minority Stress Theory has been used to indicate the significant impact minority stress has on minority groups such as GLTBIQ employees (Meyer, 1995). Minority Stress Theory asserts that socially marginalised groups including sexual minorities can experience mental and physical health problems resulting from negative social environments created by stigma, prejudice and discrimination (for example: Fisher and Shaw, 1999; Gee, 2002, Meyer, 2003). For GLBTIQ employees, minority stressors are conceptualised as internalised heterosexism. This relates to GLBTIQ members direction of societal negative attitudes toward the self, which relates to both expectations of rejection and discrimination and actual experiences of discrimination and violence.

Following on from Brooks (1981), Meyer (1995) refers to an environment whereby an individual experiences minority stress where there is conflict between the minority member and the dominant social environment. For GLBTIQ individuals, this conflict is expressed in discordant values and norms regarding sexuality, intimacy and more generally human existence and purpose (psychological well-being). Meyer defines these stress processes as internalised homophobia which has now become known as internalised heterosexism (see conceptual review on heterosexism versus homophobia by Smith, Oades & McCarthy, 2012). Here the expectations of rejection and discrimination and actual events of antigay violence are internalised and experienced as a form of self-discrimination. Internalised heterosexism is now seen as the most insidious of the minority process whereby GLBTIQ individuals direct the negative social attitudes towards the self, leading to a devaluation of the self, resulting in internal conflicts and poor self-regard. The combined effects of minority stress experienced both directly and indirectly force GLBTIQ employees to stay in the corporate closet.

Yet despite a now considerable body of research on sexual orientation disclosure in the workplace, little Australian research has examined how individuals decide to reveal their sexual orientation (SO) or gender identity, and the sexual identity management strategies involved in this process. Whilst measures such as the Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure-Revised (WSIMM-R) Lance, Anderson and Croteau, 2010), and the Workplace Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (WSEQ) (Waldo, 1999) exist, there has been little application of them in Australia. The small body of Australian research into SO discrimination that does exist encompasses; (i) varied methodological approaches, (ii) disparate authors selecting a varied range of aspects of discrimination thus absenting a unifying framework to guide research and lacking as yet seminal authorship providing focus, iii) limited sampling of participants which while eventually contributing to construct validity, at this stage makes comparisons difficult and further indicates the absence of a unifying framework with which to focus the research and iv) limited studies exclusively investigating workplace discrimination. The following literature review presents existing Australian research in chronological order, and where possible, links studies together to indicate the commensurate nature of the studies.

## Literature

Hillier, Dempsey, Harrison, Beale, Matthews and Rosenthal (1998) conducted a telephone survey of Australian women aged between 16 and 59 years randomly selected from all states. Out of the 9134 women interviewed, .8% identified as gay, 1.4% as bisexual and 15.1% reported same sex attraction. This suggests a sum of 17.3% engaging in GLB activities. Moreover, Smith, Russell, Richters, Grulkich and De Visser (2003) found in their Australian study of health and relationships - which interviewed 20 000 people - that when a definition of sexuality includes the three domains of identity, attraction and experience, that up to 15% of the respondents had experienced same sex attraction. Moreover, a study by the National Centre in HIV Social research (La Trobe University) revealed that between 8-11% of young people are not unequivocally heterosexual (Hillier, Warr & Haste, 1996). This is an important finding as their earlier results suggested that only 2% identified as non-heterosexual, suggesting higher numbers for this gay and bisexual group. Additionally, Hillier, Warr and Haste (1996) found in a study of 1200 rural youth in Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland that 11% were non-heterosexual. Hass (1979) reported that 11% of young women and 14% of young men aged 15-18 have had at least some homosexual experience, whether or not they associate this with being homosexual. Often young people feel embarrassed about what meanings hold regarding their sexual identity and thus do not disclose their sexual orientation. This adds support to the view that a fear of discrimination may prevent a component of these individuals from identifying as non-heterosexual. These studies indicate that there are a large number of non-heterosexual employees and future employees in the Australian population who make up GLBTIQ sexual minorities. It is emphasised that these numbers are thought to be conservative due to the sensitive nature of this issue and the fear of being a target for discrimination either directly or indirectly.

Hillier, Dempsey, Harrison, Beale, Matthews and Rosenthal (Writing Themselves In, The National Report, 1998) in a study attempting to chart the baseline figures about young non-heterosexual people, also documented the experiences of verbal and physical discrimination and abuse of the 14-21 year old age group. The main findings in this regard were that nearly one third believed they had been discriminated against due to their SO, 46% had been verbally abused, and that males were more likely higher targets than females. Moreover, 13% had been physically abused, with 70% having being abused at school. Finally, with regard to disclosure, 20% had never spoken to anyone about their sexuality outside of the study. Limitations of the study were that the sample was not randomly selected, and therefore no claims can be made where results can be generalized to the broader population of young people. This, however, is a common limitation in studies of minority groups where, due to the exploratory nature of the research and the difficulties in reaching a potentially stigmatized and emotionally vulnerable population, it is considered ethical that participants self-select, thereby sacrificing the non-random selection sampling process. Although this study was not limited specifically to workplace experiences of sexual orientation discrimination, the results do indicate the presence of SO discrimination for individuals up to 21 years of age, and a large number of Australian youth enter the workforce at an early age.

