The Psychology of Sexualities Section Special Issue

An introduction to the field of LGBTQ Psychology and the BPS Psychology of Sexualities Section

Inclusive Masculinity Theory: Review and interview with the founder

Teaching sensitive issues – 10 Theses on teaching gender and sexuality

Also in this issue:

Doing research in LGBT+ mental health

Using the Crime Survey for England and Wales to research sexuality and criminal victimisation experiences: A magic bullet for exploring sensitive topics?
Poster Submission Deadline: Noon 11 January 2017

Themes
● Wellbeing  ● Looking forward  ● Social justice

Confirmed Keynotes
Dr Helen Bevan, Professor Rosalind Gill, Professor James W. Pennebaker & Dr Martin E.P. Seligman

Our 2017 programme will be available soon on the conference website.
HELLO AND WELCOME to the Psychology of Sexualities Section Special Issue of the PsyPAG Quarterly. The PsyPAG Quarterly is a peer-reviewed journal published under the auspices of the British Psychological Society (BPS). We hope you enjoy reading the various articles we have included in this special issue!

Psychologists have long had a love-hate relationship with the study of sex and human sexualities. Although the origins of psychology and anthropology were marked by concerns and debates over the topic, contemporary psychologists have generally moved away from consideration of the ‘erotic and exotic’ into more respectable and less controversial kinds of topics. Meanwhile sexuality remains an intrinsic, if rarely studied, aspect of human experience. The cross-cultural study of gender and human sexuality, and in particular gender and sexualities in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been an interest for me since the start of my career in psychology. Throughout my career so far, working with the Psychology of Sexualities Section of the BPS has provided inspiration and encouragement. As an important yet relatively understudied sub-area of psychology, a sexualities special issue seemed appropriate in highlighting the quality and diverse range of significant contributions to the field by postgraduate students, and to help encourage continual development and interest in the field.

Articles to look forward to include:

- a discussion paper on the history of the psychology of sexualities field and section of the BPS from Dr Adam Jowett and Dr Joanna Semlyen, as well as a review of Inclusive Masculinity Theory, which also includes an interview with its founder by Luis Morales. Gu Li received special recognition from our editorial team for his discussion paper on conducting research on sexual orientation identities, which provides students with essential knowledge on the challenges and appropriate means of measuring sexual orientation. Meanwhile, our features section delivers several fascinating pieces. One such is by Dr Christian Klesse, and addresses the challenges of teaching sex, sexualities, and gender related topics at University; and another, from Charlotte Wesson, discusses the role of gender in sexual fluidity. Additionally, we at the PsyPAG Quarterly endeavour to provide readers with highlights of research hints and tips; thus we have included two hints and tips articles, which will provide further advice and recommendations for research in the sexualities field.

In this issue we officially launch the NEW Guest Author section! The guest author section welcomes established academics who already have a PhD to write for PsyPAG Quarterly. Articles submitted can be any one of our other article types, such as discussion papers, reflection pieces or hints and tips. Articles can be on any psychology-related topic. Dr Adam Jowett is the guest author.
of this issue of the Quarterly. Adam Jowett is the Editor of the Psychology of Sexualities Review and a lecturer in psychology at Coventry University. He has made continual substantive contributions to the sexualities field covering topics such as civil partnership, gay masculinities, chronic illness in a non-heterosexual context and much more (see Semlyen and Couzens, 2016 – also in this issue).

I am pleased to announce that we have a health special issue planned for our annual special edition of the Quarterly in March 2016. Our aim for this issue is to advance the understanding of health-related issues in psychology. We seek to address work that is relevant to all areas of psychology related to health, and is not specific to health psychology per se. For example, topics that might fall under sport and exercise, clinical, social or cognitive psychology, but are related to health in some way, will all be considered. An official call of submissions was released in late August, and the deadline for submissions is 1 January 2016. We look forward to your submissions!

We’d like to thank those who contributed to the creation of this issue. First, I must send out a great thank you to all the authors who submitted manuscripts, without whom, there would be nothing here to read. Secondly, we would like to thank our reviewers who volunteered their time and energy to provide detailed feedback for authors, not only in order to ensure the quality of the PsyPAG Quarterly as a journal, but also to help authors develop their craft as writers and researchers. Furthermore, we wish to thank those who have served on the editorial board for the Quarterly in the past for providing their guidance and wisdom, as well as Research Board and Press Department of the British Psychological Society for their invaluable help in creating the journal.

We would finally like to give a special thanks to Charlotte Pennington, who has served as a co-managing editor for the Quarterly for nearly three years, and has been integral to its success. Charlotte completed her PhD in September and is beginning a new phase of her career. We wish her all the best. Following Charlotte’s departure from the Quarterly editorial team, doctoral student Celine Chhoa joined our staff as co-managing editor.

The Quarterly editorial team look forward to receiving your submissions for forthcoming issues. To ensure that your article is submitted correctly and that it will be reviewed for inclusion in the PsyPAG Quarterly, please carefully read the ‘instructions to authors’ and publication guidelines on our website.

Happy reading!

Jimmy Couzens
On behalf of the PsyPAG Quarterly Editorial Team

Reference
HELLO AND WELCOME to the Winter 2016 issue of PsyPAG Quarterly! I hope you are now well settled into the new academic year and are looking forward to the Christmas break. There has been lots of activity over the last few months at PsyPAG which I look forward to updating you on.

Firstly, we are pleased to announce the launch of our new PsyPAG Undergraduate Award. This is designed to introduce undergraduates to PsyPAG towards the end of their studies, as they consider moving on to further study. The Undergraduate Award will be given based on a summary of their undergraduate dissertation proposal, references and predicted overall degree grade. The prize for this Award will be attendance, travel and accommodation to present at our Annual Conference in July 2017 (see paragraph below). I’m sure you’ll agree that this is a fantastic opportunity for undergraduates to attend an academic conference and be recognised for their hard work. This new Award joins our range of other successful Awards: our Rising Researcher Award for exceptional PhD students, Masters Award and DART-P Award for a postgraduate with excellent teaching skills. Full information on all these awards can be found on our website: www.psypag.co.uk/awards

Secondly, we are busy with preparation for PsyPAG’s 32nd Annual Conference at Northumbria University on Wednesday 26–Friday 28 July 2017. This is our flagship event where we welcome over 150 delegates, including UK psychology postgraduates currently studying for MScs and PhDs, as well as practitioners in training. The conference is a fantastic opportunity to network with other postgraduates and present your work to a supportive audience. We also provide a range of workshops at the conference to allow you to develop new skills. We hope to see many of you in Newcastle next July!

Please consider applying for our range of funding opportunities, including workshops (http://www.psypag.co.uk/workshops/) and our range of bursaries (http://www.psypag.co.uk/bursaries-2/). Funds include our Research Grant Bursaries, providing funds for research costs such as participant payment and travel costs and our Domestic and International Conference Bursaries. We received fantastic quality applications for our October 2016 bursary round and look forward to continue supporting many more postgraduates in the future.

We still have some vacant committee positions available, with details found towards the back of PsyPAG Quarterly. If you would like to apply, please contact Vice Chair Ryc Aquino at: vicechair@psypag.co.uk

Finally, please remember to distribute details of our PsyPAG book: A Guide for Psychology Postgraduates: Surviving Postgraduate Study. This book contains articles to help navigate challenges typically experienced by postgraduate psychology students. Articles are both newly commissioned and recent PsyPAG Quarterly articles, written by current postgraduates and PsyPAG alumni. It has been posted free of charge to UK psychology postgraduate departments across the UK and can also be downloaded here: www.psypag.co.uk/psypag-book/

As ever, thank you to the BPS Research Board for their continued support and the PsyPAG committee for their hard work and commitment to supporting UK psychology postgraduates. I wish you all a relaxing Christmas and very Happy New Year!

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An introduction to the field of LGBTQ Psychology and the BPS Psychology of Sexualities Section

Dr Adam Jowett & Dr Joanna Semlyen

While historically psychologists played a significant role in stigmatising non-heterosexuals through adopting a ‘pathological’ model of homosexuality (Kitzinger, 1987), psychologists working in the field of psychology of sexualities today more typically seek to understand and challenge homophobia and heterosexism as well as promote positive wellbeing for non-heterosexuals (Clarke et al., 2010). Homosexuality was removed from the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1973, thanks in no small part to the pioneering work of early ‘gay affirmative’ psychologists (e.g. Hooker, 1957; Weinberg, 1972). These academics and practitioners successfully demonstrated that homosexuality should not be conflated with psychological dysfunction or impairment but rather that it is societal homophobia that has a negative impact on lesbians’ and gay men’s wellbeing. The mental health consequences of heterosexism, discrimination and homophobic prejudice on LGB people have been more recently evidenced in two recent meta-analyses (King et al., 2008; Semlyen et al., 2016) in addition to increased health risk behaviours (Hagger-Johnson et al., 2013).

This emerging field of psychology, originally termed ‘lesbian and gay psychology’, aimed to promote positive wellbeing and social change for lesbians and gay men, and counter the underrepresentation of non-heterosexuals in many areas of psychology (Kitzinger and Coyle, 2002). It also sought to establish research about the lives of lesbians and gay men as a legitimate field of academic enquiry.

While many are drawn to this field out of personal interest (see Jowett’s comments later in this issue), one need not be lesbian or gay to work in this area (Peel & Coyle, 2004). Indeed, early gay affirmative psychologists such as Evelyn Hooker and George Weinberg were themselves heterosexual. As Kitzinger et al. (1998, p.532) note; “a ‘lesbian and gay psychologist’ can be heterosexual, just as a “social psychologist” can be anti-social or a “sports psychologist” can be a couch potato’. The scope (and name) of the field has widened over the last few decades, incorporating bisexual, transgender and occasionally ‘queer’ perspectives (Clarke et al., 2010). Clarke et al. (2010, p.6) provide the following definition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) psychology:

LGBTQ psychology is a branch of psychology that is affirmative of LGBTQ people. It seeks to challenge prejudice and discrimination against LGBTQ people and the privileging of heterosexuality in psychology and in the broader society. It seeks to promote LGBTQ concerns as legitimate foci for psychological research and promote non-heterosexist, non-genderist and inclusive approaches to psychological research and practice. It provides a range of psychological perspectives on the lives and experiences of LGBTQ people and on LGBTQ sexualities and genders.
While it is relatively rare today for psychologists to (openly) portray homosexuality in pathological terms (at least in the West, see Jowett, 2016), non-heterosexuals continue to be under-represented in psychological research; LGBTQ issues are rarely covered in any depth in psychology curriculums and heterosexuality continues to be the unmarked norm in much psychological theory and research (Semlyen, 2015). So there is much work still to be done! LGBTQ psychologists work as practitioners across fields such as clinical, counselling and health psychology as well as in academia. See Semlyen and Couzens (2016) also in this issue for an overview of the PoSS research interests.

History of the Section

This sub-field of psychology first gained institutional recognition with the American Psychological Association’s establishment of Division 44, the Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian and Gay issues in 1985 (now the Society for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues). There was however some considerable resistance against the establishment of a similar section within the British Psychological Society (BPS). The Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section was established in 1998, after nearly a decade of campaigning and three rejected proposals (two for a Psychology of Lesbianism Section and one for a Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section) (Wilkinson, 1999). In 2009 the Section changed its name to the Psychology of Sexualities Section in recognition that the work and interests of its members also applied to bisexuality, queer identities and heterosexuality (das Nair, 2009). While transgender issues could be more accurately described as belonging to a psychology of gender, the psychology of gender and sexuality are closely related (Richards & Barker, 2015) and the Section remains committed to representing trans and non-binary research interests and concerns under the wider umbrella of LGBTQ psychology (Clarke et al., 2010).

The Section was instrumental in drafting the BPS guidelines and literature review for psychologists working therapeutically with sexual and gender minority clients (BPS, 2012a) and the Society’s position statement on therapies attempting to change sexual orientation (BPS, 2012b). Section members also played an important role in a UK Consensus Statement on Conversion Therapy with other mental health professional bodies and a Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK.

Section members are active in all aspects of sexualities research publishing regularly in the Section’s own journal and other LGBTQ and mainstream journals. Promoting sexualities research ensures the continued representation of LGBTQ issues within the wider field of psychology.

The Section has an international outlook and represents the BPS on the International Psychology Network for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex issues (www.IPsyNet.net) (see also two Special Issues of Psychology of Sexualities Review (2015, 6[1]; 2016, 7[1]) on international perspectives). The Section publishes Psychology of Sexualities Review twice a year and has a number of annual award categories including a postgraduate award.

Future of the Section

The section is keen to engage new psychologists and allied professionals, researchers and activists’ interests working in, promoting and supporting LGBTQ Psychology to join the Section and indeed the Committee to take part in the future direction of its work and objectives. If you are interested in joining the Committee or the Section email the current Honorary Secretary on j.semlyen@uea.ac.uk

The Psychology of Sexualities Section is holding a one-day conference and annual general meeting on 2 December at the BPS London Office. The theme will be ‘Innovations in Psychology of Sexualities’ and
there will be presentations, pecha kuchas and prizes. We strongly encourage postgraduate students to submit an abstract. More information about this and about the Section can be found at www.bps.org.uk/pos. You can also follow us on Twitter (@BPSSexualities).

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References


SET UP as the Lesbian and Gay Section in 1998, the Psychology of Sexualities Section (PoS) of the British Psychological Society (BPS) aims to create and maintain a compendium for the psychology of human sexualities in Britain. The section provides a forum for those involved in research, teaching, and applied work that is relevant to the sexualities field. The section is devoted to enhancing non-heterosexual and gender-inclusive means of research and practice in British psychology. The Section history is described in Jowett and Semlyen’s (2016) article in this issue.

