

Psychology of Sexualities Abstract Booklet

Workshop Abstracts listed alphabetical by presenting author

Understanding the gayby boom: Gay male fertility in the new age

Dr. Elliott Kronenfeld¹

¹*Dr. Elliott Kronenfeld, LLC, Newton, USA*

Parenting for gay men is more in the spotlight. As more gay men explore the option of parenting beyond adoption, it is important to understand the decisions they face. Unlike heteronormative counterparts, gay men face social challenges in how they explain their choices to parent, their pathway to parentage, and how they support their children in telling their own story. This workshop will broaden participants' perspectives on how to explore gay male fertility with clients, what the options are, and what the process for parenting biologically contains. Participants will learn about differences between traditional and gestational surrogacy, egg donation, how to select a surrogacy agency and IVF clinic, cost structures, and what risks must be assessed. A special focus will be placed on how to explain to children of gay men through surrogacy how to understand their own story. The session will include the clinical expertise of the presenter who has specialized in third party reproduction for more than 15 years, the history of third-party reproduction for gay men, case studies, and discussion with participants to ensure they are prepared to engage with their clients. Participants will gain a working language and foundational knowledge of the uniqueness of gay male fertility. There are no prerequisites for this workshop. The facilitator has been a fertility expert, working in hospital, surrogacy agency, and private practice for more than 15 years.

Pyrce, C. (2016). Surrogacy and citizenship: A conjunctive solution to a global problem. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, (23)2. p 925-952.

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Treating sexual compulsivity beyond the addiction thinking

Mr Silva Neves¹

¹*Private Practice, London, UK*

Treating sexual compulsivity beyond the addiction thinking

The ICD-11 diagnostic criteria inform us that compulsive sexual behaviours are an impulse control condition rather than an addiction pathology. Therefore, the treatment should reflect moving away from addictionology and be embedded in evidence-based methods.

Participants will gain clarity on the aetiology of the disorder, encouraging clinicians to think beyond the addiction framework, discussing a paradigm shift on the conceptualization of the disorder.

Participants of this workshop will learn specific psychotherapeutic tools to treat sexual compulsivity. They will be invited to discuss case studies' clinical presentations, within the framework of sexology and a sex-positive philosophy.

Participants will have the opportunity to self-reflect on their own biases about clients' sexual behaviours and challenge their thinking.

To fully enjoy this workshop, participants are encouraged to read:

Compulsive sexual behaviours, a psycho-sexual treatment guide for clinicians, By Silva Neves (Out in May 2021)

Treating Out of Control Sexual behavior: Rethinking Sex Addiction, by Douglas Braun-Harvey and Michael Vigorito.

The Erotic Mind, by Jack Morin

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Oral presentations listed alphabetical by presenting author

Biracial Bisexual Identities: Attachment Style, Acceptance Concerns, and Depression.

Kehana Bonagura, Jamie Gardella, Dr. Howard Steele

¹*The New School for Social Research, New York City, United States*

Previous research indicates that those who are biracial face nuanced psychological challenges in comparison to both their black and white counterparts. Research similarly demonstrates that bisexual individuals may experience psychological distress, including depression, at higher rates than members of the LGBTQ+ community who identify as gay or lesbian. However, there has been little empirical examination of the lived experience of those who exist at the intersection of both liminal spaces. Grounded in the Theory of Intersectionality and Attachment Theory this presentation considers how depression and relationship avoidance and anxiety may be heightened in people with intersecting biracial and bisexual identities. To investigate this question, three questionnaires were administered online to a sample of 341 respondents identifying as bisexual. The questions came from The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Identity Scale, The Experience in Close Relationship Scale - Short Form, and Beck's Depression Inventory.

Based on the data currently collected the results indicate that for the full sample there were significant positive correlations between LGBIS acceptance concerns and ECR-anxiety ($r=.31$), ECR-avoidance ($r=.15$) and depression ($r=.36$). But notably, the sub-group of respondents with intersecting biracial and bisexual identities presented with substantially more significant associations between their LGBIS acceptance concerns and their reported levels of ECR-anxiety ($r=.60$), ECR-avoidance ($r=.40$) and BDI-depression ($r=.64$). Such findings suggest that when such 'secure' romantic relationships are available, then acceptance concerns may be minimized, and protection against depression may be achieved. Moreover, the results of this study underscore the importance of taking an intersectional approach when studying the bisexual population.