Irwin (1999) in a study on the workplace experiences of 900 gay men, lesbians and transgendered employees found that harassment and prejudicial treatment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity was widespread with 59% of her respondents experiencing heterosexism in their workplace. Irwin further found in her study that 50% of the respondents had been ridiculed in front of colleagues based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. For 97%, this was not a single incident but was ongoing and affected the way they felt about themselves, their workplace and their colleagues. Heterosexism experiences included sexual and physical assault, verbal harassment and abuse, destruction of property, ridicule, belittling and homophobic jokes. Prejudicial treatment in the workplace included unfair rosters, unreasonable work expectations, sabotaging and undermining of work and restrictions to career. Forty one percent of the participants considered they had been dismissed from their most recent job because of their homosexuality. Several participants also reported that they had been denied workplace entitlements which were available to other heterosexual colleagues, such as partner travel. In this study heterosexist harassment and prejudicial treatment spanned all occupations, industries and types of sizes of the employing organisation. However, discrimination was more likely to happen in traditionally male dominated occupations and industries such as mining. Transgender participants were more likely to experience heterosexism (75%) compared with gay men and lesbians. Just over 67% of lesbians and 57% of gay men experienced discrimination or harassment in their workplaces. The result of this heterosexism was increased stress, depression, loss of self-confidence, increased alcohol and drug usage and attempted suicide. Additionally, workplace performance was also negatively affected by presenteeism due to a preoccupation with internalised heterosexism and a fear of heterosexism. Many participants were out selectively because they felt unsafe to be entirely open about their SO or gender identity. The major limitation of this study, which is similar to that of other GLBTIQ studies, is the non-probability sampling technique due to the self selected nature of this cohort and the need for confidentiality and the absence of bisexual employees. Despite these limitations, it is one of the larger Australian studies (N=900) on GLT employees, adding empirical support for the presence of heterosexist and transphobic discrimination.

In 2003, the Department of Health and Human Services in Tasmania commissioned a study on GLBT health and well-being needs, as research at the time indicated that health issues faced by GLBT people included higher rates of suicide, alcohol and drug use than the general (heterosexual) population. Additionally, research suggested that the health and well-being issues were an outcome of heterosexist harassment and SO discrimination or gender identity discrimination. Out of 131 gay men, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered employees, 40 % reported that they had suffered with depression. Additionally, the study found that only 31% of gay men, 71% of lesbians, 33% of bisexuals, 27% of transgendered and none of employees identifying as queer would disclose their sexual identity in the workplace for fear of heterosexist behaviours.

The Victorian Gay and Lesbian rights Lobby (VGLRL, 2000) reported that at least 23% of a sample of gay men, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people in Victoria have experienced discrimination when seeking health care.

Pitts, Smith, Mitchell and Patel (2006) found that people fear and avoid disclosing their sexuality to health providers for fear of sexual orientation discrimination or negative responses. Bowers, Plummer, McCann, McConaghy and Irwin (2006) found in a study on health service delivery in the NSW metro area that nursing and medical staff make derogatory comments about gay men, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered patients and that same sex partners of patients were ignored by medical staff and not informed of their partner's condition and faced exclusion from participation in decision making about their partner's case. Bowers et al. (2006) also noted that health care workers, as a result of this discrimination, do not disclose their own SO for fear of discrimination, harassment and rejection from colleagues and that these actions impact negatively on their career and job prospects (Rose, 1994). Pitts, Smith, Mitchell and Patel (2006) found in their study that the fear of heterosexism caused 67% of GLBTI employees to modify their daily activities. Pitts et al. (2006) also indicated that one in eight GLBTI respondents had been physically assaulted (direct heterosexist discrimination) and 10% had been refused employment or promotion due to their sexual orientation.

These findings are consistent with a finding in the Health in Men (HIM-) study which was conducted by the National centre for HIV Epidemiology and Clinical research at the University of NSW, the Australian Federation of AIDSA Organisations and ACON which found that around one in twelve men had been refused service or denied a job due to their sexuality (Prestage, Grulich, Van de Ven P & Kippax, 2002). Bowers, Plummer, McCann, McConaghy and Irwin (2006) carried out a qualitative study and found that the attitudes and behaviours of newly qualified clinicians (nurses) are influenced by attitudes and behaviours of more experienced clinicians and managers. Although qualitative in nature, the study highlights the effects of managers in an organisation and the role they play in modelling behaviour with regard to SO discrimination.