The Section is involved in a broad spectrum of activities across activism, expert opinion, practice and research. Activities include: raising awareness of sexual minority issues in psychology; providing a forum for presentation and discussion of issues, experiences, and findings in sexualities work; facilitating communication and support among psychologists and other professionals working in the field; promote psychological research which enhances the lives of sexual and gender minorities in the UK and abroad; advise and influence relevant organisations and policy about the psychology of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and queer (LGBTQ) population.

The Section meets four times a year with much contact through email in between meetings. Field-related conferences are also beginning to get organised with more regularity. Encouragement for postgraduate students and recently qualified psychologists to present and financial support is provided where possible. We have an annual general meeting in December each year with a keynote speaker drawn from LGBTQ psychology.

The section represents psychologists who work across all disciplines sub-areas of psychology, including health, social, counselling and clinical psychologies working at all levels from postgraduate to professorial. Here we describe our research, our drives and motivations and our journeys towards a Psychology of Sexualities.

Elizabeth Peel – Professor of Communication and Social Interaction, Loughborough University is Section Chair:

‘I started working in the field of lesbian and gay psychology, as it was known then, in the 1990s when I studied violence against lesbians and gay men and perceived factors that determined whether a homophobic crime was reported to the police for my undergraduate psychology project. I was fortunate to win the BPS Psychology of Women’s Section undergraduate prize, which meant an article based on my dissertation was published in Feminism & Psychology in 1999. I had become interested in this area because of my community work, which also provided the impetus for my PhD research (1998–2002) that explored if, and more importantly, how lesbian, gay and bisexual diversity training works to undermine heterosexism.'
From 2000 to 2006 I had a number of different roles on the (then) Lesbian & Gay Psychology Section Committee, PsyPAG Rep, Book Review Editor, then Co-Editor and then Editor of the predecessor of Psychology of Sexualities Review (PoSR) Lesbian & Gay Psychology Review. These were all excellent opportunities to develop networks of like-minded people in the field, gain experience and peer support, and ‘out’ psychology as a discipline open to, and inclusive of, LGBTQ perspectives (Clarke & Peel, 2007). My sexualities research has contributed to understanding the discursive production of heterosexism and heteronormativity (e.g., Peel, 2001; 2012), and critical understanding of relationships and families (e.g., Riggs & Peel, 2016). Since 2002 I’ve also conducted qualitative health research – primarily related to chronic illnesses impacting older people such as type 2 diabetes and, since 2010, dementia. But my sexualities and health interests have intersected in various projects (Peel & Thomson, 2009), for example lesbian and bisexual women’s experiences of pregnancy loss, and sexuality and ageing (e.g., Peel & Harding, 2016).

‘I would encourage readers interested in the field to have a look at the BPS prizewinning undergraduate textbook I co-authored Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Psychology: it’s an accessible and wide-ranging introduction that highlights what we need to research as well as what’s already known in the field. A true psychology of people should include LGBTQI+ perspectives and experiences, and avoid perpetuating (or better actively challenge) hetero- and cis-normativity in research and practice. All in all, this is an exciting field with many opportunities for interesting and worthwhile research, and synergies with other areas within and beyond the discipline – make it so!’

Joanna Semlyen – Lecturer in Psychology, University of East Anglia is Past Chair and currently Honorary Secretary:

‘I am an HCPC Registered Health Psychologist and a BPS Chartered Psychologist. I started off my academic career in neurorehabilitation (focusing on traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis and stroke) before becoming interested in minority health issues (Semlyen, 1998). Since 2003 I have focused almost exclusively on research into health inequalities, in particular lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans* (LGBT) health. I consider it crucial to be able to work with, within and between methodologies and have carried out meta-analysis, systematic review, thematic analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis and epidemiological prevalence studies all with the sole purpose of identifying and addressing the health inequalities experienced by sexual and gender minorities. I think the landscape is starting to change. There is a growing interest in this topic, and it is broadening, illustrated by the BPS Section name/focal change to the Psychology of Sexualities while I was Chair of the Section and more research is emerging. PhD studentships, course modules and research roles are all beginning to become more frequently available.

‘I have been a committee member of the Section for around 10 years with roles including stints as Chair and Treasurer and currently am acting as Honorary Secretary – a role that requires me to be very organised. I took it on for this challenge! It is wonderful to have had so many new members join and I am looking forward to continued work in LGBTQ psychology with them.

‘My own work in LGBTQ psychological research has crossed into a number of different approaches (health psychology, epidemiology, medical sociology to name but a few) and intersects with different health topics including psycho-oncology, dementia, breast cancer,
health service use, screening (Semlyen, 2015; Semlyen et al., in press). I have also special-ised in aiming to gain the highest evidence level possible to capture quality health inequity evidence that can be used to influence policy (Semlyen & Hagger-Johnson, 2016). For example, my systematic review on mental disorder in LGB people carried out in 2008 changed the National Suicide Policy to include LGB people as a high-risk group (King et al., 2008) allowing funding and targeted services for this group within budgets. More recently, UK population data on health outcomes is emerging and I have started publishing this representative data indicating LGB health inequalities across a range of health outcomes including smoking and hazardous alcohol (Hagger-Johnson et al., 2013); common mental disorder (Semlyen et al. 2016) and body mass index.

‘The most important thing about LGBTQ Psychology for you is to get involved. Moreover, LGBTQ research is interesting, challenging and full of possibility and there is room for you!’

Jimmy Couzens – PhD Student, University of Worcester is Honorary Treasurer:

‘I am currently a PhD student at the Institute of Health and Society, University of Worcester. My PhD research is exploring the psychological experiences of Voodoo and Obeah as used for changing sexual orientation in St. Lucia, West Indies. Aside from my research and teaching at the University, I also work in Mental Health Management at a Priory Group Hospital and as a Research Associate at a University Hospital in Queens, New York. Prior to this, I was a research assistant at PACE Health and Brunel University.’

‘I have a broad range of research interests, cutting across health and cross-cultural psychology. My research is largely concerned with the social construction of scientific facts, and as part of this, my research explores and challenges normative assumptions and the overwhelming dominance of west-centric space of perception and argumentation in psychology. Most of my current research interests involve gender, sex, and sexualities in Latin America and the Caribbean (and diaspora communities); culture, ethnicity, and mental illness; and Black intersectional identifications (including the intersection of racial and sexual identities). At present, this includes research on the racialisation and colouration of sexualities and homophobia in the Caribbean; racism, colourism, and pigmentocracy in St. Lucia; racism in the LGB community in England; and the mental health issues and needs of Black and Minority Ethnic LGB people in the UK. I therefore develop novel methodologies which challenge western-centric perceptions and assumptions about human sexuality – these assumptions are often antagonistic to the life experiences of non-white populations and the ethno-psychological and ethno-medical systems, conceptions, and antecedents of sexuality and mental health in non-western societies.’

‘Between November 2014 and August 2016, I was the PsyPAG representative for the Psychology of Sexualities Section, and I am now acting as the Section’s Honorary Treasurer and the Section’s representative on the Professional Practice Working Group. As an early career researcher, joining the Psychology of Sexualities Section provided a great way of networking and communicating research.’

Adam Jowett – Lecturer in Psychology, Coventry University is Editor of Psychology of Sexualities Review:

‘I first came across the field of LGBTQ psychology in a critical social psychology lecture during the second year of my undergraduate degree. This serendipitously occurred not long after I had come out as
gay and so many concerns of the field (e.g. sexual identity development) were personally salient to me at the time. This was a turning point in my undergraduate education, as up until this point I was finding the subject of my degree to be dry and was beginning to feel disenchanted with psychology as a discipline. During these lectures I felt that I had ‘connected’ with my studies in a way I had not previously and I immediately knew this was an area of study I wanted to pursue. I then embarked on a sandwich placement year as a research assistant, under the supervision of Elizabeth Peel, conducting research on civil partnership the year that they were first introduced. It was at this point that I became a member of, what was then, the BPS Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section and my first oral academic presentation was at the Section’s conference. I later went on to publish findings from my sandwich year research placement (Jowett & Peel, 2010). For my undergraduate dissertation I studied young gay men’s talk about masculinity and won the BPS Psychology of Sexualities Section undergraduate prize, which was subsequently published in the first issue of Psychology of Sexualities Review (PoSR) (Jowett, 2010).

‘Following my BSc, I was fortunate enough to secure a PhD studentship, again under the supervision of Elizabeth Peel, in the area of LGBTQ health psychology examining chronic illness in LGBTQ contexts (e.g. Jowett & Peel, 2009). During my PhD I was also successful in applying for a place at the second International Summer Institute for LGBT Psychology at the University of Michigan, which was part funded by the Psychology of Sexualities Section. This was a great opportunity to learn from leading scholars in the field and to network with postgraduates from around the globe.

‘As a lecturer, I try to incorporate the psychology of sexualities throughout my teaching to disrupt what is often a heteronormative curriculum. I have continued to conduct research and publish in the area of LGBTQ psychology, particularly in relation to same-sex marriage (e.g. Jowett, 2014) and since 2014 I have been a committee member of the Section as Editor of PoSR. The Section has played an important role and supported me throughout the early years of my career, providing opportunities I would otherwise not have had. I would encourage those interested in the field to join the Section and be part of a supportive community of academics and practitioners with common interests.’

Orla Parslow-Breen – Lecturer in Psychology, University of Roehampton is Book Review Editor, Psychology of Sexualities Review.

‘As a mature student returning to higher education to study a BSc in Psychology I was surprised to find a lack of research that addressed the issues of non-heterosexual sexualities. Whilst completing my BSc, I quickly came to realise that mainstream psychological research was both androcentric and heteronormative (Hegarty et al., 2013), both standpoints that did not reflect my own position. Despite this I enjoyed my time as a psychology undergraduate and was keen to take my studies further so enrolled for an MSc in Social Psychology at the University of Surrey where I was introduced to LGBTQ psychology and met Professor Peter Hegarty, who had been one of the officers of the BPS Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section Committee at its inception and is also a past Chair of the Section. Peter Hegarty’s passion for social psychology and social justice was just the impetus I needed. I soon signed up for a PhD, which Peter agreed to supervise, to examine lifespan development issues of lesbian women post coming out. I was fortunate to secure competitive studentship funding for my PhD, which I undertook on a part-time basis so that I could incorporate both my PhD work and continue in my role as a family carer.'
Whilst a PhD student I was successful in gaining a place at the 2010 LGBT Summer Institute at the University of Michigan, which was an excellent opportunity that allowed me to engage with key LGBT researchers and meet fellow postgraduates at an early stage in my PhD research. My doctoral research has examined the mid-life lesbian caregiving experience (Parslow & Hegarty, 2013). Using a mainly qualitative approach my research has engaged with the elided experiences of lesbians who provide family elder caregiving. This research highlights the unique issues that these women face around lesbian identity performance within a shared home environment as well as their need to maintain lesbian social networks and community connections. I also examined the expectations of young lesbians and queer women regarding future relationships with their families of origin and personal relationships. In 2015, when I moved into the write-up phase of my PhD, I became a member of the Psychology of Sexualities Section committee. As part of my membership of the committee I took on the role of Book Review Editor of PoSR. My engagement with the section has allowed me to connect more widely with both academics and practitioners in the field of LGBTQ psychology. My PhD is now complete. My thesis was submitted in April 2016 and I successfully defended it at my viva in June 2016. I am now a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Roehampton where I am continuing my research around lesbian lifespan development, caregiving and identity; as well as developing a project on same-sex marriage and minority stress.

Beré Mahoney – Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of Worcester joined as Ordinary Member in April, 2016:

‘My research interests are broad but all focus on exploring and challenging normative assumptions, particularly around identity, wellbeing and research methodologies, but in ways that are impactful for marginalised groups and less researched topics. Consequently, my research activity has always been diverse. Currently, this includes qualitative health projects on rare and unusual conditions, using big data to explore issues typically researched qualitatively (e.g. sexuality and victimisation experiences), and research with doctoral students that challenge assumptions about sexuality and health. The Section is a great fit for my research interests, activity and importantly, professional values. Having joined I welcomed the chance to work more directly with the section as an Ordinary Member of the PoS Committee because of its integrative and inclusive ethos to exploring issues around sexuality; and, because of its commitment to promoting research and practice that is non-heterosexist and gender inclusive.’

Dean Wilkinson – Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of Worcester joined as Ordinary member in April, 2016:

Dean Wilkinson is a senior lecturer in Psychology at the University of Worcester. He is a chartered psychologist, Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He teaches on undergraduate and post-graduate programs, around cognitive psychology, clinical psychology and forensic psychology. He co-supervises doctoral research students on topics around sexual orientation, gender and psychological health. One of his current research interests focuses on exploring links between sexuality and religion.

Katherine Hubbard – Lecturer in Psychology, University of Surrey, joined as Ordinary member in April, 2016:

‘I am a social critical psychologist and a historian of psychology. My most recent research
has been on the history of the Rorschach ink blot test and I adopted a queer feminist lens through which to consider this history. Prior to this doctoral research I also focused on gender and sexuality in my research regarding essentialist beliefs and their relationships with prejudice towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people. I therefore adopt a variety of methods including more archival and literature based research, including a queer feminist analysis of the character Rorschach in the graphic novel Watchmen. Generally, I am interested in historical approaches, beliefs and prejudice, and the involvement of society and popular culture in the construction of psychology.

‘I argue that it is important to think historically about psychology because of the difficult past we have had as a discipline. This is especially in regards to how we have treated people in minorities. This clearly includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, as well as women generally. Psychology is not developed in a vacuum but rather deeply impacted by wider social beliefs, contexts and individuals. My research aims to untangle these influences and put psychology in a framework which contextualises and critiques its history. It was on the back of my own research in sexualities in psychology that I joined the BPS Psychology of Sexualities Section in 2016.’