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Psychological Stress of Transgender Youth – An examination of the adolescents who used the “Interdisciplinary Special Consultation for Questions of Gender Identity” at the Charité Berlin

Alexandra Brecht¹

¹*Universitätsmedizin Charité Berlin, Berlin, Germany*

Purpose: In heteronormative societies, transgender adolescents are confronted with various risk factors that can harm their psychological well-being. The goal of this study was to investigate the psychological stress, associated factors and diagnostic constraints of the adolescents who used the “Interdisciplinary Special Consultation for Questions of Gender Identity for Children and Adolescents” (GIF) at the Charité Berlin.

Methods: By initial interviews and using the Youth Self-Report (YSR-R) and Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL-R) $n = 63$ transgender adolescents between the ages of 11-18 were examined for emotional and behavioural problems from December 2018 until November 2020. Analysis of associated gender dysphoria and poor peer relations was conducted. Furthermore, the congruence between self-report and parent-report was analysed. Differences between the questionnaire's binary templates of gender identity and birth assigned sex were also investigated.

Results: Half of the sample population reported suicidality, self-harm and bullying. Transgender adolescents showed significantly higher internalising, and total problems than the manual's norm-population. A significant positive association between poor peer relations and psychological stress was found. The congruence between self- and parent-report proved to be moderate to high and was associated with psychological stress. Significant differences between the template's means of gender identity and birth assigned sex emerged, whereas the clinical significance changed significantly on the somatic problems scale only.

Conclusions: Transgender adolescents who used the GIF show above-average levels of psychological stress, that is associated with their social environment. There are limitations to the suitability of questionnaires with binary templates regarding transgender adolescents.

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Overcoming Barriers: Connecting through affective practices at 'Pride in London'

Mr Chris Day¹

¹*Centre for Trust, Peace & Social Relations, Coventry University, Coventry, United Kingdom*

Objectives: Extant research indicates Pride parades as spaces where the LGBTQ+ community unite to challenge discrimination through a display of collective pride. This study explored how this manifested in the affective practices of attendees at 'Pride in London' 2019.

Methods: Participants were respondents to recruitment material (virtual and hardcopy) shared by local parade group organisers or through social media. Twenty-three people were interviewed about their emotional experience at the parade to gain an understanding of how they made sense of individual and collective emotional practices. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were thematically analysed. Analysis focussed on how interviewees talked about the emotional context of the Pride, salient affective features and properties of the parade, and the embodiment of emotion.

Results: A theme running through the findings was that of overcoming barriers and how emotion-laden social practices facilitated this; the constitutive elements were 'The Rainbow Connection', 'Transgressing Roles', 'Physical Separation' and 'Sensory Bonds'. Each aspect highlighted unique ways in which collective interactions overwhelmed difference and combined to heighten emotional experience.

Conclusion: This nuanced investigation demonstrated a complex social environment that transcended simplified notions of individual pride and shame. 'Pride in London' was an intense, interactive and dynamic emotional experience for those that attended. Importantly, it emphasised the need for Pride parades as spaces that bring LGBTQ+ people and wider society together in a shared experience of positive collective emotion.

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Bisexuality and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI): A narrative synthesis of associated variables and a meta-analysis of risk

Mr Brendan Dunlop¹, Dr Samantha Hartley^{1,2}, Olayinka Oladokun, Dr Peter Taylor¹

¹*University Of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom*, ²*Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust, Ashton-under-Lyne, United Kingdom*

Objectives: Previous research has found that bisexual people have an increased risk of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) when compared with other sexual orientations. The objective of this meta-analysis and narrative synthesis was to update the estimated risk of NSSI for bisexual people independently of others, and outline variables associated with this behaviour for this population.

Methods: From electronic searches of multiple databases, 24 eligible papers were identified. All papers were assessed for risk of bias. Meta-analysis, including moderator analysis, was used to ascertain NSSI risk. A narrative synthesis of predictors and correlates of NSSI for bisexual people was also completed.

Results: The majority of studies were rated as having a moderate risk of bias. Bisexual people had up to six times the odds of engaging in NSSI compared with other sexualities. Mental health variables of anxiety and depression symptoms were found to be most commonly associated with NSSI for this group.

Conclusions: Bisexual people seem to be at an increased risk of NSSI compared with heterosexual and gay and lesbian people. Experiences of poorer mental health and exposure to negative life events may explain this increased risk. Studies were found to be consistently cross-sectional in design and limited to western cultures. Future research should continue to report on and investigate bisexual people independently of others in NSSI research, given clear differences in risk.