Irwin (2002), in her study on discrimination against gay men, lesbians and transgender teachers, academics and educators, found that just over 60% of the GLT teachers, academics and educators identified experiencing homophobic behavior, harassment and discrimination and/or prejudicial treatment. Homophobic behavior included being a target of jokes was reported at 35%, being asked unwelcome questions around their SO was noted as 31%. Twenty seven percent reported being outed, 23% reported being socially excluded, 18% reported being ridiculed, 16% being sexually harassed, 11% threatened with physical violence and 5% having property damaged. One respondent was sexually assaulted, and it was noted that perpetrators were more likely to be work colleagues employed at a similar or senior level. For school teachers, perpetrators included students and their parents. Many teachers, academics and educators also experienced prejudicial treatment in the form of: undermining and sabotaging of work 21.6%, unreasonable work expectations (15%), limited opportunities for career development (15%), threat of loss of promotion (13.3%). 17.5% stated they had been denied partner rights to superannuation. 9.1% had been denied entitlements available to heterosexual staff. Some teachers reported that staying in the corporate closet had prevented them from experiencing homophobic or prejudicial behavior. 8% reported not being open to anyone at work, 35% reported being open to everyone at work. Teachers who were employed at religious institutions reported concerns about being out and the risk this posed for their continuing employment. Some reported being closeted due to past homophobic experiences. Participants reported that the fear of becoming a target of harassment affected the way they behaved. Furthermore, the participants reported a belief that the effects of discrimination caused problems with both physical and emotional health. Ninety percent identified an increase in anxiety and stress, 80% had suffered depression, 63% has experienced a loss of confidence, and 59% reported that the discrimination had a negative effect on their personal relationships. Sixteen percent had contemplated suicide and one person had attempted suicide. As a result of ongoing heterosexist discrimination 34% had attended counseling and 34% had medical treatment. Fifty nine percent reported that heterosexism had resulted in them achieving less at work, referred to as Presenteeism. Thirty eight percent had resigned, 46% had taken sick leave, 49% had decided on a career change and 18% reported that they had been fired. Outing oneself was dependent upon how committed the institution appeared to be to the promotion of diversity. Irwin (2002) reported that less than half of the participants (45%) chose to take action against the perpetrators.

Commensurate with Irwin's empirical and exploratory study are Goody and de Vries's findings (2001), which indicate that anecdotal evidence suggests that heterosexist behaviour and offensive comments and gestures with respect to sexual orientation occur in Australian universities despite anti-discrimination clauses and legislation being present. Irwin's study adds support to, and deepens, the understanding of the existence of heterosexist behaviours in the Australian labour market, with particular emphasis on the education sector. In this sector previous research has demonstrated that higher education generally leads to greater acceptance of minority groups. There is a clear need to conduct further research in this area to fully understand the complex nature of SO discrimination in the workplace and to locate this in an appropriate theoretical paradigm. Irwin's study, although one of the largest in this area to date (with 900 participants and using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies), does not embed itself in a theoretical paradigm to account for the effects the harassment has on employees.

Further, Goody and de Vries (2002) explored the climate for GLBT people in the workplace of faculty employees of the University of Western Australia (UWA), and describe two projects which aimed to make the UWA a safer and a more productive and positive work and study experience for GLBT staff and students (The Rainbow Project). A survey was used with limited statistical data being reported (mainly percentage answered by respondents for variables), with 754 participants (92.4% heterosexual). The survey indicated a significant majority of students with homophobic attitudes and high levels of discomfort in regard to GLBT people. There was also an apparent ignorance of harassment issues on the part of the majority of students who held more positive attitudes. Findings were commensurate with those found in the Irwin (1999) study, where university employees reported experiencing UWA as an unsafe place to be out and they experienced difficulty in attending GLBT group meetings for fear of being seen and targeted and having their SO made public against their will. Some employees reported 'invisibility', while others experienced direct anti-gay comments in faculty settings which resulted in GLBT employees feeling increasingly uncomfortable. The survey further pointed out that 85% highlighted that they knew someone who had made derogatory comments about gay people, 10% knew someone who had damaged the property of a gay person and 15.7 % of staff reported saying 'I avoid gay men' and 8.3% reported saying 'I avoid lesbians' (questions posed in the survey). Also, 39.8% reported that it bothered them to see two gay men being affectionate in public and 14% thought homosexuality was immoral. While Goody and de Vries (2002) do not explicitly embed their research in a theoretical paradigm, they use constructs such as stigmatisation, where an assumption is made that the study is based on stigma theory. They do however raise the important issue of challenging homophobia (heterosexism), making the invisible visible and initiating awareness to take steps in making universities a place where GLBT employees and students can strive. This is significant as GLBT employee's careers (and lives) become characterised by a preoccupation with self-disclosure and skill in the management of sexual identity. Invisibility and isolation in the workplace become common manifestations of these difficulties which can lead to the aetiology of various pathologies.

In the *You Shouldn't Have to Hide to be Safe* report on homophobic hostilities and violence against gay men and lesbians in NSW (2003), it was found that 56% of the respondents had experienced one or more forms of homophobic abuse, harassment or violence in the past 12 months. Eighty five percent had at some time experienced such abuse, harassment or violence. Although the study focused specifically on homophobic abuse and violence aimed at GLBT individuals in general and in multiple settings, it found that three quarters of the respondents were employed and that one of the most common locations of the abuse/harassment/violence was at or near work or the place of study of the participants. Workplace abuse was reported by 13% of the respondents. It was also reported that relatively more lesbians (20%) than gay men (9%) identified the at/near work or place of study as the location of the most recent abuse. Furthermore, 3% of respondents described the abuser as being a co-worker and a further 3% their abuser as a customer or client. This study has some methodological differences to other studies and hence no direct comparisons can be made. Although the study was not aimed specifically at investigating work place sexual orientation discrimination, it does highlight the fact that 82% of the respondents reported that they had experienced homophobic verbal abuse, in any location, at some point in time.