Tom Nadarzynski – Lecturer in Sexual Health, University of Southampton, Ordinary Member in April, 2014:

‘I am a health psychologist with a particular interest in sexual health and digital health promotion. My research has explored the feasibility and acceptability of novel sexual health services for men who have sex with men such as HPV vaccination. My methodological approach attempts to link the psychology of sexualities with the development of online health services related to genito-urinary medicine. I have utilised a number of models used in epidemiology, public health and psychology to study how sexual orientation, identity and behaviour influence specific health outcomes. Hence, my research interest concentrates on health inequalities due to sexual orientation in relation to cancer, sexually transmitted infections and mental health.

‘I believe that psychology is an important discipline that needs to be utilised to inform health professionals and policy-makers about suitability and acceptability of novel sexual health services. Beliefs and attitudes towards sexual health screening, contraception, vaccinations and pre-/post-exposure prophylaxis are associated with uptake of these services. The BPS Psychology of Sexualities Section supports research related to health service development by providing expertise on matters related to non-heterosexist identities.’

Charlotte Wesson – PhD Student, University of Lincoln, PsyPAG Representative for the Psychology of Sexualities Section (as of July 2016):

‘I am currently a PhD student at the University of Lincoln, part of the Forensic and Clinical Research Group (FCRG). My PhD research centres around finding a new method to measure sexual preference based on approach-avoidance, and utilising a tablet PC. Though this solely focuses on exclusively heterosexual individuals at present, I am hoping to develop it further and test it with individuals with a paedophilic sexual preference. Though this is my PhD work, my interests are also in women’s sexual fluidity and non-category specificity, using methods such as eye-tracking and mousetracking to measure the latter. I hope to broaden my research in the forthcoming years into looking at understanding the fluidity of trans* individuals.'
I have taken over the role of the Sexualities section PsyPAG representative as of July 2016. I am very much looking forward to this role and what opportunities it will bring. I think that this special issue, along with the conference in December 2016 will be a great opportunity to discover opportunities for collaboration outside of my typical area of interest. 

This issue focuses on the importance of sexualities research and the breadth and depth of research interests of and possibilities to collaborate with and invite presentations from the Section Committee and to create opportunities for postgraduate psychologists interested in our work to join the Section. We hope to see you many of you at our AGM this year.

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References
Discussion paper:

Teaching sensitive issues – 10 Theses on teaching gender and sexuality

Dr Christian Klesse

The following text is based on my personal experience of many years of teaching on gender and sexuality in Higher Education settings in the UK and Germany. The text was originally prepared as a presentation for a workshop on ‘Teaching Sensitive Issues’ at the Department of Sociology of Manchester Metropolitan University on 26 November 2015. The 10 Theses on Teaching Gender and Sexuality address teachers in the Humanities and Social Sciences regardless of whether they deliver specialist gender or sexuality-focused units or not.

Gender and sexuality are closely connected categories. Gender is a complex subject matter and exceeds the question of male-female relations in many regards. Transgender issues are therefore included in this discussion. They have historically emerged in connection with discourses on and in the proximity of the cultures and politics of non-heterosexual groups. This is indicated in the common usage of acronyms/ umbrella terms such as LGBTIQ (Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Intersex-Queer where Q at times also stands for Questioning). At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that many trans* people object to the conflation of transgender and LGBQ issues.

The following theses are based on my personal understanding derived from many years of teaching and researching on gender/sexuality. They are meant to stimulate discussion and not to convey any ultimate truth on the subject matter. My main intention is to delineate a problem, rather than to provide water-tight solutions.

10 Theses on teaching gender and sexuality

1. We may be teaching sexuality without being aware of it and even if there are no references to these words and concepts in our lecture scripts

Normative views on gender and sexuality shape not only common sense ideas, but run also deeply within mainstream social and cultural theories, encapsulated in and reproduced through many of the concepts we teach our students. For example, we reproduce the naturalisation of certain genders and sexualities, if we only refer to heterosexual families and relationships when we are teaching on family-related policies or if we assume that all our students are either heterosexual and/or cis-gendered (i.e. people whose self-identity corresponds with their assigned sex). This form of ‘teaching gender and sexuality’ may not be consciously picked up upon by all students, but it may reinforce the alienation and marginalisation of LGBTIQ students. Yet if we strive for a more inclusive curriculum and a more refined and adequate conceptual language, gender and sexuality contents will inevitably become more visible in our teaching.
2. Topics relating to sexuality and non-normative, trans* or non-binary genders are perceived by many as non-standard ('particularised') teaching subjects

As a result of this, our experience of teaching these issues may be very different from our experience of teaching other subjects. This is the case for a variety of reasons. Sexuality is a taboo subject in many social contexts. Moreover, certain sexualities are more taboo than others. Historically, the expression sexuality has been heavily regulated and confined to the private sphere. As a taboo subject, conversations on sexuality were only considered to be legitimate within a small number of academic professions (such as law, medicine and psychology). Intersex and transgender identities have often been read through a sexuality-lens (usually in a sexual deviance perspective) or have received hostile treatment because they unsettle not only taken-for-granted views on gender, but also on sexuality or sexual orientation. Few people are comfortable discussing sexuality or issues relating to transgender or intersex in public settings. Talking about certain sexuality and gender issues can cause discomfort, shame or mobilise rejection or resistance. While discomfort and shame may stem from the effects of tabooisation, hostility is often the effect of response schemes bound up with homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia or transphobia (that is, negative attitudes towards lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans* people).

3. Non-normative gender and sexualities experience marginalisation in many social contexts

Non-heterosexuals (such as lesbians, gay men and bisexuals) and trans* and intersex people are likely to experience stigmatisation, exclusion and attacks in many parts of their social lives. This may not only include discrimination by institutions, but also individual members within their families, peer groups, neighbourhoods, ethnic or faith communities, universities, work places plus all kinds of public spaces. Such experiences are harmful and damaging and can have an impact on people’s wellbeing, mental and physical health, career development, employment trajectories and levels of income. These issues alone should demonstrate that gender and sexuality are important issues within education. We need to think carefully about how we approach teaching these topics in the classroom.

4. Many people are poorly educated around non-normative gender and sexualities

Stereotypes of non-normative genders and sexualities abound in popular culture and are all too often reproduced in research and academic literature. This means that we need to thoughtfully choose teaching materials and carefully evaluate texts and visual sources that we wish to use in the classroom. We need to be prepared that students may have different experience and/or understanding of trans*, intersex and LGBQ issues and cultures. Lack of understanding often goes hand in hand with a lack of sensitivity which, in turn, may have a negative impact on classroom interaction and as a result may offend or alienate LGBTQI students. We need to be prepared to educate ourselves on the changing social, cultural and legal issues that concern minoritised genders and sexualities, if we wish to teach in an informed and tactful manner on these subjects. Some non-cisgenders and non-heterosexual sexualities are arguably even less understood than others. This applies (among others) to trans* identities outside the transsexual paradigm, intersex conditions, bisexualities or pansexuality. Genders and sexualities outside or beyond the LGBTQI spectrum are frequently completely off the radar of public perception. There is poor understanding of BDSM (Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission and Sadomasochism), sex work, non-monogamy, polyamory and asexuality.
5. There is a lack of non-alienating, sensitive common public language to address certain sexual acts, and certain genders and sexualities

The public language on sexuality and sex/gender is rooted in medical terminology which is somewhat distant from the lived and sensual experiences of sexuality and gendered embodiment. Moreover, with regard to gender and sexual minorities, terminology is also often burdened with a history of pathologisation. While medical language may be technocratic, over-rationalised and alienating, vernacular alternatives tend to reflect male experiences or a patriarchal mind. Subcultural terms and identities are not very well-known beyond certain gender and sexual identity-based communities. Beyond the lack of adequate words we face the problem that speech acts around sexuality, too, are highly regulated by gendered codes (that further differ across different cultural locations). The challenge thus is not only to find a language, but also to create a speech situation that welcomes everybody to express their views and that allows communication across difference. We should be cautious to avoid stigmatising or offensive language and be prepared to step in, if students address alternative genders of sexualities in judgemental or discriminatory fashion. We should strive for a language that does not misconstrue the classroom or any other collectivities (such as social classes, professional groups or ethnic, national or religious populations) as being monolithically heterosexual and cis-gendered. Moreover, we should always use the pronouns and names preferred by our students.

6. Whether gender and sexuality-related topics turn out to be ‘sensitive topics’ in classrooms depends very much on the context

While gender and sexuality arguably assume a particularised status as teaching subjects, it would be counter-productive to label them as ‘sensitive subjects’ per se. While it is certainly good practice to dedicate care and effort towards finding adequate ways to address non-normative gender issues and sexuality topics in the classroom, an over-cautious approach may kill off spontaneity and could reinforce the culture of tabooing. I do not see any need to introduce every treatment of gender/sexuality with a ‘trigger warning’. A generalised practice of using trigger-warnings continues to particularise these subjects. Whether certain gender and sexuality issues are experienced to be sensitive (i.e. potentially upsetting (traumatic) or capable of causing strong or uncontrollable emotions that may render it difficult to resolve conflicts in a non-injurious manner) depends very much on the context. Context-relevant factors include classroom composition, histories of conflict within learning groups, levels of understanding and familiarity, the proximity of critical local or global events that have the potential to entice or polarise, etc.). We have to take the decision whether or not to use trigger warnings or whether to formalise communicative procedures thoughtfully depending on the respective situation.

7. Discussing non-normative genders and sexualities may render certain people vulnerable of abuse and epistemic violence in the classroom

Inviting classroom discussions on non-normative genders and sexualities may render certain students vulnerable to possible abuse of the exertion of some form of epistemic violence in the classroom. This may involve conscious acts of hostility (e.g. the defamation of certain genders and groups) or the teasing/bullying of particular students. Injurious behaviour may not always be intentional, as in the case of spontaneous utterances of disbelief, exoticising remarks or inappropriate questions hammered out in curiosity. While many LGBTQI students value the inclusion of LGBTQI subjects in the curriculum, they may not always experience such teaching sessions as pleasant. It is important to secure a classroom atmosphere...
that feels safe and in which all students can express themselves freely, but also to keep things private to themselves. ‘Overdisclosure’ of personal information may cause problems for certain students as well. We also have to be aware that we never know exactly how many students with non-normative gender or sexual identities are in our classroom. Many intersex, trans* or LGBTQ students may not be out to their peers or their teachers. Many may go through a period of questioning or struggling with their gender and sexual identities or may be in a period of transitioning, re-orientation or coming out. It is more likely for a conversation to take an ‘objectifying turn’, if there is a shared assumption that the ‘kind of people’ discussed are not in the room. This is why it is good to remind ourselves of the diversity of the student body and the (potential) diversity of each classroom setting.

8. Whether to refer to one’s own gender and sexual identity is a tricky question in gender and sexuality teaching

The question of self-disclosure in gender and sexuality teaching is a tricky issue, in particular for those of us who inhabit non-normative gender or sexual identities. Heterosexual and cisgendered teachers may disclose more unconsciously through little stories on their families or the use of gendered terminology. LGBTQI staff will of course also have to consider the potential risk of exposing themselves to workplace discrimination. Yet here I am more concerned with considering the potential merits of ‘being out’ in the classroom. Many students seem to appreciate the readiness of teachers to share personal stories of their lives, which many seem to take as an indicator of trust. It may therefore contribute to a comfortable and open atmosphere in the classroom. Many students may be speculating regarding the sexual identities of their teaching staff (if they do not know already) and may crave to know. Many situations are conceivable, in which it would be odd, create artificial barriers and result in the loss of important learning opportunities, if teachers would not take the opportunity to relate their own experience to a discussion. Some of the literature on the subject alludes to the positive effects of LGBTQI role models within education settings. The assumption is that students may identify with such role models and read the existence of ‘out’ LGBTQI teachings staff as an indicator that their university is a welcoming and ultimately not so hostile space. I would like to argue that what we need an inclusive educational environment that takes diversity issues seriously, rather than individual role models. We also have to take into account the possibility that some LGBTQI students may not feel empowered, but maybe even awkward or intimidated in the presence of ‘out’ LGBTQI teachers. The value of selfdisclosure in teaching gender and sexuality is difficult to determine ‘in general’ and decisions about self-disclosure (‘coming out’ or the telling of personal experience stories) may require or benefit from a ‘situational’ analysis (the moment, the context, the institutional setting, and one’s own position with regard to all of these).

9. As teachers concerned with an inclusive educational practice we need to deepen our understanding of heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, sexism and transphobia

Research suggests that many LGBTQI students have suffered harassment during their time at schools and at colleges (Beemyn & Rankin 2011; Ellis 2009; Valentine et al., 2009; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2010; National Union of Students, 2014). Many LGBTQI students seem to perceive universities to be a relatively safe and welcoming setting. However, the level of homophobia, lesbophobia, biphobia and transphobia at higher education institution in the UK is shocking. According to one study, 46 per cent of LGB students interviewed have received homophobic comments from other students and 8.9 per cent also from staff.
Homophobic discrimination and bullying have played a part in the educational experience of 20 per cent of LGB students. 28.5 per cent of transgender students have been taking time out from studying, which is a figure that is much higher than the national average (Gunn, 2010, see National Union of Students, 2014). To understand our students and to make sure that we are not part of the problem we need to work towards deepening our understanding of heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, sexism and transphobia. Multiple surveys involving LGBTQI students in UK Higher Education suggest the need for professional training on LGBTQI gender and sexuality issues across the university and college sector.