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It's like bisexuality, but it isn't: Pansexual and panromantic people's experiences and understandings of their identities

Dr Nikki Hayfield¹, Karolína Křížová

¹*University Of The West Of England (UWE), Bristol, UK*, ²*Independent Scholar, Czech Republic*

A range of plurisexual identities are increasingly becoming recognised and taken-up within western societies. In this research, we sought to explore how pansexual and panromantic people experience and understand their identities, via an online qualitative survey. Eighty participants were recruited via social media and internet forums. Thematic analysis resulted in the development of two key themes. In The label is contingent on the context: It's like bisexuality, but it isn't we report the sometimes blurry lines between pansexual and bisexual identities. We discuss how, despite often having a preference for pansexual and panromantic terms, these participants nonetheless engaged in strategic use of both bi and pan identities. In the second theme, entitled Educated and

enlightened pansexuals, we report how participants portrayed pansexual and panromantic identities as requiring an advanced understanding of gender and sexuality. This meant that those who employed these terms were represented as educated and enlightened. In the subtheme An internet education: Tumblr-ing into pan identities and communities, we discuss how educational resources and inclusive spaces were largely understood to exist only online. In this research, participants understood pansexual and panromantic identity to be related to, but distinct from, other identities (including bisexuality). They presented their identities as entailing distinctive experiences, including of prejudice and discrimination. We discuss the contribution and implications of our findings.

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The impact of sexuality on how men experience disordered eating and drive for muscularity

Ms Ruth Knight¹, Dr Mark Carey¹, Dr. Paul Jenkinson, Dr. Catherine Preston¹

¹*University of York, York, UK*

Current research into men's experiences of eating disorders paints a mixed picture regarding the key issues affecting men struggling with body image, including the influence of sexuality and muscularity. This study considers how sexuality impacts eating disorder symptoms and muscularity drive in men, and whether a clinical tool that is commonly used to assess eating disorder symptoms (Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire 6.0) is useful in men. Results indicate that gay men suffer more with symptoms related to attitudes to their body and shape and weight concerns, whereas heterosexual men experience more muscularity and restraint related symptoms. Bisexual men show a different pattern to both gay and heterosexual men, and therefore should be considered independently, and not grouped with gay men as has been done in previous research. Furthermore, the relationship between drive for muscularity and eating disorder symptomology relating to restraint is also modulated by sexuality. It seems that sexuality has an important impact, not just for rates of eating disorders in men, but also the kind of disordered eating that men experience, and thus should be taken into account when considering treatment and diagnostic approaches.

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Cisgenderist Collusion and Challenges in the Interview Context

Mr Gabriel Knott-fayle¹

¹*Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK*

Objectives: To consider how cisgenderist activities pervade research and what this tells us about the functioning of prejudice in interactions which are, on the surface, progressive or inclusive.

Methods: Using discursive psychology and drawing on similar reflexive analyses on the topics of heterosexism, I deployed a feminist reflexive analysis of my 14 PhD research interviews to consider how I colluded in the production of cisgenderism. These interviews were conducted with cisgender, trans and nonbinary people. The interviews were part of my PhD research into cisgenderism in sports communication. Various sports media materials were used as discussion prompts.

Results: The analysis bore out three important practices of cisgenderist collusion. Firstly, the use of media materials generated a cisgenderist subject position and footing in the interviews as well as reproduced the omission of non-cisgender voices. Secondly, instances of conflation occurred both between LGBTQI+ identities and between various trans identities. Most noticeably was the assumption that 'trans athlete' referred to trans women. Finally, certain presuppositions around engagement with sport and sports media were evident in such a way that non-cisgender experiences were either ignored or, alternatively, enforced.

Conclusions: From my analysis I draw two conclusions. Firstly, it draws attention to the contextual manifestation of prejudice not in obvious or traditionally violent ways, but through taken-for-granted assumptions and ideological underpinnings which permeate ostensibly inclusive discursive interactions. Secondly, a wider conclusion can be drawn concerning the importance and necessity of ongoing reflexive engagement in LGBTQI+ research.

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Research on LGBTI+ youth in Europe: A two-phased landscape and knowledge gap study

András Költő¹, Dr Elena Vaughan¹, Dr Colette Kelly¹, Prof Elizabeth M. Saewyc², Prof Saoirse Nic Gabhainn¹

¹*Health Promotion Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway, Galway, Ireland*, ²*Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada*

Objectives: There is a growing research interest in different aspects of LGBTI+ young people's lives and health, but most studies are from North America. In line with the Irish LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020, our aim was to collect relevant studies conducted in Europe in order to draw a landscape and identify knowledge gaps in the area of LGBTI+ youth research.