McNair and Thomacos (2005) found in their study of 652 participants (GLBQIT- 90% Gay & Lesbian and 5.5% Bisexual) mainly from the Melbourne metropolitan area, that 75% had publicly concealed their same sex relationships at some time to avoid discrimination. Moreover, 81.5% of lesbians and 79.4% of gay men were aware of public insults and had experienced equal levels of verbal abuse because of their SO. In total, 71.5% had been harassed in a public space. Fifty nine percent of bisexual participants had been verbally abused and 68% had felt indirect insults. Thirteen percent of bisexual respondents had been sexually assaulted. Over 80.7% had felt publicly insulted due to indirect negative public statements about same sex relationships and this did not differ according to age, sexual identity, gender or ethnicity. Almost 20% had received explicit threats and 13% had been physically assaulted, with more men than women experiencing these levels of harassment. McNair and Thomacos (2005) also found unacceptablly high and at times increasing levels of indirect public insult, verbal and physical harassment and discrimination within health and legal systems (20%). It was noted that the effect of these attitudes and behaviors was to force concealment of the same sex relationship in public by making GLBTI people feel vulnerable, which ultimately accentuates social inequality. With regard to disclosure, 54.7% had disclosed their SO to everyone, 34.6% had told almost everyone, .8% had told no one. Also, 75% had concealed their relationship at some time with friends and colleagues. Bisexual respondents were noted as having the highest concealment at 92%, suggesting a higher level of stigmatisation and fear of sexual orientation discrimination. A weakness of the study, however, is that this concealment may also be due to other personal factors unrelated to discrimination. Limitations of the study were that it did not cover specific questions around harassment, transgender issues were not specifically addressed, and that intersex participants comprised only 1% of the participants. The study was also conducted only in Victoria and mainly in the metropolitan city of Melbourne, making it difficult to generalise findings. Research indicates that rural minorities have different experiences to urban minorities. Anecdotal discussions make reference to these figures being much higher in rural localities due to ignorance around sexual orientation diversity and a lack of awareness of protective legislation. Moreover, rural GLBTIQ individuals themselves feel isolated and face a more severe information deficit than do their urban peers. There is an absence of the sense of 'us' which is the essence of group identity afforded by other minorities. This absence of 'us' results in sexual minorities being socialized into values and beliefs discordant with their self-identity and this ultimately may result in internalized heterosexism. International and Australian literature now points to the mental health of individuals who find themselves in this situation, which ultimate results in these minorities turning to alcohol and drugs to alleviate this pain (Sanford, 1989). More serious, is that mounting evidence now indicates a strong link between homosexuality and suicide, particularly among young men (Bagley and Tremblay, 1997; Ramafedi, 1997).

Willis (2009), in his small qualitative study (N = 34) on the strategies young GLBQ employees use to resist and refute homonegative practices in Australian workplaces, found three prevalent forms of homonegativity encountered and described by this group of employees in their workplace. These are referred to as: symbolic practices, material practices and discriminatory practices. With regard to symbolic practices, 20% of respondents witnessed comments by heterosexuals reinforcing and consolidating heterosexual norms, 10% reported witnessing expressing of discomfort and disapproval towards GLBQ identities, 13.3% had been assumed to be straight by colleagues and service users. His study also showed that 20% of respondents had their sexual identity questioned by colleagues and service users, 20% had experienced expressions of homonegative humour to a group audience and 66.6% had witnessed homonegative expressions and espoused beliefs. With regard to material practices, one employee reported being physically assaulted and bullied by colleagues, 30% reported verbal abuse and harassment, 3.3% reported public vilification in local media and 6.6% reported sexual harassment from members of management. Finally, with regard to discriminatory practices, 6.6 % reported repeated criticism of work performance because of their SO, 10%

reported unfair dismissal and 3.3% reported refusal of leave provisions based on their sexual orientation. Willis' findings from his qualitative study are limited in scope and generalisability and therefore are not transferrable to other organisational contexts. Moreover, as occurs in other research of this nature (mentioned earlier), the sample is comprised of self-selected GLBQ participants. The organisational sectors are also limited in that there are no trade industries represented. Nevertheless, the findings highlight the challenges young GLBQ employees encounter when entering the Australian labour market as a result of their sexual orientation.

A study carried out by Robinson and Berman (2010) found that 53% of their respondents (GLBTI) had been harassed or abused within the last two years on the basis of their sexual orientation. The five most prominent forms of abuse experienced were: verbal abuse, spitting and offensive gestures, threats of physical violence, written threats and abuse and physical attack or assault (without a weapon). Of note, is that the major threats were in the form of blatant direct discrimination. Furthermore, 12% of the respondents counted their workplace as their most recent experience of abuse, harassment or violence and hence of direct sexual orientation discrimination. Robinson and Berman also found that 62% reported that fear was a major factor in concealing their sexual orientation at work, which is consistent with international literature as described earlier. Despite Robinson and Berman's study being reported as one of the most comprehensive within Queensland and Australia to date, 80% of the respondents were employed and 9% of the perpetrators of homophobic or transphobic abuse were found in the Queensland workplace. Little is therefore known about the heterosexist experiences of GLBTIQ employees across Australian states. Consequently, this 2010 study illustrates that despite legislation in Queensland having been around for seventeen years; sexual orientation discrimination in the Australian workplace is still prevalent.