10. Institutional culture shapes the teaching environment. The university management and colleagues need to be prepared to step in to support staff and students who are attacked on the grounds of their gender or sexualities or their teaching/learning on gender and sexuality-related topics

Teaching gender and sexuality involves particular challenges. Some of these challenges are bound up with the construction of non-normative genders and sexualities – or of the open and critical discussion of gender and sexuality as such – as a social problem. This situation renders the teaching of gender and sexuality precarious within wider educational practice. Moreover, certain groups of students – and some members of staff (depending on their identities) may experience a stronger vulnerability than others in the context of gender and sexuality teaching. A safe teaching environment is only possible, if management and staff work towards a culture of inclusiveness. This necessarily implies the readiness to act in support of students (and staff) who might find themselves at the receiving end of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic attacks. This is at least what they would be expected to do within the framework of the law, since the single Equality Act (2010) requires universities (as public institutions) to counter discrimination, promote and advocate equality of opportunity and to foster good inter-group relations.

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References:
On the measurement of sexual orientation
Gu Li

Whereas the concept of sexual orientation is no stranger to lay people, its measurement poses challenges to researchers. Self-report measures can be readily incorporated into large-scale surveys but is subject to self-report bias. Automatic measures may reduce self-report bias yet the findings are dependent on sample representativeness. Measures that overcome these shortcomings may bring fresh insight into studies of sexual orientation.

As with every other psychological construct, the measurement of sexual orientation is intertwined with its conceptualisation. How sexual orientation is defined will influence the means to study it and, conversely, how sexual orientation is studied will inform our understanding of the concept. In the dark and gloomy days when homosexuality was listed as a sociopathic personality disturbance in the Diagnostic and Statistical Handbook of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1952), psychiatrists ticked symptoms on a checklist to diagnose whether a patient’s sexual orientation was normal (heterosexuality) or abnormal (homosexuality). With the ground-breaking invention of the Kinsey scale (Kinsey et al., 1948; 1953), which sees sexual orientation as a spectrum rather than two opposing categories, American society was shocked that apart from exclusive heterosexuals and homosexuals at either end of the scale, there were many individuals who scored in-between.

Contemporary scholars view sexual orientation as a multidimensional construct, comprising sexual/romantic attraction, sexual behaviour, and sexual identity, which are often self-reported in surveys (Savin-Williams, 2006). With the application of automatic measures such as penile plethysmography, vaginal photoplethysmography, pupil dilation measure, functional magnetic resonance imaging, and implicit association tests, among others, new components of sexual orientation have been introduced. Each of these approaches has unique advantages and disadvantages, and perhaps measures that combine their advantages could further our knowledge of sexual orientation.

Self-report measures
The most popular measures of sexual orientation are multiple-choice questions, administered in surveys that either address topics specifically relevant to sexual minority people (e.g., the ‘Q & A Project’; D’Augelli et al., 2005) or have a broader scope (e.g., the England Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey; Hayes et al., 2012). While surveys targeting sexual minority people often enquire two or more aspects of sexual orientation, those with a larger aim usually touch on one or two, along with thousands of questions that serve other purposes. The frequently asked dimensions of sexual orientation include sexual/romantic attraction (e.g., ‘Have you ever had a romantic attraction to a male? Have you ever had a romantic attraction to a female?’; Russell & Joyner, 2001), sexual behaviour (e.g., ‘Have your sexual partners been... 1 = only opposite sex to 4 = only same sex’; Hayes et al., 2012), and sexual identity (e.g., ‘Based on your experiences over your entire life, how would you describe your sexual orientation?’
The measurement of sexual orientation

0 = totally heterosexual to 6 = totally gay or lesbian’; D’Augelli et al., 2005).

The obvious advantage of self-report measures is economy. This is especially important when working with sexual minority individuals because as an underrepresented minority group they are not easy to reach. The common sources of recruitment in sexual-minority-focused studies include mailing lists and other online social networks for self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBT+) people, pride events, and LGBT+ communities (such as LGBT+ support centres and gay-straight alliance). However, many LGBT+ people contacted through these approaches may not be able to pay a lab visit often required for other measures of sexual orientation (see Automatic Measures). Surveys, either online or in a paper-and-pencil format, therefore provide a convenient alternative that can quickly reach a large number of sexual minorities.

Relatedly, self-report measures have the potential to reveal the diversity of human sexuality. This is because multiple-choice questions of sexual orientation can be readily incorporated in nationally representative studies (e.g., the US National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, also known as ‘Add Health’; Harris, 2013), thus reducing sampling bias resulted from recruitment in LGBT+ related institutions – many people with same-sex attraction or behaviour do not identify as LGBT+ or affiliate with LGBT+ communities. In contrast, large-scale nationally representative surveys are more likely to include sexual minorities who are not ‘conventionally gay’ and those who are not interested in LGBT+-specific studies (Savin-Williams, 2005).

The major drawback of self-report measures is self-report bias. Such bias may come in two ways. First, some mischievous heterosexual individuals may pretend to be non-heterosexual (Robinson-Cimpian, 2014), which may overestimate the prevalence of non-heterosexuality. It is possible, however, to detect these ‘jokesters.’ Robinson-Cimpian proposed that because these mischievous responders tended also to adopt a minority status on other measures, the more positive response a responder gave to such measures in which a positive response was unlikely, the more likely the responder was a joker. For example, self-identified non-heterosexuals who also report themselves to be deaf and blind and a gang and have more than 500 sexual partners and have ten children are very likely to have adopted a low-frequency response on the sexual-orientation measure for ‘fun.’ Therefore, researchers can screen rare-positive items in the same survey that are in principle unrelated or negatively related to a minority sexual orientation status, and identify mischievous participants who may have misreported their heterosexual orientation.

The second source of bias results from non-heterosexual respondents identifying as heterosexual, possibly due to stigma associated with non-heterosexuality (Herek & Garnets, 2007). This overestimation of the prevalence of non-heterosexuality may be controlled for if internalised homophobia and biphobia are also measured in the survey.

Automatic measures

As suggested by the name, automatic measures of sexual orientation do not rely on deliberate cognitive processes; therefore, they are less subjective to self-report bias. There are two general types of automatic measures. The first type records participants’ physiological arousal to erotic stimuli presented in a laboratory setting. The stimuli commonly used include pictures, audio, or video clips featuring autoerotic behaviour or partnered male-male or female-female sexual activities (reviewed in Bailey, 2009). Differences in the physiological responses to the stimuli of the preferred sex versus non-preferred sex presumably reveal a participant’s sexual orientation. Materials comprising sexual activities between a male and a female are
not chosen because both heterosexual and non-heterosexual audience may find them arousing, simply by shifting attention to the actor of the preferred sex (e.g., Chivers et al., 2004).

Men’s genital arousal to the stimuli is measured by penile plethysmography, which gauges changes in the circumference or the volume of a penis during erection. In contrast, women’s genital arousal is measured by vaginal photoplethysmography, which gauges changes in the vaginal blood volume and the vaginal pulse amplitude caused by vasocongestion of the vagina (Bailey, 2009). These genital arousal measures have high face validity but also carry limitations (Rieger & Savin-Williams, 2012). For example, many people opt not to participate due to the invasiveness of the technique. In addition, it is difficult to directly compare genital arousal between the sexes because different measures are used.

In order to account for the limitations of genital arousal measures, some less invasive and more sex-equivalent physiological measures have been developed. Pupil dilation (to visual stimuli) has been established as a valid indirect measure of sexual arousal (Rieger & Savin-Williams, 2012; Rieger et al., 2015) – the larger the increase in the pupil diameter, the more aroused is the participant. Further, functional magnetic resonance imaging offers a multidimensional approach that examines parallel excitatory and inhibitory processes in perceiving sexual stimuli (Safron et al., 2007).

The second type of automatic measures stems from implicit social cognition theories. The rationale varies from task to task, but the general principle is that people’s reaction time differs as a function of stimuli, due to changes in cognitive load. For example, the implicit association test of sexual preference (e.g., Snowden et al., 2008; Snowden & Gray, 2013) estimates the relative strength of associations between competing concepts (e.g., male versus female) and evaluations (e.g., sexually attractive versus sexually unattractive). Participants would presumably associate pictures of the preferred sex with adjectives describing sexual attractiveness faster than with adjectives describing sexual unattractiveness because the former association may be more automatic and occupy less cognitive load. Viewing time tasks require participants to evaluate the sexual attractiveness of pictures of male and female models while unobtrusively recording their response latencies (e.g., Lippa, 2012); participants would presumably spend a longer time looking at models of their preferred sex. Finally, the choice reaction time tasks assess the influence of a priming stimulus (e.g., a male or female model) on the cognitive processing of a task irrelevant to sexuality (e.g., finding a dot on the screen; Rönspies et al., 2015); participants primed with a stimulus of their preferred sex would presumably react slower in subsequent cognitive tasks due to occupied cognitive load.

Compared to self-report measures, automatic measures of sexual orientation are less susceptible to self-report bias (Savin-Williams, 2006). However, this does not completely free automatic measures from thoughtful deception. For example, participants can intentionally suppress their sexual arousal by diverting attention or taking deep breaths, among others, thus introducing error to physiological measures (Rieger & Savin-Williams, 2012). Similarly, participants may control reaction time in latency-based tasks. Nevertheless, these deceptive attempts may be less effective than in self-report measures, because each automatic task has multiple trials.

The major limitation of automatic measures lies in the large-scale application in the general population, which is important considering the diversity of human sexuality (reviewed in Diamond et al., 2015). The generalisability of findings in studies utilising automatic measures of sexual orientation is therefore constrained by their sample; a non-representative sample may lead to inaccurate conclusions. Consider
The measurement of sexual orientation

Initially, bisexual arousal patterns were claimed to be non-existent because self-identified bisexual men, recruited via gay-themed magazines and an urban newspaper, demonstrated homosexual or heterosexual genital arousal patterns, rather than a bisexual one (Rieger et al., 2005). Years later, after using a different recruitment approach (from the internet advertisement lists targeting bisexual men) and applying more stringent recruitment criteria and excluding self-identified bisexual men who did not have sexual or romantic relationships with both sexes, the same lab observed a bisexual genital arousal pattern (Rosenthal et al., 2011). Therefore, when using automatic measures researchers should be especially careful about the representativeness of the sample.

Looking ahead

Research on the nature and origins of sexual orientation is heavily influenced by how sexual orientation is operationally defined and measured. To accurately measure sexual orientation, researchers are faced with two critical challenges: to reduce self-report bias and to incorporate the measures into large-scale population-based representative surveys.

One promising solution could be to adapt implicit automatic measures into an online version. Rönspies et al. (2015) reported that when administered online, the implicit relational assessment procedure (a variation of the implicit association test) and the viewing time task distinguished gay men from heterosexual men nearly perfectly. The hit rate observed in this online study was comparable to, if not better than, those reported in lab-based studies (e.g., Snowden et al., 2008; Snowden & Gray, 2013). However, it remains unknown how the online measures work with bisexual men or women of any sexual orientation.

An alternative approach could be to use big data. Increasingly, digital devices and services have invaded people’s daily life. The digital traces someone leaves often encipher the person’s private information, including sexual orientation. For example, Facebook likes can help distinguish gay men from heterosexual men in 88 per cent of cases and lesbian women from heterosexual women in 75 per cent of cases (Kosinski et al., 2013). In addition, Facebook friendship associations can also be used to predict people’s sexual orientation (Jernigan & Mistree, 2009). Other potential data include Facebook and Twitter messages, as these have been linked to other private traits and attitudes (Barberá et al., 2015; Park et al., 2015), and perhaps Instagram posts and YouTube playlists. Admittedly, messages, posts, and likes on the social media are susceptible to impression management – people may intentionally disclose or hide their sexual orientation by sharing or not sharing certain information. But other digital footprints such as text messages and website browsing history may be of use, which are more spontaneous than those posted on social networks.

When sexual orientation can be measured free of self-report bias and in a large representative sample, researchers would be better equipped to detect the prevalence and the complexity of sexual orientation (Diamond et al., 2015; Savin-Williams, 2006). It would be exciting to see what surprises these new measures will bring us, just as when the Kinsey scale (Kinsey et al., 1948, 1953) was introduced.

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References


Discussion paper:

Inclusive Masculinity Theory: Review and interview with the founder
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Inclusive masculinity theory (IMT) is a theoretical framework developed by Professor Eric Anderson to understand the cause and implications of liberalising attitudes on males gendered expression. Focal to inclusive masculinity theory is the concept of homohysteria – a multifaceted phenomena that describes a society where homophobia regulates men toward hypermasculinity. In this article, I explain the history behind the construction of masculinities in the US from the late 19th century in periods of homoerasure, high cultural homohysteria, and declining homohysteria. Then, I explain the way by which declining homohysteria is leading to increased emotionality, physical tactility, and acceptance of bisexuality, among straight men in several western contexts. Finally, I interview Professor Anderson about his theory, criticisms of it, and future directions for research.

Erasure, homohysteria, and the rise of inclusivity

Following the recent social trend in the US of decreasing homophobia (Keleher & Smith, 2012), in tandem with the widening of socially acceptable gendered behaviours among heterosexual men (Coad, 2008), there became a need for a theoretical framework to explain and document the relationships between masculinities, homophobia, and gendered behaviours in a historically situated and contextually nuanced manner. Inclusive masculinity theory emerged to fill the void. The theory conceptualises changes that occur concerning masculinities within Anglo-American societies in three periods: moments of high cultural homohysteria, diminishing cultural homohysteria, and diminished homohysteria (Anderson 2009). According to Anderson (2009), homohysteria describes the fear of being homosexualised within a culture and is met by three social conditions: 1) mass awareness that homosexuality exists as an established sexual orientation within a significant portion of that culture’s population; 2) significant disapproval of homosexuality and the femininity associated with it; and 3) compulsory heterosexuality, or the need to visibly align their identities with heterosexuality to avoid homosexual suspicion.