Methods: Using a combination of different searching methods, we identified 4603 relevant research records. These were independently evaluated by two researchers against pre-set inclusion criteria, resulting in a set of 127 retained records. First, specific information on each records were extracted in order to create a landscape. Second, the records were evaluated by standard evidence quality methods, and gaps were identified where LGBTI+ youth research should be adapted and/or improved.

Results: Coverage of the different objectives of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy was uneven, and quality of the evidence varied. Some areas and topics (e.g. bullying and inclusive educational settings) were well covered, while other areas such as employment and work experiences, the specific needs of intersex youth, and fragmentation of LGBTI+ youth services, were almost entirely missing.

Conclusions: The landscape of European research with LGBTI+ youth is varied and diverse in terms of scope, aims, research questions, design and methods, investigated populations and outcomes. Cross-national comparisons and intervention studies are largely missing, and many of the studies concentrate on bullying victimisation or poor mental health, while positive dimensions and sources of resilience remain to be explored.

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'Auntie Stella: Teenagers talk about sex, life and relationships' - Discursive constructions of gender and sexuality in the materials of a sexuality education programme

Ms Chantelle Malan¹, Professor Mary van der Riet¹

¹UKZN, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

One of the major challenges for sexuality education in South Africa has been the way in which interventions have largely reproduced, rather than challenged existing gender roles and hierarchies in society. The 'Auntie Stella: Teenagers talk about sex, life and relationships' intervention, developed by the Training and Research Support Center in Zimbabwe has experienced success in encouraging adolescent participation and engagement with their sexual and reproductive health. The materials of the intervention comprise 42 question and answer cards in agony aunt format. However, to date, no research has undertaken a discursive analysis of the ways in which gender and sexuality are constructed in the materials. Given its widespread use across southern Africa this study set out to explore the constructions of gender and sexuality within the materials.

Using a Foucauldian discourse analysis, the research identified that the materials were largely constructed within a context of risk and responsibility which served to regulate adolescent sexuality in powerful ways. Additionally, dominant discourses of gender and sexuality were prevalent throughout the materials. For instance, biological essentialism, gender difference and heteronormativity were produced as normative. Despite overwhelming constructions of victimhood and vulnerability, young women were contradictorily expected to be responsible for regulating men's desire. This uneven burden experienced by women in the materials represents a central conflict in the ways in which women's agency was constructed and negotiated. On the whole, the materials largely reproduced gender inequalities and offered limited discursive resources for adolescents to fashion their sexual subjectivities in complex and creative ways.

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Gender and sexuality diverse youth negotiate access to sexual health education and resources in South Africa

Dr Emmanuel Mayeza¹

¹University of the Free State, South Africa

Objective: This paper draws on sexual citizenship theory to analyse how some lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, pansexual and queer (LGBTPQ) youth in a low socio-economic rural South African context negotiate access to inclusive sexual health education programmes and resources.

Methods: Participants are students aged 19 to 32 years old at a South African university. Using in-depth individual interviews, participants reflected on their experiences of sexual health education when they were still at school. They also reflected on accessing the student health clinic at the university where they are students. During interviews, participants were encouraged to “set the agenda” so that interviews focus on the issues that were of concern to them. Interviews were then analysed following an inductive thematic analysis process.

Results: The results show the continuing silencing of sexual health issues concerning LGBTPQ youth in South African schools. Disadvantaged by the lack of sexual health education programmes in schools, results show how the students sought LGBTPQ centred knowledge through self-study and other ways to empower themselves with information on sexual health matters. Accessing condoms, lubricants, dental dams and HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) remains a challenge.

Conclusion: The study highlight how heteronormativity hamper the accessibility of sexual health education programmes and resources among LGBTPQ youth in the marginalised rural setting. Implications suggest ways of improving the provision of LGBTPQ inclusive sexual health education programmes and resources in poor rural contexts in South Africa. Limitations of the study, in relation to the sample, have been briefly discussed in the conclusion section.

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“My sexual life is definitely not orthodox”: Queer intelligibility and visibility in sexual health services

Ms Shannon O'Rourke¹

¹Open University, Camden, United Kingdom

Objectives: To explore the sexual health care experiences of lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women in South Africa and the responses of health care professionals to non-normative and fluid sexualities.