In the 2010 *Writing Themselves in-again* study (Hillier et al.), 61% of same sex attracted youth reported that they had been exposed to extreme levels of verbal and physical abuse, which was up from 42% in 2004. This study also indicates that as a result of heterosexist discrimination, self-harming behaviour in Same Sex Attracted Youth (SSAY) is increasing along with alcohol and other drug usage, including heroin (7%). The study indicates that 64% of the SSAY had thought about suicide as a result of the SO discrimination they faced. Camilleri (2010) cites figures for gay male suicide as four times that of heterosexual males (20.8% vs. 5.4%). Although this is with same sex attracted youth (SSAY), it is evidence for the presence of discrimination and the stigmatisation of GLBTIQ individuals as a result of heterosexism.

Barrett, Lewis and Dwyer (2011), in their quantitative study on the effects of disclosure of sexual orientation at work for 152 GLBTI employees in Queensland, found that 36% of their respondents had experienced sexual orientation discrimination at one workplace and 34% at two workplaces based on their sexual identity. They found that the most frequent types of discrimination based on sexual identity were remarks (27%), ridicule (27%) and jokes (25%). Where more than one co-worker was present discrimination took the form of remarks (59%), ridicule (56%) and jokes (58%). With regard to single co-workers discrimination was evident in the form of written threats of physical abuse (100%). Where respondents had experienced discrimination in their current workplace more than three times, the types of discrimination were; death threats (80%), threats of physical abuse via telephone (67%), property damage (33%) verbal threats of sexual abuse (30%), verbal threats of physical abuse (29%) and verbal threats of sexual abuse via telephone (25%). Despite this quantitative study having a relatively low sample number and the common sampling problem found in GLBT research (non-random) and no even distribution with regard to the various sub categories, the research is based in a theoretical paradigm relevant to issues around discrimination placing it well to contextualise the findings. The study importantly raises relevant issues around GLBTI employees and discrimination. Important concerns raised are how respondents, who experienced discrimination more than three times, faced severe forms of discrimination. The threat of personal injury as a result of revealing ones sexual orientation is therefore extremely high. More importantly, the study confirms that in Australia 2010, discrimination is still directed at GLBTI employees in Queensland workplaces, despite ethical considerations and potential legal ramifications. Finally, as a result of sexual orientation disclosure, GLBTI employees are experiencing more sexual orientation discrimination in the workplace, despite anti-discrimination policies being in place. Due to the fact that sexual orientation is not readily observable, direct discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation requires knowledge or suspicion of an employee's orientation. Therefore, the potential for discrimination is seen to be higher when GLBTIQ individuals disclose their sexual orientation.

The studies discussed above provide insight into the extent and incidence of reported workplace sexual orientation discrimination and gender identity discrimination in the form of heterosexism. The challenge is that despite the presence of legislation at both federal and state level, organisational heterosexism needs to be addressed to respect the rights of all employees and to determine whether the present legislation is indeed having an impact in our current work environment. Furthermore, research needs to fully investigate the relationship between sexual orientation disclosure/concealment and the effect this has on the psychological wellbeing, job satisfaction, mental health and satisfaction with life of sexual minority employees, and across all states and with multiple organisations. These studies then provide clear evidence for why the Australian corporate closet is still so full.

## Conclusion

Psychological poor health is associated with SO disclosure at work (Ragins & Wiethoff, 2005; Welle & Button, 2004) and employees who have experienced heterosexism report less positive job attitudes (Day & Schoenrade, 1997), receive fewer promotions (Irwin, 2002) and less compensation (Irwin, 1999). However, the present research both internationally and in Australia is anomalous, and further more rigorous research needs to take place to better understand the working experiences of GLBTIQ employees. Coercing sexual orientation minorities to conceal their SO is a specific form of discrimination associated with psychological distress and SO discrimination correlates with reduced mental health (Cochran, 2001; Warner et al., 2004). GLBTIQ employees engage in sexual identity management strategies in the company of heterosexual employees to try and manage the consequences of heterosexism in the workplace, but often end up leaving their place of employment because of the stress encountered. Recent studies seem to indicate that the decision to come out of the corporate closet depends highly on the organisational context.

The studies discussed above confirm that workplace discrimination against GLBTIQ employees still exists in Australian workplaces, and that these limited studies indicate positive relationships between heterosexism and workplace distress due to outness. Some studies indicating up to as high as 75% of participants experiencing workplace heterosexism (Irwin, 1999). Existing reports (for example, Day & Schoenrade, 2000; Moradi, 2009; Waldo, 1999) suggest conservative estimates of discrimination in the workplace due to GLBT employees not fully disclosing their sexual orientation at work due to the complexities involved. It has been indicated that greater reported disclosure of sexual orientation is associated with positive direct heterosexism. Respondents who conceal their sexual orientation have been least likely to experience sexual orientation discrimination but have higher levels of reduced psychological health and well-being outcomes.