Before high cultural homohysteria came to define the social landscape of the US (beginning from the late 1960s until the 1990s), the US exemplified a culture of erasure; one in which sexual minorities concealed their identity and sexual desires from severe homophobia, and social and legal oppression (Johnson, 2004). While the medicalisation of same-sex behaviours in the late 19th century established homosexuality as an invariable and persistent sexual orientation (Greenberg, 1988), men’s gendered behaviours were generally not regulated by homophobia (Ibson 2002). This is because the general perception in society was that homosexuality could only exist in gender atypical men outside of one’s social network.

Thus, it was unlikely that how a person acted would result in them being perceived as gay (Anderson, 2009). These phenomena have been evidenced by multiple scholars, notably Ibson’s (2002) photographic anal-
ysis of men hugging and cuddling in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, all the while existing in an otherwise homophobic culture. However, Ibson (2002), Connell (1995) and others (Pronger, 1990) all show a closing down of these behaviours by the 1980s, which coincides with the time that masculinities scholarship began to appear (Kimmel, 1994).

The waffling of attitudes and masculinity in the 20th century can partially be explained by challenges to social conservatism, with an increase in liberal attitudes towards sex and homosexuality in the 1960s and 1970s (Spencer, 1995), and political activism that promoted a ‘politics of sameness’ and gender atypicality to oppose heterosexual privilege (Shepard, 2009).

However, homohysteria emerged in the 1980s from three factors (Anderson, 2009). First, the HIV/AIDS crisis made clear the notion that homosexuality existed in large numbers (Shilts, 1987), that it could be present in men who previously seemed to embody heterosexuality and masculinity (McCormack & Anderson, 2014), and that homosexuals worked and lived ubiquitously among heterosexuals in every social institution (Anderson, 2009). As homosexual practices fell deeply into the scrutiny of the clinical gaze, and researchers sought to find a cause for the disease, homosexuality again became highly pathologised (Weeks, 1991). Gay men became subjected to repulsion and the fear of contagion (Lupton, 1994), and society found an epidemiological reason to condemn and ‘prevent’ homosexuality (Anderson, 2009).

Stereotypes of gay men and AIDS victims as effeminate, thin, and weak and social anxiety about one’s perceived serostatus drove men of all sexual orientations to strive for stoic masculinity and hypermuscularity, according to Anderson (2009). Second, the revival of Christian fundamentalist ideals in the US (even while church attendance declined) (Chaves, 1989) and its proliferation into the social and political arena brought upon an increasingly conservative moral outlook in which people viewed homosexuality as a sin and threat to the nuclear family (Lotfus, 2001). Finally, conservative politicians drew upon those fears of homosexuality and the general moral panic to advocate for supposed traditional family values and win elections (Lugg, 1998; McCormack & Anderson, 2014; Sherkat, et al., 2011).

Since these times, there has been a rapid expansion in the range of accepted gendered behaviours back toward the way there were in the 70s, and increasingly so (Anderson, 2009).

These gendered forms of expression are made available to men within a new paradigm – one of significantly decreased homophobia, and more pertinently to Anderson’s theory, decreased homohysteria.

Changes in heteromasculine behaviour
In the current period of diminished homohysteria in the US and Britain (and likely other Western contexts) Anderson argues that homophobia loses its power to regulate gendered behaviours, and that this leads to various sociopositive traits among men who display forms of inclusive masculinity. Anderson’s research (2008b, 2012) has documented a number of characteristics to the homosocial behaviour of these mostly White, middle class heterosexual males. First, heterosexual men in settings of inclusivity are not afraid to associate with their homosexual peers of the same-sex, and have been documented to maintain friendships with them (Stotzer, 2009). Second, diminished homohysteria has allowed heterosexual males to embrace artefacts once stigmatised as feminine (and thus, coded as homosexual). Next, Anderson describes the rise of increased emotional intimacy (Anderson, 2009; Baker & Hotek 2011; Luttrell, 2012), including among ethnic minorities. Fourth, inclusive men have been shown to reject violence as an effective solution to solving problems (Anderson, 2011c). Fifth, the one-time rule of homosexuality – defined by
Anderson (2008a) as a prohibition against even one homosexual act for fear of being homosexualised – was found to have lost traction among youth, evidenced by the heterosexual legitimacy afforded to males who had engaged in samegender sexual acts and identified as ‘mostly heterosexual’ or ‘heterosexual’ (Anderson, 2008a, b; Savin-Williams and Vrangalova 2013). Finally, scholars studying young men show increased physical intimacy between adolescent heterosexual men (Anderson 2014; Barrett, 2013). Hence, these changes are positive for the development of less toxic forms of masculinility. Historical contextualisation in mind, I interviewed Professor Anderson about his theory, its uptake, criticisms and future.

Interview with Sociologist Professor Eric Anderson at the University of Winchester

Luis: Inclusive Masculinity Theorists have conducted research in the UK and the US. Can those results sufficiently generalise changes to adolescents across these two countries?

Eric: The decrease in cultural homophobia is absolutely a phenomena of the last few decades affecting all geographical areas in these countries. Declining homophobia is however an uneven social process, resulting in varied degrees of progress; but ample quantitative work shows homophobia has rapidly declined across all age cohorts, especially among under 30s.

Generalisability of qualitative data is a valid concern; not all change necessarily leads to sustained trends. However, my 40 research projects, concurrent with dozens more: results on adolescents from the 80s and 90s are no longer valid. This corpus makes IMT powerful for explaining broader social trends.

Luis: Do you think IMT has broader utility than just in the US and UK?

Eric: Yes. I’ve been conducting work in Tunisia, where homohysteria is on the rise, because Tunisians are now aware that gay men exist – yet still stigmatised. Recall that IMT does not require progress; it’s a heuristic tool to understand shifts in the performance of masculinity based on two conditions: whether a locale believes homosexuality exists among peers and attitudes toward gay men. While many countries are moving into inclusivity, others are moving from homohysteria into homohysteria.

Luis: What role do you believe globalisation has for decreasing homohysteria?

Eric: Globalisation has brought a particular, positive, perspective on what it means to be gay from Hollywood. Hollywood stereotypes can be critiqued but they have likely been useful in dismantling homophobia outside the US. This primes a culture for inclusivity, and thus inclusive masculinities.

Luis: Does IMT account for intersectionality?

Eric: Absolutely, and for a perfect example of this I’d implore you to read my recently published book on bisexuality with Mark McCormack. Interestingly, however, intersectionality with other social variables has been used to argue against the broader trend of more inclusive masculinities, by a few. These scholars find damaging masculinities for one group and then they generalise those findings to the whole of society. Sadly, sociologists rarely classify overt statements of society being ‘homophobic’ as overgeneralising; but they are quick to argue that it is overgeneralising if you state that society is accepting of homosexuality. Intersectionality is important, and it highlights complexity. It brings to the fore the vital importance of local context and specific cultural dynamics, and is a welcome addition to the men and masculinities literature. It fits in very well with my theory.

Luis: What are the next steps for Masculinities Research?

Eric: Absolutely, and for a perfect example of this I’d implore you to read my recently published book on bisexuality with Mark McCormack. Interestingly, however, intersectionality with other social variables has been used to argue against the broader trend of more inclusive masculinities, by a few. These scholars find damaging masculinities for one group and then they generalise those findings to the whole of society. Sadly, sociologists rarely classify overt statements of society being ‘homophobic’ as overgeneralising; but they are quick to argue that it is overgeneralising if you state that society is accepting of homosexuality. Intersectionality is important, and it highlights complexity. It brings to the fore the vital importance of local context and specific cultural dynamics, and is a welcome addition to the men and masculinities literature. It fits in very well with my theory.
Hegemonic masculinity’ impacted upon patriarchy. Almost all of the masculinities literature has been conducted by feminist scholars with the plight of women at the centre of their attention. This is, of course, hugely important work. However, we are at a junction now where we are realising that men’s lives are also important; and studying the positive impacts of declining homohysteria on men is thus of social significance. We are seeing phenomenal change, absolutely tremendous progress toward producing young men that are kinder, more inclusive, and appreciative of diversity: of many sorts. I think that this is the direction the field is traveling, and will continue to do so.

I also believe that the centrality of the internet is still undertheorised in much masculinities research, as are the effects of deindustrialisation and shifting patterns of work and leisure. Research that examines the softening of masculinity and how this intersects with women’s attitudes about men, men’s attitudes about women, sexual relationships, domestic violence, and other gender related issues will be important going forward.

Yes, there has been some discussion lately about postmasculinities. I know that a lot of scholars are moving toward using your theory instead of hegemonic masculinity (e.g. Adams, 2011; Channon & Matthews 2015; Gottzen & Kremer-Sedlik 2012; Roberts, 2013; Scoats, 2015) and this has some upset because your theory is not exclusively about how masculinities oppress women. I saw that feminist graduate student Rachel O’Neill (2014) critiqued inclusive masculinity theory for not being about women, to which Borkowska (2016) recently responded. What are your thoughts on this debate?

I state, repeatedly in my work, that while inclusive masculinities are likely to have a positive impact on the way men view and treat women, patriarchy still persists. I think that masculinity scholars have a very narrow understanding of patriarchy. Whatever patriarchy is, it is a highly complex milieu of variables, inclusive of biology, that drives men’s privilege. No masculinities research has empirically shown how a hegemonic form of masculinity drives the patriarchal dividend. I think this perspective on patriarchy has been proven wrong. More so, too many scholars have focused solely on the costs to women under a patriarchal system. It is important to remember that any time someone rules, there is also a cost to the ruler. Gender inequalities are not a one way street in which men benefit all the time and women lose out. Men suffer under patriarchy too. We, as masculinity scholars, should be free to research and write about this without being stigmatised. I hope that my research helps bridge this gap.

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Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, and people questioning their sexual or gender identity (LGBTQ+) community is vastly under researched in comparison to within heterosexual relationships. Prevalence rates have varied but it is becoming clear within the literature that this is a significant social issue. This paper will first discuss the prevalence of IPV within the LGBTQ+ community before moving on to consider the health risks of IPV. It is essential to consider the specific needs of those within this community to be able to understand and tailor support to reduce this issue.

Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and the increased health risks in the LGBTQ+ community

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a serious societal problem, and there is a significant body of literature that has explored both the etiology and consequences of it (e.g. Archer, 2000). Acts of IPV can be defined as physical, sexual, psychological, verbal or emotional harm perpetrated by a current or former partner or spouse; these behaviours can also include controlling behaviour such as coercive control (Centres for Disease Control, n.d.). In terms of the forms of partner violence there is no ‘typical’ form of abuse even though some forms of abuse may be seen more frequently than others. Using IPV to describe these forms of abuse instead of the term domestic violence, gives a wider range of partner relationships within the spectrum and therefore includes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning and Other relationship (LGBTQ+; Stanley et al., 2006). Researchers argue that the term domestic violence has been associated with marital violence and that it was exclusively a heterosexual issue, and it applies to a broader range of family violence such as violence from a child against their parent, or parent against their child.

Reported prevalence rates for IPV within an LGBTQ+ sample in the US are at around 25 per cent, with 1 in 10 individuals reporting acts of physical violence; research has estimated prevalence ranging from 25 per cent to 50 per cent in gay and lesbian relationships (Carvalho et al., 2011). A UK-based IPV charity known as SafeLives, found that within their LGBTQ+ sample 69 per cent of participants had experienced some form of IPV. Some suggest that maladaptive behaviours of partners in relationships is becoming more widespread within those relationships; this can be supported with prevalence rates of bidirectional violence being at an estimated 50 per cent (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2012).

Physical violence has been found to be 2.5 times higher in transgender individuals than in the LGB cis-gender\(^1\) individuals (Whitton et al., 2016). Research suggests that 61 per cent of the transgender youth

\(^1\) Relating to a person whose self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex.
have experienced sexual IPV victimisation (Zweig et al., 2013). Transgender men and women are thought to be at a higher risk for physical IPV and psychological IPV than cis-gender individuals; however, transgender women are at a higher risk of physical IPV in comparison to transgender males (Pitts et al., 2006).

As within violent heterosexual relationships, jealousy, dependency and power imbalances can also be related to manipulative behaviours within LGBTQ+ relationships. Many aspects of IPV within this community can contain different power dynamics between partners; this was particularly common within the research of the 1980s and 1990s. Some LGBTQ+ individuals who had ‘come out’ were ostracised from their family, lost their employment and also friendships were terminated. Some were thrown out of their homes and would move in with their partners; in a violent relationship this automatically caused an imbalance of power within the relationship, the owner of the home holding the power over their partner in order to exert control. With the fear of homelessness, many victims of IPV would not leave their partner despite this abuse. This was also true of individuals losing their employment; this power imbalance comes from their partner having financial power over their partner and using this as a means of control (Renzetti, 1992).

LGBTQ+ IPV has been found to cause serious negative health and social consequences. Health risks, including mental health issues, are already a significant problem for the LGBTQ+ community, many have experienced prior physical or psychological trauma; these are often related to minority stressors and experiences such as internalised homophobia, societal homophobia, internalised transphobia, societal transphobia and discrimination (Whitton et al., 2015). With the cyclical nature of these types of abuse in both society and within their intimate partner relationships, this increases the likelihood of mental illness developing within this population. Previous research, has found that dating violence could increase the health risks of individuals (Stanley et al., 2006). Behaviours such as internalised homophobia, depression, suicidal ideation, self-injury, unsafe sexual encounters, isolation and drug and alcohol abuse are somewhat common amongst LGBTQ+ youths, and dating violence can increase the severity of these problems (Zwieg et al., 2013). The maladaptive behaviours that develop, such as self-injury and depression, can affect other areas of life such as school/work performance and truancy, and also negatively affect the relationships between family, friends and other peers (Whitton et al., 2015).