Methods: Qualitative research consisted of in-depth interviews with nine women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or queer; several had worked as healthcare professionals. Participant observation took place at social events, public talks about queer sexualities, conferences, and sexual health clinics.

Results: The HIV discourse in South Africa has a strong influence on widespread understandings of sex and risk; the prevalent notion that sex between women does not create risk for HIV has further marginalized the sexual health needs of LBQ women. This marginalization has resulted in lack of discussion about queer women's sexual health and leads to issues around visibility and intelligibility within sexual health care spaces. In addition to facing erasure, participants expressed struggles of finding sexual health care providers who understand queer identities and non-normative/fluid sexual lives. Discussing this challenge, one participant stated, "my life is not orthodox, and my sexual life is definitely not orthodox. I need someone who is not going to judge these things."

Conclusions: This research indicates that challenging heteronormativity in health care settings requires a multi-levelled approach. Health care providers need further training around sexual and gender diversity to provide adequate information and resources to their patients. Furthermore, there needs to be a continuing dialogue around how provider bias can impact a patient's sense of safety in health services.

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The impact of attachment security on felt stigma among a community sample of transgender and gender nonconforming adults

Ms Christina Panas

¹The New School for Social Research, New York, United States

The minority stress model posits that increased psychological morbidity among gender minorities (e.g. greater risk for internalizing disorders, suicidality, personality disorders, etc.) results from the internalization of discriminatory attitudes faced by this population (Meyer, 2003). While there has been some inquiry concerning the relationship between gender identity- based discrimination (i.e. “enacted stigma”) and mental health among transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) people, little attention has been given to the potential moderating influence of attachment on the internalization of these experiences (i.e. “felt stigma”). This study aimed to explore the impact of attachment security on felt stigma using self-report measures of attachment and gender minority stress: we expected that endorsement of secure primary attachment would correlate negatively with measures of gender minority stress, while insecure or disorganized attachment would correlate negatively with gender minority stress; additionally, we hypothesized that attachment would moderate the relationship between experiences of discrimination and measures of internalized transphobia. Correlational and multiple regression analyses evidenced a significant relationship between attachment and felt stigma, with secure attachment appearing to buffer internalization of discriminatory attitudes. Implications for treatment are discussed.

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“An Impossible Dream”?: Non-binary people’s perceptions of legal gender status and reform

Professor Elizabeth Peel¹, Dr Hannah Newman¹

¹*Loughborough University, UK*

There has been recent growth in the number and visibility of individuals viewing their gender as outside of conventional sex/gender categories. In a number of jurisdictions globally, but not the UK, the binary two-sex registration of gender close to birth has changed. In this article we explore non-binary people’s perceptions of legal gender status and reform. Nonbinary participants reported support for reform (85.5% (n=165) in favour) to the current UK legal gender system. Over half (57%, n=110) were in favour of abolishing legal gender (i.e., the state would no longer assign a legal gender status), although this was perceived to be ‘an impossible dream’. The introduction of a third gender category was deemed a positive and more realistic option for reform, but inferior to complete abolition of legal gender status.

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Investigating the experiences of transgender students in higher education in the UK

Lynne Regan¹

¹*The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK*

Negotiating the university environment can be difficult for many students but for those who identify as transgender, there can be additional hurdles to face. With university often being the first experience of real independence for young people it may also be a place where young trans people feel they can be themselves for the first time, as they navigate an environment free of family and friendship ties from the past.

This study employs a transformative framework and uses qualitative methods to increase understanding of trans students’ experiences in higher education (HE). A qualitative online survey of 164 students investigates the breadth of experiences and challenges faced by students across different institutions, and remote one-to-one interviews of 7 students allows for in-depth exploration of trans students’ perspectives and voices. The study explores the challenges that trans students in HE in the UK face with key findings around institutional facilities and administration; harassment, bullying and transphobia; inclusion/exclusion; and representation in the curriculum. The study also investigates higher education institution (HEI) transgender policies, investigating eight policies to identify how/whether the needs of this student group are being met by the HEIs.

Key findings were that there is a disconnect between what the policies say and what trans students experience, with policy often not translating into practice, and an exclusion of this student group due to institutional cisnormativity. The research provides insights into the effect of this disconnect and suggests areas of improvement for professional practice, provision of support, and policy and procedure implementation.