Further research needs to empirically test these findings so that organisations can bring about required action to support sexual minority employees. Implications are that there are costs to organisations in the shape of absenteeism and presenteeism, for GLBTIQ employees in an environment which is discriminatory. Moreover, there is a need to investigate organisational compliance with workplace legislation. While national and state anti-discrimination laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity at work, many non-heterosexuals still experience both direct and indirect discrimination in the international and Australian workplace. The research indicates that this discrimination is more evident than is suggested by the incident rates present in the literature and by the numbers of formal complaints lodged with Gay and lesbian Lobby Groups in Australia. Finally, these studies have been limited to primarily gay men and lesbians, and often have not included bisexual, transsexual, intersex and questioning employees as these groups are difficult to research due to the sensitive nature of sexual orientation disclosure. There is therefore a need to better understand minorities working in a majority context and the impact this has on their psychological well-being, especially when research indicates that self disclosure is a necessary prerequisite for psychological wellness or well-being (Cain, 1991). To conclude, there is clearly little doubt of the need for further empirical research using valid and reliable measures to improve the understandings and experiences of GLBITQ employees to overcome heterosexist behaviours and to enhance the workplace lives of sexual minority employees such as gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender, intersex and questioning individuals so that they no longer have to hide in the corporate closet.

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# BOOK REVIEW

LUKE GAHAN

*Edser, S. (2012). Being gay, being Christian: You can be both. Wollombi: Exisle Publishing. ISBN 978-1-921-497-07-0*

When I was first asked to do this book review I admittedly asked myself, 'do we need another book on homosexuality and Christianity?' Ironically, as I sceptically opened the book I was pleasantly surprised to find that the author, Dr. Stuart Edser, had addresses this question in his first chapter aptly titled 'Why another book?' (p. 19). Edser argues that his book stands out amongst the growing number of books on this topic because he writes 'from the point of view of a psychologist who has a long-held deep faith and who has studied to understand the interface between psychology and science with spirituality and theology' (p. 19). While it may seem strange to open a book with a chapter defending the need for the book or the author's credentials, Edser knew his audience well and responded to their need. While there is an abundance of books on this topic, most are from the USA, and more often than not authors of these books fail to intertwine academic understandings with that of lived realities. Similarly, books on Christianity and homosexuality are rarely by non-theological academics who happen to be both 'gay' and Christian. This book is thus not only uniquely Australian, but it also manages to connect Edser's own lived experience as a Christian gay man with that of both secular-academic and theological understandings. Rarely do we find a book on this topic that brings together so many different discourses and understandings into its pages and attempts to address each of them equally. Edser not only convinced me of his credentials and the need for another book on this topic, but he has left me hoping that he will continue to publish new editions as both Australia and Christianity continue to change.

In the Australian context, very little has been published in the area of same-sex attracted people and religion. Several Australian studies have begun to focus on this area and have shown that religious samples of same-sex attracted young people (SSAY) are more likely to experience isolation and self-harm than non-religious SSAY (Hillier, Mitchell, and Mulcare 2008, Hillier et al. 2010). Most importantly, Australian research has shown that when SSAY are able to reframe negative religious discourse, or come up with new ones that describe themselves in positive ways, they begin to feel better about their lives and themselves (Hillier, Mitchell, and Mulcare 2008). Research findings like these are proof as to why a book like Dr. Edser's is incredibly important. While many academics may question why someone would want to be both gay and Christian, as the research has shown, for those who find themselves inhabiting both worlds, knowing that religion and homosexuality are indeed compatible can have incredible benefits to their wellbeing and reduce people's experience of isolation. Edser leaves no one in suspense, declaring on the front cover of the book 'you can be both'.

Early in the book the author shares with us some of his most intimate experiences that have helped mould his understanding of the subject matter. Edser weaves his own narrative and journey through the book as he examines genetic, biological, psychological, sociological and theological explanations and views regarding same-sex desire. While I would certainly like to read more about Dr. Edser's journey, in "Being Gay, Being Christian" Edser had found a good balance between the personal and the academic. Unlike other books on this topic, this book does not read like an academic journal article. Instead, Edser has wonderfully 'translated' research and theory into a language that can be understood by students, academics and parishioners alike. Edser makes theology and psychology understandable, and through the use of his own story and contemporary real-life examples, Edser makes the theory he presents both tangible and relevant.

It is rare to read an academic book that has been written with such passion. Edser understands his readers because he was once where they are – he knows what it is like to be standing at a precipice in desperate search for an answer. Edser explains,

> lonely, confused, celibate and angry, I went to the top of a hill in the middle of the city and shook my fist at God. I called Him a fucking bastard and told Him that I needed to put Him on the shelf for a few years…I was angry that I had served Him so faithfully and yet He had let me down so blatantly. I would not discard him forever, but I needed to find out some answers, and they had to be from someone who knew what they were talking about. (p. 24)

When Edser went looking for answers as a young man, he became unsatisfied with the rigour of the answers that he was given. He became tired of 'seeing pastors, elders, and teaching evangelists' who only offered 'prayer or…Christian counselling' (p. 24). Perhaps this book is Edser's way of sharing the answers that he eventually discovered along his journey. Having come full circle, Edser offers to many who are at the beginning of their journey the quality of answer that he perhaps wishes that he had been given at the start of his voyage.