One such health risk that can affect both mental health and violence is internalised homophobia (IH) and internalised transphobia (IT), which can arise due to a person’s attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ population; these views can be shaped by family, friends, other peers and outlets such as the media. Due to the common misconception that being a heterosexual or cis-gendered is ‘normal’ and that being a part of the LGBTQ+ community is ‘not normal’, youths and adults often experience bullying, which can result in the individual developing their own form of internalised homophobia/transphobia and self-dislike (Carvalho et al., 2011). The negative view that having a LGBTQ+ identity is ‘bad’ or ‘not normal’ can increase the prevalence of issues such as depression and self-injury (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Igartua et al., 2009).

IH can affect individuals within a same-sex relationship through the transference of their own IH and this can create anger and conflict within the relationship. Due to IH and other minority stressors, violence can be used within a relationship when the individual with IH believes their partner to present themselves as ‘overly gay’ such as the stereotypical effeminate male or a female who presents herself as masculine (Carvalho et al., 2011).
Depression, anxiety, isolation and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are often associated with IPV within heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Glass et al. (2008) found women who experience IPV within their same-sex relationship are at risk of re-assault, increasing injuries, chronic health conditions, disabilities and death. This can also be applied to the males within a same-sex relationship. Depression, anxiety, isolation and PTSD can cause many other issues within LGBTQ+ relationships, the development of mental health issues can be linked to issues such as chronic health problems arising. For example, some individuals use substance abuse as a coping mechanism to escape their abuse or in response to the minority stressors that are apparent within their lives (Ard et al., 2008). Gay males report higher use of drugs such as ecstasy within their relationships than heterosexual males; some of the explanations for this are as coping mechanisms, but males also report that these drugs cause them to become more aggressive and therefore increases the violence within their relationships. Substance abuse can become cyclical in nature and this can have an overarching effect; repeatedly using substance abuse as a coping mechanism can increase the risk of alcoholism and drug addiction (Murray et al., 2006).

It can also be argued that being under the influence of drugs and alcohol, inhibitions are decreased and this can occasionally result in unsafe sexual encounters, sometimes with strangers. By doing this, it increases the risk of sexual health problems such as HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI). Significant links have been found between HIV status and IPV victimisation (Murray et al., 2006). For perpetrators, they can use their own HIV status to emotionally control their partners by making their partner experience guilt in leaving them. For some, research has found that as a means of control a partner will intentionally infect their partner in an attempt to stop them leaving the relationship. Victims with a HIV status can also be emotionally controlled by their partners as they use psychological forms of abuse in order to lower their victim’s self-worth and therefore lowers the chances of the relationship dissolving (Murray et al., 2006). Furthermore, high rates of sexual violence within the LGBTQ+ community are apparent, some believe they did not feel safe asking their partners to use safer sex methods. This supports the suggestion that victims of same-sex IPV may be at an increased risk for HIV and other STIs. A common misconception is that lesbians are less likely to be at risk of sexually transmitted infections, however Ard et al. (2008) found that there are elevated levels of risk of HIV/STI for women. This misconception can affect their health as they may not engage in STI preventions; this creates an increase of the health issues in lesbian women who are not aware of the risks.

It is apparent that IPV is just as prevalent within the LGBTQ+ community and that there are a number of health risks that this violence can create. Many of the LGBTQ+ community are already vulnerable to mental health issues due to their exposure to risk factors such as stereotyping, misconceptions and discrimination; if IPV is also present, the likelihood of mental health issues increases. Minority stressors negatively affect their lives as this can increase violence within relationships. This violence then goes on to negatively affect both the perpetrator as well as the victims, as both can use coping mechanisms such as drugs and alcohol. By consuming these substances, this lowers the inhibitions which can increase the risk of sexual violence and unsafe sexual encounters, creating a more significant health risk. With this in mind it becomes apparent that IPV needs to be addressed within the LGBTQ+ community in order to both reduce the prevalence, provide additional support and tackle growing concerns about the mental and physical health risks.
Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and the increased health risks in the LGBTQ+ community

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**Discussion paper:**

**The fairer sex – literally:**

**A brief review of sexual fluidity**

Charlotte Wesson

**Heterosexuality is, unfortunately, still portrayed as the ‘norm’ in many cultures. Though this is potentially detrimental to other groups, it also means that people may assume that heterosexual orientation is simple, straight-forward, and not necessarily in need of further research. However, this is not the case, particularly for heterosexual women, who experience a ‘fluid’ sexuality. This article presents a brief literature review of sexual fluidity, including proposed theories of this phenomenon, and whether heterosexual men also experience such fluidity.**

**N**early 70 years ago it was proposed by Kinsey et al. (1948) that sexuality is more of a continuum than categorical in nature, with an individual’s sexual interest being susceptible to considerable fluctuation over time. Though this was understood many years ago, heterosexuality is, unfortunately, still widely accepted as the ‘norm’ in many cultures. Consequently, it then may be presumed that heterosexual orientation is straightforward and non-complex compared to other sexualities, thus perhaps less deserving of continuing research.

However, it would seem that this is not the case, particularly for exclusively heterosexual women, who appear to experience a ‘malleable’ sexuality. This malleable sexuality is referred to predominantly as ‘sexual fluidity’ and is defined as the amount an individual’s sex drive can be moulded by social, situational and cultural pressures (Baumeister, 2000). This fluidity incorporates three ideas: non-exclusive attraction to either sex, possibility of change in attraction, and attraction directed towards the individual (Diamond, 2008). Thus, in short, an exclusively heterosexual woman may find herself attracted to men one year, and women the next year, however this does not make her ‘bisexual’, or indeed anything other than ‘exclusively heterosexual’.

**Theories of sexual fluidity**

But why is sexual fluidity something that happens in heterosexual women? One explanation, the ‘Exotic-becomes-Erotic’ theory, suggests that individuals may become erotically attracted to classes of individuals that they felt different from during childhood (Bem, 1998). Though female fluidity departs from the inherent assumption of this theory (that exotic becomes erotic), Bem (1998) states that this statement only applies to a ‘gender-polarising culture’. Women tend to develop in a less polarised culture than men, and thus engage in both sex-typical and – atypical behaviours, gaining more childhood friends of both sexes. This leads to women being less likely than men to feel different from both opposite- and same-sex peers, thus leading to an ‘erotic’ attraction to both (Bem, 1998).

A second explanation suggests that sexuality is based on two different types of sexual desire: proceptivity (the motivation to initiate sexual activity), and arousability (the capacity to become aroused to sexual stimuli) (Diamond, 2008). Proceptivity in women is linked to their reproductive cycle and is highest during ovulation, however arousability is independent of hormonal influence (Diamond, 2008). Thus, as proceptivity only affects women’s sexual desires for a few days
The fairer sex – literally: A brief review of sexual fluidity

a month, another factor (arousability) must be involved to contribute to the day-to-day sexual desires of women (Diamond, 2008). As this arousability is supposedly ‘gender-neutral’, then under certain conditions, heterosexual women should be able to experience same-sex desires (Diamond, 2008).

Finally, there have been evolutionary explanations for such fluidity. Firstly, the ‘Alloparenting Hypothesis’ (Kuhle & Radtke, 2013), which purports that sexual fluidity in heterosexual women is a result of adapting to the absence of the male figure in ancestral times. A fluid sexuality is said to have helped ancestral women establish resources and care for their offspring when paternal investment was not present, ensuring reproductive success, thus many heterosexual women are born with the capacity for fluidity (Kuhle & Radtke, 2013). More recently, an evolutionary theory that has offered to explain female sexual fluidity is based on the premise of polygyny (Kanazawa, 2016). It is suggested that, for the senior wife in a polygynous relationship, the acquiring of other wives lead to the husband’s resources being reallocated, which was not beneficial to the first-wife, leading to conflict (Kanazawa, 2016). Therefore, it is suggested that sexual relations between cowives may have evolved in order to reduce the conflict and tension felt in a polygynous marriage (Kanazawa, 2016). Thus, heterosexual women are evolutionarily designed to be sexually fluid, in order to both reproduce, but also strengthen bonds and reduce conflicts between cowives (Kanazawa, 2016).

What about men?
Heterosexual men do not seem to experience the same sort of mouldable sexuality as heterosexual women. In fact, they appear to have a sexual interest that is much more ‘either-or’ in nature. They seem to be either attracted to men, or to women, but rarely to both, whether simultaneous or at different points in their lives. Bisexuality in men, though not the same as sexual fluidity, has been suggested as a transitional life period (by some evidence), indicative of some malleability (Rosario et al., 2006). Heterosexual men are said to be more likely to allow a single experience to lead them to an exclusively homosexual identification, suggesting that it may be natural for men to assume a ‘one or the other’ position with regards to their sexuality (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1977).

But, what makes men like this? Unfortunately, men’s seemingly rigid sexual interest seems to be less researched than women’s fluidity. Nevertheless, it was suggested that the ‘either-or’ nature of men’s sexual orientation may result from socialisation pressures that are greater for boys than girls (Lippa, 2005). Effeminate behaviour in boys is tolerated less than ‘boyish’ behaviour in girls, thus perhaps leading to the suppression of same-sex attraction in heterosexual males (Lippa, 2005). This is supported by Bem’s (1998) aforementioned theory of sexual fluidity, whereby males grow up in a gender-polarised culture. This means that they either have male friends, or female friends, but rarely both, leading to either a heterosexual- or homosexual-orientation, respectively. Despite the view that men’s sexual interest is ‘either-or’ in nature, some evidence suggests that the prevalence of male fluidity, though considerably lower than for females, does exist, with one in 20 men shifting their sexual orientation identity over a six-year period (Savin-Williams et al., 2012). However, this is still something that evidently needs further research.

So, why is this important?
Some of the main questions underpinning any psychological research are why it is being conducted and how does it apply to the real world? Sexual interest research is undoubtedly important; however, it may not be clear exactly why to everyone. Sexuality is something that mostly everyone experiences, at some point or another in their lives, whether that is having a stable one, a changing one,
or an absent one. Sexual orientation and identity can empower some individuals, but can also cause much distress to others. For instance, heterosexual women who realise that they are aroused by the same-sex may experience some distress, however Chivers et al. (2004) said that these women should not question their sexual identity. Thus, it should be evident that researching sexualities is inherently important, if for no other reason than for an individual’s psychological and emotional wellbeing. The more sex interest, orientation and identity are researched, the more that can be discovered, and thus the more people will, hopefully, feel free and open to express themselves. This research should most definitely extend to understanding sexual interest as a continuum, such as looking into whether heterosexual males experience any fluidity akin to heterosexual females.

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References

Discussion paper:
Humans don't fit in boxes: Reconfiguring female (a)sexualities for the 21st century
Aoife Sadlier

This paper seeks to reconfigure female (a)sexualities, beyond the current definition of asexuality as a ‘lack’ of sexual attraction, drawing on empirical work with five women, who experienced sexual fluidity in their trajectories. The paper has two parts. The first explores the constraining nature of sexual orientation labels. I draw on Diamond’s (2009) work on female sexual fluidity and the accounts of two queer/asexual-identified women, arguing that female (a)sexualities cannot be fitted neatly into a box. The second examines the accounts of three other women, who asserted that there is a need for a new term to hold a broader range of female subjectivities. I draw on Braidotti’s (2006) theory of nomadic subjectivity to work towards a conception, which goes beyond the commodification of female desire under capitalism. Ultimately, the aim is to begin thinking beyond labels, which are themselves products of patriarchy and capitalism, to create a more ethical society for all.

Introduction

In the 21st century, asexuality has become synonymous with sexual orientation, being described by psychologists and the asexual community as a ‘lack’ of sexual attraction (Bogaert, 2004; AVEN, 2016). This definition is problematic, as it erodes individual idiosyncrasies; assumes that everybody is sexual and that sexuality is immutable; and fails to acknowledge that labels are products of patriarchy and capitalism. At this juncture, a study of female (a)sexualities is long overdue. Myra T. Johnson’s (1977) chapter was perhaps the only offering on the subject. She highlighted the dangers of reducing asexual-identified women to symbols of spiritual devotion or political consciousness at the absence of examining their lived realities. Johnson’s work still resonates. As Gill and Scharff (2011) assert, with the rise of a postfeminist sensibility whereby women are represented as desiring their own sexual objectification, the possibility of new female subjectivities is being limited for all women and the narratives of asexual-identified women are at danger of being lost. Therefore, a study of female (a)sexualities is particularly relevant to the 21st century. Finally, this paper focuses on women, because as Young (2005 [1980]) demonstrated, female bodily agency is constrained within heteronormative spaces in the Western world. Although heteronormative culture is undoubtedly limiting for men, its effects are not as marked as for women, due to deeply ingrained patriarchal structures.

This paper is divided into two sections and draws on empirical work from life history interviews with various women, which I conducted as part of my PhD research. In the first section, I will highlight the

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1 Throughout this paper, I draw on the word (a) sexualities, rather than ‘asexuality’ or ‘asexualities.’ The bracketing of the (a) seeks to destabilise asexuality as a categorical orientation that implies a ‘lack’ of sexual attraction and highlight that one may move in and out of asexuality throughout one’s life.
constraining nature of ‘the box’ as a symbol for sexual orientation, drawing on Diamond’s (2009) theory of female sexual fluidity and the accounts of two queer/asexual-identified women I spoke to. In the second, I will highlight the need for a new term to hold a broader range of female subjectivities, beyond genital sexuality, which I will explore through Braidotti’s (2006) concept of nomadic subjectivity and the accounts of three other women.

I – Humans don’t fit in boxes

The yearning for rigidity is in us all. It is part of our human condition to long for hard lines and clear concepts. When we have them we have either to face the fact that some realities elude them, or else blind ourselves to the inadequacy of the concepts (Douglas, 1966, p.200).