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LGBTQ individuals’ experiences of holding hands with their partner(s) in public

Dr Poul Rohleder¹, Dr Róisín Ryan-Flood¹, Dr Julie Walsh¹

¹*University Of Essex, Colchester, United Kingdom*

Objectives: Many LGBTQ individuals grow up with a sense of being 'other' in a heteronormative society. Many LGBTQ individuals report being recipients of hostility, victimization and harassment. Negative messages may become internalised, impacting on an individual's internal psychological experience, and sense of self, with consequent feelings of shame. Interpersonally, homophobia and transphobia (both actual and internalized) may play out between partners and inhibit partners from commonplace displays of affection (e.g. holding hands in public).

Method: We report here on findings from a qualitative study, exploring LGBTQ individuals' experiences of this, drawing on 25 individual photovoice interviews and 5 friendship conversations.

Results: Preliminary analysis of data have identified common themes of pervasive sense of vigilance about safety, daily inhibition of physical intimacy, and negotiations between partners about public displays of affection.

Conclusion: Holding hands in public, a taken-for-granted act of interpersonal affection for many heterosexual couples, may be experienced with feelings of anxiety, shame and fear, as well as pride and love.

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Breaking Heteronormativity with Glitter? - Drag Queens' Views on Sexuality and Sexual Practices

Anna Theresa Schmid¹, Dr. Shahin Payam¹

¹*Technical University of Munich, Munich, Germany*

Objectives: Drag queens are a unique subgroup of the LGBTQI+ community. By performing as often caricature-like women they publicly challenge 'naturally' dichotomous gender role categories, though it remains unclear how that translates into their private (e.g., sexual) lives. Whilst they tend to have a celebrity status that opens up the possibility of political protest and empowerment, they are often stigmatised for cross-dressing, posing a possible health risk. However, there is a dearth of knowledge on the sexual health of drag queens. This project sought to close the gap in the literature by exploring the (private) sexuality and sexual practices of drag queens.

Methods: Employing a critical realist approach, ten semi-structured interviews are conducted in Germany, with questions focusing on their sexuality and sexual practices. Thematic analysis is adopted to analyse the data.

Results: Three main themes are identified: natural vs. artificial identity; advocacy for sexuality; and rejection of heteronormativity. A major purpose of drag queens is to challenge heteronorms, but privately they regularly adhere to these. This illustrates the distinction made by the participants between their 'public' persona, which is portrayed as an artificial character that lacks sexuality, and their 'private' lives (e.g., sexual practices), which might be shaped by an 'inborn' sexuality.

Conclusion: Although being a drag queen seems to pressure the participants to break the heteronorms, they often fail to do so in their sexual practices. Nonetheless, drag queens seem to occupy a possible role model status within the LGBTQI+ community, advocating for tolerance and acceptance.

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Non-binary Identity as a Visible Challenge to Gender Expectations at Weddings.

Ms Verity Williams¹, Dr Mark Burgess¹

¹*Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, England*

This small-scale qualitative research investigated the experiences of non-binary people attending weddings. Six non-binary (assigned female at birth) individuals were interviewed about their experiences, and their accounts were analysed using Thematic Analysis, Fairchild's (2014) notion of Visibility Cues, and Risman (2004) and Martin's (2004) concept of gender as multidimensional. The results revealed two main themes important in understanding the specific challenges faced by non-binary people attending weddings. The first main theme, Preparing the Self, demonstrated that non-binary people face a series of complex negotiations around their exterior presentation at a wedding, due to the expectations of others and the 'traditions' of weddings. This highlighted how the challenges faced by visibly non-binary individuals in formal social rituals spanned the individual, interactional, and institutional dimensions of gender. The second main theme, Presenting the Self, showed that the wedding space is a powerful place for the celebration and (re)production of cis-het binary gender ideals. This power prevented non-binary individuals from addressing microaggressions, which took a heavy emotional and mental toll on the individual. The toll was alleviated by the presence of allies, but the Lived Space of Churches and religious ceremonies acted as an oppressive and exclusionary space for non-binary individuals. Consequently,

their visible non-binary presentation became a challenge to the institution. This was not the intention of the individual, who was merely existing and presenting as their authentic self.

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Poster Abstracts listed alphabetical by presenting author

Exploring LGBTQIA+ professional's experience of working in the screen industries in Northern Ireland and associations with their mental health and wellbeing - Looking through an intersectional lens

Mrs Elizabeth Cowdean

¹Ulster University, Lisburn, Ireland

The current PhD research project is focused on the exploration of LGBTQIA+ professional's experience of working in the screen industries in Northern Ireland and associations with mental health and wellbeing.