This book does not shy away from the hard questions. Edser tackles the difficult task of unravelling, understanding, and interpreting Biblical texts (chapter 9) and attempts to explain the various understandings of homosexuality by Evangelicals (chapter 10) and Catholics (chapter 11) alike. While the author could have easily attacked alternative views, Edser attempts to explain why their views are incorrect without attacking the people who created those views or the people who continue to follow them. In a chapter titled 'Sound People, STck therapy' (chapter 8), Edser diplomatically explores the history of homonegative beliefs, both scientific and religious, regarding same-sex desire. Unlike many authors on this topic who pose their own view and never address the views of their opposition, Edser tackles them head-on with an academic and intellectual critique that can be easily understood by any reader.

As someone who has navigated my own journey of Christianity and homosexuality, I found the book rather confronting. It was not because I disagreed with what Edser had written, indeed, I found his argument to be incredibly sound. Reading this book confronted me because I resented not having this book when I had been looking for it 14 years ago. Dr. Edser is an inspiration for his willingness to share his research, along side his deeply personal journey, and into a world that has over the centuries turned its back on people who have dared to question dominant religious understandings. While this text would be a perfect accompaniment to university courses dealing with sexuality and religion, it is equally of benefit to a non-academic reader who is simply looking for answers. Perhaps, as with Stuart, you will read this book and come to the realisation, "that even though (you) thought (you) had put God on the shelf for all those years, He had actually been with (you) all along, integral to every part of (your) journey" (p. 25).

## Author Note

Luke Gahan is a Sociologist at the Bouverie Centre, La Trobe University. He was the first national convenor of Australian Marriage Equality in 2004 and is the former Treasurer of the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby. He is currently on the organising committee of the Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and is a board member of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives. Email: L.Gahan@latrobe.edu.au

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# BOOK REVIEW

GRAHAM WILLETT

*Brickell, C. (2012). Manly affections: The photographs of Robert Gant, 1885-1915. Dunedin: Genre Books. ISBN 0473208784.*

Since the 1960s a whole school of historians have been working to uncover the lives of ordinary women and men. Social historians have as their Holy Grail knowing how people really lived. In their quest they have uncovered letters and diaries and news reports, conducted life history interviews, and examined the paraphernalia of everyday life from the recent and more distant past. It has been hard but exhilarating work, made all the more enjoyable by its very difficulty; every small discovery has been a great step forward.

For gay and lesbian history the discoveries have been less voluminous than for other lives. People who were marginalised, vilified – in the case of men, criminalised – were not inclined to preserve material that might land them in trouble with the powers that be. Their families were not inclined to pass down their stories, even if they were privy to them. Nonetheless, it is not as if there was nothing to find, and in the past forty years or so historians have trawled court records and newspapers, have talked to gay people and their friends, and have started to reveal a richer history than many had expected to find.

In New Zealand, historian Chris Brickell has made a remarkable discovery, and in *Manly Affections* he mines it to reveal the life of one gay man and his friends; and to throw light on the world in which they lived. The man is Robert Gant, a photographer, and Brickell has unearthed two photo albums containing 465 photographs. They date from the late 1880s and they record the social activities of Gant and his friends. Men (*almost* always men) relaxing indoors and out, men in costume for their theatrical performances, men in drag, men touching, men kissing…

*Manly Affections* is a lavishly illustrated volume, as might be expected – but it is also a serious examination of the world that is revealed here. Although 'revealed' is perhaps too strong – 'suggested', 'hinted at', 'presented' would be more like it. The thing is, there are no letters or diaries or memoirs to go with the albums, only captions to some of the photos and whatever can be gleaned from local newspapers, government records and the like. And one suggestive short story, reprinted in full by Brickell to throw some light on the mind of Robert Gant.

Brickell presents the images and his reflections upon them in five sections – theatrics, friendship, bodies, beheadings (yes!) and connections. His scholarship is sound, but it is to Brickell's credit that it sits lightly here. This is an eminently readable book, as well as a delight to the eye (queer or otherwise). He has the advantage of having written a history male homosexuality in New Zealand (*Mates and Lovers*) and so this small study of Gant and his photos is fitted into its wider context.

The discussion of masculinity is a model of thoughtful attention to an issue that is often treated cavalierly or abstrusely. Staying close to his sources, Brickell brings together what he knows as a scholar with what he sees in the albums to explore the many possible meanings of touching, horseplay, affection, kissing, sporting prowess, bulging crotches, torn jerseys, dressing up, acting, singing, ladies in 'a long-forgotten social, emotional and

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sexual world' (p. 15). Gant is never explicit about his feelings and motives, but it would require a serious act of will-power not to see desire here. We know he lived for over 25 years with Charlie Haigh who Brickell has no hesitation in calling 'his lover'. On the other hand we know that many of those who appear in the albums cross-dressing, or expressing various kinds of affection with each other, went on to marry and have children. But at the time that their escapades were being recorded they were young and single and unattached, with plenty of scope for privacy. What were they thinking? We ask this, not in the rhetorical disbelieving sense, but literally – what were they thinking? To which the answer is: we do not know. We cannot know. But we can speculate. Which is different to guessing or indulging in wishful thinking. What do we know about men in the late nineteenth century in the British World and how does what we see in the images in the albums mesh with that – reflect it, or illuminate it, or throw doubt on it? Brickell discusses all this calmly and clearly without closing off too many options.