As Douglas’s quote highlights, there is a sense of comfort in being able to define oneself neatly as a point on a line; to fit human subjectivity into a box. Yet, in reality, there are a wide variety of human subjectivities, which quite simply cannot be fitted into boxed confines. Thus, the image of the line and its cumulative effect in the box are undoubtedly constraining. They are abstract notions that have a real impact. Female (a)sexualities have always been fitted into the boxed confines of the male gaze (Przybylo, 2011). Yet, as I will argue in the following sections, female (a)sexualities, when unfettered by patriarchal constraints, go far beyond this binary.

In her longitudinal study of female sexual fluidity, the developmental psychologist, Lisa Diamond, highlights the ‘situation-dependent flexibility in women’s sexual responsiveness’ (Diamond, 2009, p.3). Furthermore, she asserts that fixed sexual orientation is a Western concept, and that sexuality should rather be viewed as context-dependent and culture-bound. Diamond’s work is valuable on a number of counts. Firstly, it acknowledges that women’s sexual identity may change over time. Secondly, it allows for a sense of doubt and transformation within the process. Thirdly, it prizes non-exclusivity, as the dyad is not necessarily accepted as its root. Fourthly, she critiques the psychoanalytic viewpoint, which assumes that early experiences determine one’s sexuality in later life. Fifthly, she provides an insightful discussion of proceptivity (desire fuelled by hormones) and arousability (desire influenced by environmental triggers and cues). These facets exist in different proportions in various women, thus shaping the ever-shifting direction of female desire. Finally, she acknowledges the powerful role of female relational ties.

I would however critique Diamond on one key point: her erasure of the possibility of an asexual identity. Various women she spoke to stated how they only became sexually attracted to someone after building a strong emotional bond, and that they had no label for this. Yet, this description captures perfectly the tenets of demisexuality, a branch of asexuality. Diamond also mentions person-specific attraction, which she hypothesises could be viewed as an independent sexual orientation. Yet, she fails to engage in a discussion of asexual spectrum sexualities, which could have provoked a much more nuanced perspective. After that she could have dispensed with labels entirely. This may seem counterintuitive, for my whole ambition in this paper is to challenge the fixity of identity categories. Yet, I hate the erasure of asexuality as a possible subject position.

Nevertheless, Diamond’s most persuasive work exists in her interviews with women who have decided to abandon labels. Here, the confining image of the ‘box’ surfaced.

I hate boxes. Hate them, hate them. And I hate this whole dichotomy paradigm that our society tends to revolve around. It’s black, it’s white, it’s male, it’s female, it’s straight, it’s gay, whatever. None of those fits (participant, aged 24 – Diamond, 2009, p.80).
Humans don’t fit in boxes: Reconfiguring female (a)sexualities for the 21st century

In my life history interviews, the box also emerged in the accounts of two queer/sexual-identified women, when they discussed the constraining nature of heteronormative structures. Anna (26) and Titania (20) highlighted the issue of translation surrounding labels, and the societal pressure to adopt one.

Anna: I always find sexuality a really really difficult one ’cause I think it’s this incredibly fluid thing that’s really different for everybody and that you might have the same label as somebody but it doesn’t actually mean the same thing as somebody else.

Yet, whilst both women seek to go beyond labels in relation to their (a)sexualities, heteronormative structures make them feel boxed in, as they are so deeply ingrained in their upbringing. Titania admitted that:

Titania: I find it really hard to think outside of family norms… that little four-person box…

Similarly, Anna, when asked when she is going to get married and have children, is forced to draw on the constraining box:

Anna: But I can’t tick that box…

Yet, when the box is no longer held as a referent, multiple possibilities exist for alternative configurations of female (a)sexualities. This approach is echoed in Anna’s words:

Anna: They say, ‘I want to put you in a box.’ And people don’t go in boxes.

Quite simply, human beings in all their multifacetedness are not meant to fit into boxes. Labels can be useful for personal and political reasons, yet they fail to ever capture the complexity of our lived realities (Riley, 2000). Yet, it is possible to go beyond these boxed confines. Indeed, I will now show how the women expressed a desire for a new term to hold a broader range of female subjectivities.

II – The need for a new term: Women going beyond sexuality

In this section, I will argue that a feminine libidinal economy need not be about sexual orientation, as articulated through a tick-box culture. Neither is it directly related to sexuality, which is too focused on having a sexual object (Van Anders, 2015). The patriarchal nature of capitalism and neoliberal intimate ties, characterised by compulsory monogamy and male heterosexual control over female desires, haunted many of the women’s accounts. Capitalism is deeply suspicious of alternative relational configurations, notably being single or in a polyamorous relationship web (Barker & Langridge, 2010). Ruth (52), a woman in a heterosexual partnership, who has previously had same-sex relationships, highlighted this:

Ruth: …People feel uncomfortable about single people… either because… they think you’re going to try to steal their other half in some way, or because somehow they feel that things are just more balanced, when you know you’re with another person… and equally people are really uncomfortable if you end up in a relationship with more than one person.

Yet, this system leads to women not feeling like they own their sexualities.

As Isadora (50), a heterosexual woman who previously had relationships with women, asserted:
Isadora: ...And what I realised is that perhaps I’ve never really spoken about or thought about my sexuality in my own terms. I think it was very much sort of like based on society’s acceptance or non-acceptance...

However, Giselle (22), who identified overall as heterosexual, asserted that at this juncture, possibilities exist for developing alternative feminine libidinal economies, since women are being invited to break the societal rules that have oppressed them in the past.

Giselle: ...And I also think that em femininities are changing more rapidly nowadays and so because they’re changing, I think women are given the opportunity... for more changes and em, for breaking the rules.

Furthermore, when I asked Giselle specifically about asexuality, she associated it with negativity.

Giselle: I don’t fully like the term because it sounds a bit negative. It’s something you don’t have.

Ruth also highlighted this negativity, whilst highlighting the stereotypes that create it, and calling us to look beyond these:

Ruth: Em, and I guess because in my own life my own sexual identity has changed over time, I can understand how people either permanently or as a phase in life, would go through a phase where actually it’s [having sex] not important. There are other things that are but that isn’t important... Em, but it doesn’t stop people having strong emotional bonds, I feel. You know, it’s just one aspect of what those bonds look like...and yet I think most of society sees it as a really negative concept.

As Ruth’s account highlights, sexuality can shift over the life course. This resonates with Ahmed’s (2006) work, which highlights that sexual orientation has a strong relationship with how we orientate ourselves towards others and objects. Equally, it can transform in moments where our relationship with objects shifts.

Ruth highlights the stereotype that not being in a sexual or romantic relationship implies that people cannot have strong emotional bonds with others. Asexuality is a negative term because it is constructed as a ‘lack’ and pays lip service to late capitalism and neoliberalism. After all, as Weigel (2016, p.46) highlights: ‘Today, it is a commonplace that “sex sells.”’ Thus, I agree with Giselle and Ruth and propose that this is exactly why we need a new term that embraces the positivity of difference. I believe this term can emerge from Braidotti’s (2006) concept of nomadic subjectivity. Nomadic subjectivity refers to a ‘non-essentialist brand of vitalism’ (p.4) that transcends the commodification of desire within the capitalist regime. Nomadic subjectivity is a collective oriented subjectivity, which focuses on the positivity and creativity of difference and challenges a unitary view of human subjectivity. In Braidotti’s formulation, desire is not a given but is rather a process of moving forward to a horizon of possible becoming. As Braidotti (p.197) notes: ‘Desire sketches the conditions for the future by bringing into focus the present, through the unavoidable accident of the encounter, a flush, a sudden acceleration that mark a point of non-return.’ This resonates with the accounts of my research participants, who looked towards an alternative horizon for female (a)sexualities and highlighted the embodied moments in which (a)sexualities are in movement and transformation. The future of female (a)sexualities is thus found in movement, not in constraining boxes.

Conclusion
This paper has drawn on insights from life history interviews with five women, each of
whom experienced sexual fluidity in their trajectories. In the first section, I briefly explored the constraining nature of the ‘tick box’ and its impact on the development of alternative female subjectivities. In the second, I explored the women’s need for a new term to hold a broader range of female subjectivities, which does not necessarily involve genital sexuality. I drew on Braidotti’s (2006) concept of nomadic subjectivity, to work towards a conceptualisation that looks beyond the linear capitalist model, which constructs asexuality as ‘lack.’ The hope for the future is that we may begin to think beyond the labels that reduce us to essences, in order to create a more ethical society for all.

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References
Love, loss, and the space between: Interview with Professor David Sbarra
Dennis Relojo

I AM INCREDIBLY PLEASED to share this interview with Dr David Sbarra, a clinical psychologist and professor at the University of Arizona. Dr Sbarra recently published a new ebook entitled, *Love, Loss, and the Space Between: The Relationship Expert Essays*. Perhaps the best part of Dr Sbarra’s new ebook – aside from the great content – is the price; at £2.42, this is a can’t-miss deal! I have interviewed Dr Sbarra to learn more about his book and why it is so affordable.

*Maybe you can start out by telling us about yourself and what this book (or should we say ebook) is all about.*

Sure, thanks for contacting me and for talking about my new book – in truth, I don’t know what to call it either. Let’s stick with book. This way it sounds more official and formal, and maybe a little more serious.

I am a clinical psychologist and professor at the University of Arizona, where I direct the doctoral programme in Clinical Psychology. In 2011, I started writing a series of relationship advice columns for YouBeauty. It was pitched to me as a part of Dr Mehmet Oz and Dr Michael Roizen’s growing internet presence, where they marketed themselves as the You Doctors and were following-up and extending the successful content behind their books and Dr Oz’s TV show.

I ended my run as the relationship expert with YouBeauty in 2014, and after finishing up a few other projects, I started to think about all the columns I had written. Earlier this year, I reread the columns for the first time in a while; they felt fresh, alive, and still very meaningful to me. I also felt like they were going to waste on the web – just sort of rotting on an electronic vine.

I thought it would be fun and worthwhile to put all the columns together in essay format, then curate them a bit by providing some introductory remarks and organising them in a conceptually meaningful way. The result is this ebook!

As for the topics, the title of this book suggests I cover everything between love and loss. In some way, this statement is not quite accurate. I tried to take on everything in the space between love and loss, but there are some topics which I do not cover at all.

During my tenure as the relationship expert, I wrote 37 columns; often, I came up with the ideas on my own, and occasionally my editors suggested I cover a particular topic. For the most part, though, these essays represented 37 meditations about relationships; this is what I came up with when doing so monthly for three years – from why and how our brains are wired for friendships, all the way to how to break it off with a partner. I write a good amount about sex in relationships, as well as the everyday digital distractions that poison intimacy. I discuss serious stuff on the pain of infidelity and how couples can go about healing after an affair; in other essays, the topics are a little lighter – for example, why romantic comedies shape how we feel about relationships.

I do not however, cover too much about attraction, falling in love, or dating in general. I also don’t say too much about how to choose the right partner or how to decide about compatibility, nor do I write about parenting and family relationships in any real way.
These are important topics, but I just never had the chance to give them much attention. In general, then, this ebook is more about how to thrive within our romantic relationships than it is about finding the love we want (and need). Certainly, these topics go hand-in-hand, but I don’t want anyone to feel they were sold a bill of goods.

To help readers along, I introduce each essay with a few sentences – a brief preamble about the idea and, if I can remember, what was in my head when I wrote the specific column.

How did you decide to self-publish the book, and how in the world did you come up with the $3.20 (£2.42) price point? And, why not publish the essays as a ‘real’ book?
These are great questions. When you consider why someone might write a book, I think a lot of it has to do with a need—in that the author and publisher believe people want to learn the story behind current cancer treatments, for example, or what causes veterans to develop PTSD. When I think about the topic of relationships, I see a great need. Three out of every ten marriages can be considered extremely distressed, and we have tremendous problems with loneliness and disconnection in our society. For me, from my vantage point, I saw a tremendous need to write about relationships and how to make our relationships as good as they can be, and how to fix the kind of nagging problems that plague all our relationships.

So, in my opinion, there was an absolute need for something accessible that could discuss a range of interesting and important relationship topics. At the same time, however, I also think publishing a book—and I haven’t published a ‘real’ book before so I might be talking out of turn here—is about having a good market. Even if you, a potential author, see a need, is there a market for your book? On this front, I felt far less certain. The columns are all still freely available on the web, so you can go out now and, if you’re exceptionally cheap, read them for free.

Given all of this, I thought the best route forward might be to do some sort of ‘direct to consumer’ ebook, and I was able to accomplish this using Amazon’s Kindle Direct Publishing, which is an amazing system for self-publishing. Even if there’s not a market for a real book, some people pay more than $3.20 (£2.42) for a cup of coffee every day (or, twice a day for that matter, but these people are probably too caffeinated to read all that much—no offence). At this price point, I think there is a real market for the content of the book, and that is why I elected to self-publish it at a low cost.

More philosophically, by making this ebook reasonably cheap, I hope I am making it incredibly accessible to people. My goal is to give the science of close relationships away as broadly as I can and to illustrate the relevance of this work to our everyday lives.

What are some of your favourite essays in the book?
I probably have 10 or so favourites, but if I had to narrow it down to just a few, I especially like the ones about grieving on Facebook, how to deal with a workplace bully, why it’s so hard to appreciate our partners. I especially like the essay on the question of whether depression can be contagious. I had a lot of fun writing the introduction to the piece. I don’t think my wife has any idea (yet) that she appears in the book several times, but I think I care most deeply about the essay in which I asked myself a question about what is happening around me—Why was I doing what I was doing? Or, why was I feeling what I was feeling?—then tried to contextualise my personal observations with what I saw happening in my clinical practice or in my research.