This presentation will provide a narrative overview of the research and methods to be employed. The presentation will begin by addressing the separate strands within the project by responding to the following core questions;

- (1) What do we know about creativity and mental health?
- (2) What are, and why, the screen industries?
- (3) Why LGBTQIA+ professionals?
- (4) Why Northern Ireland?

These important questions are what amalgamate the separate aspects of the thesis which aim to understand the intersectionality issues of being part of a sexual minority group and a screen sector worker in Northern Ireland. In addition, we will consider how being both a member of a sexual minority group, and a screen sector worker in NI during Covid-19 has impacted such individuals. The methods proposed to address these questions shall be outlined. This includes a systematic review, a two-tier sequential qualitative research approach encompassing semi-structured individual interviews, which will be thematically analysed, followed by a photovoice project.

Findings from the systematic review shall be discussed and some preliminary findings from the interviews. More focused interviews shall then be conducted and these will be analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. The presentation will end considering the future implications of the work.

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“Even I think I’m disgusting sometimes”: Negotiating being Muslim and Bisexual

Miss Navneet Dhothar¹, Dr Katie Wright-Bevans¹

¹Keele University, Newcastle-under-Lyme, United Kingdom

Objectives: Although there has been research examining homosexual identity among Muslim individuals, bisexuality is notably absent from the LGBTQ+ research with Muslims. This research sought to explore social representations and experiences of bisexuality among LGB Muslims. This sample was selected from a larger study on bisexuality.

Methods: Qualitative survey data was collected from 12 participants (7 females and 5 males). Of the 7 females; 4 identified as lesbian, 1 as bisexual, 1 as gay and 1 as ‘other’. Of the 5 male participants; 2 identified as bisexual, 1 as queer, 1 as gay, and 1 as homosexual. All participants were asked about how they make sense of bisexuality through a series of open questions. Bisexual participants were also asked about their experiences. A social constructionist thematic analysis was used to identify common constructions of bisexuality across the participants’ accounts.

Results: Primarily, bisexual identity was constructed as incompatible to Muslim identity. Bisexuality was constructed as a political act much like homosexuality, however, the construction of bisexuality as a transitional phase was prominent in participant’s accounts. The assumed transitional nature of the identity was used as a means to appease family and satisfy a cultural desire/hope of one day entering a traditional heterosexual marriage.

Conclusions: Bisexuality disrupts Muslim cultural values, specifically, it undermines the heteronormative family unit. Our research has implications of the teaching of LGBTQ+ relationships in religious schools and also highlights a need to explore how formal and informal sources of support might replace the common lack of family support.

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Feeling of Shame in Iranian Homosexual Men Causes and Effects in a Phenomenological Study

Mr. Masoud Eshaghi¹

¹Psychotherapist in Training under Supervision, Vienna, Austria

This study was done basically as the final thesis for the degree of bachelor "Psychotherapy Science" at Sigmund Freud University, Vienna in 2018 and explored the important topic "Feeling of Shame in Iranian Homosexual Men" based on the grounded theory method of research with two interviewees. The interviews were unstructured, each around 80 Minutes long and tried to be as phenomenological as possible. The study revealed (in its own scale, not generalizable) the existence of enormous shame in Iranian gay men and that "homo-sexuality" and "shame of Homosexuality" is not alluded enough in Iran. The current study also provided evidence of the effect of such a shame as a risk factor for depression and low self-esteem in Iranian homosexual men through rejection, isolation, introjection, self-denial and frustration of self-actualization. This study also explored how shame in Iranian gays prevents them from coming out. Concerning the corporal manifestations of shame, it was shown that Iranian gays (in a small scale) are entangled in a permanent struggle of pleasure and shame on the two levels of body and mind. This research worked as well on the social roots of shame in Iranian gay men and revealed that heterosexual standards, lack of empathy and cultural beliefs of the Iranian society in combination with their learning process forms the shame in homosexuals as a fixed gestalt (in its own scale, not generalizable). This study also discussed new questions to be researched qualitatively and/or quantitatively in future.

Keywords: shame, gay men, Iranian homosexual men

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Stressors on Bisexual Alcohol use

Ms Amy Montague¹, Prof Ana Nikcevic¹, Dr Bruce Fernie^{2,3}, Prof Philip Terry¹

¹Department of Psychology, Kingston University, London, UK, ²Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK, ³HIV Liaison Service, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK

Objectives: The study examined possible causes of the high rate of alcohol consumption by people identifying as bisexual. We tested the hypothesis that specific distal and proximal stressors (microaggressions and bisexual identity-related concepts, respectively) influence daily drinking.