In the chapter 'Connections' Brickell looks at how Gant's world – centred on a few small towns in the Wairarapa district north east of Wellington – was connected to the wider world. Partly this was through travel – Gant was born in England and went back there for a visit in 1891. But what Brickell reveals is just how much towns like Masterton and Greytown were attuned to what was going on more widely via 'Books, magazines, newspapers, theatre tours and rugby trips' (p. 160) – from within New Zealand and from beyond – and how these enriched, informed and changed the lives and the thinking of people no matter how isolated we may think they much have been. For men that we would call homosexual the reference points, the ways of understanding their desires – 'the romantic friend, the theatrical cross-dresser, the ancient Greeks, the swimmer, the sailor, the saint' – are international and there is plenty of evidence in Gant's photos that he knew them.

We end up knowing Gant and his friends as well as we could hope to. Some flit through on their way from one place to another; for some we have birth and death and occupation and marriage details. For all of them we have faces – and what a miracle that is for the historian, especially of gay life.

The book itself is beautifully produced. Not a big coffee table book; rather more intimate than that, with lightly glossy paper, a lovely mottled effect throughout, sharply reproduced photos. All, perhaps, in keeping with the albums themselves.

Would we trade the albums for diaries or letters, which might reveal more about what they were thinking? Some would, I am sure. But for me, seeing these faces, seeing those touches, looks, stances makes these photos of inestimable value. Chris Brickell is to be congratulated for making them available to us.

## Author Note

Graham Willett is the author of *Living Out Loud*, a history of gay and lesbian activism in Australia and a long-time committee member of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives. Email: gwillett@unimelb.edu.au

## Preparation, submission and publication guidelines

Types of articles that we typically consider:

A)

Empirical articles (6000 word max)
Theoretical pieces
Commentary on LGBTI issues and psychology

Research in brief: Reviews of a favourite or troublesome article/book chapter that you have read and would like to comment on

B)

Conference reports/conference abstracts
Practitioner's reports/field notes
Political/media style reports of relevant issues

Book reviews (please contact the Editor for a list of books available & review guidelines)
Promotional material for LGBT relevant issues

The Review also welcomes proposals for special issues and guest Editors.

Each submission in section A should be prepared for blind peer-review if the author wishes. If not, submissions will still be reviewed, but the identity of the author may be known to the reviewer. Submissions for blind review should contain a title page that has all of the author(s) information, along with the title of the submission, a short author note (50 words or less), a word count and up to 5 key words. The remainder of the submission should not identify the author in any way, and should start on a new page with the submission title followed by an abstract and then the body of the text. Authors who do not require blind review should submit papers as per the above instructions, the difference being that the body text may start directly after the key words.

Each submission in section B should contain the author(s) information, title of submission (if relevant), a short author note (50 words or less) and a word count, but need not be prepared for blind review.

All submissions must adhere to the rules set out in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (fifth edition), and contributors are encouraged to contact the Editor should they have any concerns with this format as it relates to their submission. Spelling should be Australian (e.g., 'ise') rather than American ('ize'), and submissions should be accompanied with a letter stating any conflicts of interest in regards to publication or competing interests. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum. References should be listed alphabetically by author at the end of the paper. For example:

<u>Journal Articles</u>: Riggs, D.W. (2004). The politics of scientific knowledge: Constructions of sexuality and ethics in the conversion therapy literature. *Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review*, 5, 16-24.
<u>Books</u>: Kitzinger, C. (1987). *The social construction of lesbianism.* London: Sage.
<u>Edited Books</u>: Coyle, A. & Kitzinger, C. (Eds.) (2002). *Lesbian & gay psychology*. Oxford: BPS Blackwell.
<u>Book Chapters</u>: MacBride-Stewart, S. (2004). Dental dams: A parody of straight expectations in the promotion of 'safer' lesbian sex. In D.W. Riggs & G.A. Walker (Eds.), *Out in the antipodes: Australian and New Zealand perspectives on gay and lesbian issue in psychology* (pp.393-416). Perth: Brightfire Press.

References within the text should be listed in alphabetical order separated by a semi-colon, page numbers following year. For example:

(Clarke, 2001; Peel, 2001; Riggs & Walker, 2004)
(Clarke, 2002a; b) (MacBride-Stewart, 2004, p. 398)

Authors should avoid the use of *sexist, racist* and *heterosexist language.* Authors should follow the guidelines for the use of non-sexist language provided by the American Psychological Society.

Papers should be submitted in Word format: title bold 14 points all caps left aligned, author 12 points all caps left aligned, abstract 10 points italics justified , article text 10 points justified, footnotes 9 points justified.

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