Methods: The sample comprised 43 self-identified bisexuals: 25 females; 10 males; and 8 as non-binary; 6 participants identified as transgender. The average age was 28 yrs (SD=6.3 yrs). A longitudinal Ecological Momentary Assessment design was employed, utilizing online daily diary entries across a 10-day period. Proximal stressors were recorded at baseline, these included concepts such as concealment and internalized homonegativity. Daily measures included alcohol use and microaggressions (categorized as interpersonal or environmental).

Results: A hierarchical multi-level model analysis tested the daily impacts of the stressors on drinking. Several baseline measures significantly predicted day-to-day drinking: concealment motivation, internalized homonegativity, identity affirmation and identity centrality. Microaggressions alone did not significantly predict drinking levels by day, but there was a significant interaction between internalised homophobia and environmental microaggressions.

Conclusions: Proximal stressors were unique predictors of daily alcohol use, but microaggressions alone were not. However, an interaction was identified between interpersonal microaggressions and internalized homonegativity. This finding suggested drinking was particularly elevated when high levels of microaggression were present in individuals who reported high levels of internalised homophobia. In conclusion, both proximal and distal stressors influence bisexual alcohol use, but proximal stressors are particularly salient in predicting drinking on a day-by-day basis.

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Lived Experiences and Psychological Health of People of Non-Lesbian Gay Bisexual (LGB) Diverse Sexualities

Amanda Nyman¹

¹*Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, Scotland*

Aims of the study: To learn more about the lived experiences of people of non-LGB diverse sexualities, a group whose voices have rarely been heard in psychological research, and to learn more about the self-reported psychological health and needs of people of non-LGB diverse sexualities.

Methods: Participants are adults in the United Kingdom and Europe who identify with non-LGB diverse sexualities, this includes, but is not limited to, asexual, pansexual, demisexual, queer and questioning individuals (QIA+). They are recruited mainly through gender, sexuality and relationship diverse communities such as university societies, and through snowball sampling. Data collection is done through an anonymous, online, qualitative questionnaire with open questions. The responses will be analysed using descriptive thematic analysis.

Results: Results are not yet available as the study is still ongoing, but preliminary results will be available at the time of the conference.

Conclusion: It is hoped that the results will further the understanding of the needs and experiences of people of non-LGB diverse sexualities and help inform the practice of applied psychologists as well as influence future research. The study's main limitations include the sample being largely based in Glasgow and Scotland which means any results might be specific to that population. The anonymous nature of the study offers some benefits but additionally prevents the researcher from following up or clarifying any points raised by participants.

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“I have to trust that who I am, as I am, is enough”: an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of the ‘Coming Out’ Experiences and Wellbeing in Christian Sexual Minorities

Mr Jamille Palmer¹, Dr Amanda Wilson

¹*lapt, Leicester, United Kingdom*

Objective: Religion is known to incur a host of wellbeing benefits for Christians, however for sexual minority Christians, religion can be deleterious to wellbeing. Internalisation of homonegative doctrine and greater exposure to minority stress appears to subject sexual minority Christians to a litany of adverse health outcomes. That said, some Christian sexual minorities report faith as a source of coping with stress. The present study aimed to answer the research questions "Do Christian sexual minorities believe their wellbeing:

- was affected by their decision to disclose their sexual identity to significant others at the time of disclosure?"
- is presently being affected by their decision to disclose their sexual identity to significant others?"

Methods: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to obtain a nuanced understanding of the experiences of sexual minority Christians. The sample consisted of five mixed-gender, mixed-sexuality, Christian participants, aged 20-36.

Results: Three themes emerged from the data; Authenticity: A Wellbeing Boon; Identity Quests: Reconciling Conflicting Identities; and, Safety: A Disclosure Prerequisite.

Conclusions: Findings indicate that sexual minority Christians believe their wellbeing is positively impacted by their decision to disclose their sexual identity, both at the time of disclosure and in the present day. Caveats to this include a need for disclosure targets to be sexuality-affirming and autonomy support-giving, and a need for resources (e.g. spiritual leaders, online communities) to offset the adverse wellbeing impact of identity conflict. Findings have potential implications through the creation of or signposting to relevant Christian-specific sexual minority support groups or gay-straight alliances.

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