You seem somewhat uniquely positioned to write this book because you’re both a therapist and a scientist. What is the nature of your research?
This is true, but many clinical psychologists are both therapists and scientists, or at least that’s the goal in our training programmes in
theory. I have tried to stay true to both sides of the so-called scientist-practitioner model, and I’d very much like to share lessons that I’ve learned about health and mental health with the general public. Clinical Psychology is an amazing sub-discipline and many of its best ideas are cloistered away in jargon-filled psychology journals or densely-edited volumes. I think many outside of the discipline think almost exclusively about Freud when they think about psychology, or they’re inundated with far-fetched, reductionist ideas from biological psychiatry. Personally, I think it’s time for a change and clinical psychology does need a bit of a voice to speak broadly in a scientifically-informed way.

Most of my research is about divorce and how people cope with difficult life events, especially social transitions. I am particularly interested in how psychological responses to these events – for example, how we grieve – might be associated with psychological responses that have health relevance down the road. People can learn more about my scientific works on http://sbarra.faculty.arizona.edu).

What are your goals for this ebook?
My goal for this ebook is simple: I want to make a noticeable difference in people’s relationships. I don’t care where this change comes from or even how people get there, but if something in this book causes a spark, and if someone feels better in even the smallest noticeable way, then that’s a success.

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me.
My pleasure. I hope PsyPAG Quarterly readers would like my ebook. Also, I am on Twitter @dsbarra. I’d love people to follow me and learn more about the book, its contents, and all manner of topics in Clinical Psychology.

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Reference
This short article considers how person-centred music group work can support a young person who is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans* or questioning their sexuality and/or gender (LGBTQ) move towards self-actualisation (Rogers, 1961). Rogers wrote of ‘becoming a person’ and for all youth, this self-construction of identity can be thought of as a profoundly creative act during a neurologically, hormonally and environmentally changing time. For LGBTQ youth, already in dissonance with dominant culture, can expressive music enhance their resilience and what are the aspects of resilience which may be influenced? The resilience framework (Hart et al., 2007) provides a structured lens through which to reflect on a past project that used community music group work as an expressive modality.

Despite improvements in civil liberties and rights, for young people exploring issues of sexual orientation and gender identity such questioning is still difficult. Leading UK LGBT rights campaign group PACE identified high levels of self-harm and suicide attempts in young LGBT, alongside higher than general population levels of mental health, counselling and support needs (Nodin et al., 2015). Risks to LGBTQ youth arise from both external experiences of societal hatred and discrimination, plus internalised concerns – the latter sometimes called ‘minority stress’ (Meyer, 2003). UK LGBT rights organisation Stonewall asserts that homophobia in schools continues to be a neglected area of bullying which significantly impacts youth wellbeing (Guasp, 2012).

Youth work with this group can help to provide a protective environment that might enable new positive experiences to take place and enhance self-expression, confidence, and coping mechanisms. Grotberg’s (1997) idea of resilience is a valuable concept when planning such groupwork. This captures the notion that some qualities can protect a young person from the worst effects of their difficult circumstances. Related literature has grown over the last fifteen years which suggests that resilience promoting strategies include enhancing communication and self-expression, through participating in valued enjoyable activities (Bostock, 2004). This can include a creative music group, where young people can learn to explore ideas, develop
trust, work with other people, share their feelings and find acceptance both by society and also within the self (Pestano, 2013).

Creative Croydon, a small voluntary community music organisation, secured funding for a short-term, out of school music project with young people (aged 15–22) who either identify as part of the non-binary, queer community or are questioning their sexuality or gender identity. The partner was a South London LGBT (15–21 years old) youth service run by an LGBT charity who provided two LGBT youth workers. Ten sessions of 2–3 hours music-making were provided across 10 weeks, during the regular youth group slots. Two LGBT music facilitators worked with a group of up to 20 young people, not all of whom might be in the room at any one time (chill out space and two extra break out rooms were provided).

Activities and session structure were emergent, co-designed with participants who were keen on their own chosen topic of love yet also open to a theme suggestion of bullying from the youth workers. Sessions included whole group, small group activities; existing repertoire; creation of new music; space to try new things and opportunities for those with music experience to use existing skills; community culture/history. Learning songs important to others in diverse LGBT communities (Glad to be Gay, Somewhere over the Rainbow), hearing music and seeing artefacts from these generations enriched the sense of community and connection between participants and other staff in the LGBT projects. This group included young people with a wide range of additional needs, including those using Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Looked After Child status, and several with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. A number of others made use of other LGBT specialist counselling and support services. Their ethnic profile was a mix of Black, Asian, White and Mixed Heritage.

A group contract was negotiated for working positively together, building on their existing youth group ground-rules. Rock and world music kit was provided, with young people invited to share any instruments they had, whether or not they could play.

**Structure**: A session would begin with a welcome, chat and refreshments, moving into whole group creative music making, jamming and exploring the instruments. Next was LGBT cultural history, learning a song together. Collaborative whole group song-writing or break out into smaller groups to develop pieces formed the next large area of activity. At this point workers stepped back, available as a resource yet allowing participants space to figure things out together through trial and error. Informal show and tell helped move towards a sense of conclusion, as young people visited the small groups to hear how things were going. Sessions ended with circle reflections and a celebratory recap of one of the group songs that had been learned or created. Settling into a regular routine brought a sense of safety and structure to each week.

**Resilience framework**
Hart offers a resilience framework, drawing on her work with Blincow and Thomas on resilient therapy (Hart et al., 2007). This is underpinned by ‘four noble truths’ of accepting, conserving, commitment and enlisting. These provide a solid foundation for five different areas of endeavour in which resilience can be built up. These areas are basics, belonging, learning, coping and core self. The combination of the two aspects provides a hopeful context for practice and a way into considering both past and future practice. **Acceptance** is about recognising both as workers and participants that wherever we are starting from and feeling is just fine without any changes. **Conserving** is a new contribution to the literature in which traditional notions of containment are shifted to emphasise more of the working with positives rather than having everything take place within a relationship with a ‘stranger therapist’. **Commitment** concerns clarity about the time and longevity of work on offer and an emphasis...
Creative group work using community music with LGBTQ youth: Reflections on resilience

on honouring arrangements, made explicit with those being worked with. **Enlisting** means the bringing in of others, connecting to a wider range of community and resources. Our decision to use staff from the LGBTQ community could be seen as an enlisting approach. Certainly the parameters around which the working group agreement was established, in discussion with the young people, means that there were opportunities to co-create with the young people. These noble truths could naturally be embedded in the working atmosphere so that it felt very much the young people’s project and not at all like school.

The **basics** might seem beyond the remit of this project but one such is of course psychological safety, being free from discrimination. The materials the young people generated enabled them to explore a range of feelings and experiences. Themes included their fear as they noted the wider world’s negativity to perceived sexual and gender deviance. For some of them, this alienation could turn in on itself as self-harm. Some examples of their lyrics follow:

Will you join my cause and save me?
‘cos I’m falling and there’s no one here to hold me…

A nightmarish werewolf song, with themes of destruction and then transformation, allowed feelings of confusion, fear and a sense of otherness to be expressed.

A great emphasis on the acceptability of diversities within the group helped to create bonds across a wide range of differences, in age, background, identities and musical experiences. A young woman participant shared that ‘the lyrics I wrote with my group helped me to deal with a certain situation I found myself in which was related to homophobia’. Play is another basic right – the playful nature of this project allowed for an experience of creative, collaborative fun. At times we used repurposing of existing songs to promote this playfulness alongside self-affirmation. *O Happy Day* allowed the group to flirt with terms from LGBT life that are often used as abuse by those outside the LGBT community but which need to be reclaimed in order to use them comfortably. Reclamation is an established survival strategy of the queer community. And so we had, ‘*Oh happy gay, oh tranny gay, oh dykey gay, oh fairy gay*’ as a blithe and blissful outro to a fairly outrageous pastiche version celebrating our shared LGBT diversities.

**Belonging** is a key quality sought from LGBTQ youth group attendance. Careful approaches to ensuring that people worked with different group members, while also having core songwriting sub-groups, helped to ensure that everyone had a sense of belonging. Plenary sessions on LGBT music history and culture and the closing large group singing of LGBT songs also helped build a sense of belonging to a wider community. The youth workers commented on their considerable surprise at the degree of cooperation displayed on the music project (Pestano, 2013). In their experience young people were much more ‘…held back and dysfunctional’ in regular sessions and noting that the activity ‘…created a shared experience and brought the group closer together.’ One young ex care leaver shared, ‘If not doing this music group I would have been attending and hanging out at the project but would not have made so many links with other people. I really loved this, music brings people together. What I liked best was getting to write songs with my friends.’

**Learning** is about finding out and discovering things. For many in the group it was their first experience of music making. As well as musical skills, many other qualities were developed. Capacities to question, explore, challenge and to be emotionally congruent are all life skills that can be fostered through creative and improvisatory play. Gentle wondering, teamwork and enjoyment of the unexpected musical ‘mistakes’ were other life-enhancing elements in this process. Exploring LGBT culture allowed for the beginnings of shared dialogue in which ideas and values could be interrogated, questioned and re-evaluated in relation
to the young people’s experiences. This helps foster a resilience-promoting climate in which critical thinking and Freire’s liberating critical consciousness (1968) might begin to develop.

Youth workers noted their surprise at seeing how quickly co-operation built between the young people, who were normally more separate in their use of the club. A young LGBTQ woman with autistic spectrum needs said that her favourite aspect was: ‘collaboratively creating a musical piece. I’ve never been in any kind of independent music group before.’

**Coping**, a musically edgy electronic track, a new song about first love in adversity, revisited an experience of school lunch room bullying. Hesitant but brave, it became something of an anthem for the project, its young writers teaching it to the wider group:

*What we feel inside is love, passion and desire,*  
*Don’t stare us down, or make a sound*  
*We’re only human, we’re all the same*  
*We’re only human, we’re all the same*

and ‘surviving a breakup’ songs were another popular theme:

*I’m on my way to a brighter day,*  
*I’m stronger than I’ve ever been before*  
*I ain’t breakin’ no more*  
*There just no way I’m ever coming back to you…*

Determination to join together to stand up for their right to exist was another powerful focus:

*We’ll fight the fight, we’ll stand our ground*  
*We’ll pay the price, we’re not backing down*  
*It’s not gonna be easy but we’re not standing alone*  
*but standing as one*

**Core self.** ‘The right type of music can reach parts of ourselves that are usually inaccessible, dormant, and therefore neglected.’ (Taransaud, 2011). Song lyrics included lots of love songs celebrating that their love was natural, a powerful new experience for many:

*You’ve kept me strong, so strong, for so long*  
*You give me love, ecstatic love*  

One young man, a former looked after child, grew in confidence across the project, moving from shy contributions to taking the lead in singing. He encouraged his colleague with Aspergers syndrome to keep trying to sing until she delivered in a way that she was happy with. It was moving to see his emerging sense of self. An increased sense of self-acceptance was reflected in some of their lyrics:

*We’re really cool and rather fab,*  
*If you don’t like us then you are sad*

**Conclusions**

Music groupwork with an excluded minority such as LGBTQ youth can be emancipatory and life-affirming, strengthening resilience. Creative self-expression can provide relief, connection and fun, which in turn can allow for an emergent acceptance of self. Finding your voice in a music project can extend beyond, into the wider world. Use of the resilience framework was helpful in reflecting after the ending of the project, helping unpick some of the additional values and symbolism of the ways that the project ran. It might also be a valuable planning resource for future work.

*You and me we can be free, for I can see reality*  
*I want to fly into the sky and scream and yell*  
*You cannot make me conform you see,*  
*for I can see reality*

A longer project description is available from the author.

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Hints and Tips:

Doing research in LGBT+ mental health
Dr Nuno Nodin

Introduction
Despite recent advances in sexual minority equality in many countries, including in the UK, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or as having other non-normative sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBT+) are still often the target of discrimination and violence, and disproportionately experience mental health issues when compared to heterosexual and cisgender people (e.g., Nodin et al., 2015). Although there is a known link between these two realities, much remains to be understood about the factors that may contribute to or are associated with LGBT+ people developing mental health issues. Additionally, although LGBT+ mental health research is growing in England and in the UK, most of what is known about this topic comes from research conducted in the US, highlighting the need to generate current and culturally specific British research on this area.

Research in the field of LGBT+ mental health can be done by applying qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches and can be framed by a range of conceptual perspectives, some of which find their origins in the LGBT community, as is the case of Queer Theory.

In this article I have put together some suggestions and recommendations for anyone considering conducting LGBT+ mental health research, based mostly on my experience of managing the RaRE Study (see Nodin et al., 2015). This was a mixed methods research project about LGBT mental health risk and resilience, which was carried out at PACE, a now defunct charity specialised in providing mental health and wellbeing support to members of the community. Therefore, this article is mostly informed by a third sector perspective. It is not exhaustive and anyone interested in the field should also seek inspiration and guidance from other sources (a good place to start is: Peel et al., 2007).

Inform your research with some research
There are numerous topics open for inquiry within the field of LGBT+ mental health. As in any other areas, the choice of a specific issue or population can be daunting, with so many possibilities available. Start by reviewing the existing scientific literature in your generic area of interest or population – for example, risk factors for alcohol misuse among gay men, suicidality among trans people, help-seeking behaviours among ethnic minority bisexual people. The published research will point the way to further topics of research which are still lacking or which need further academic input.

Additionally, read the news – both the ‘pink’ and the mainstream press – to find out what is happening in the community. Start conversations with your LGBT+ friends and family members about what they think is relevant in their communities, which may have an impact on mental health. Check LGBT+ organisations’ websites and read about the topics that they focus on. Is there a seemingly emergent trend in the use of a new drug among gay men? Are various celebrities coming out as bisexual? Are progressively more young people rejecting traditional LGBT labels and choosing to
identify as queer or pansexual?

While these accounts may often be purely anecdotal meaning they do not represent a real trend or emerging issue, many may point towards new or unseen trends which have implications for mental health within the LGBT+ community.

**Make best use of LGBT+ community resources**

Community-based LGBT+ organisations are great resources for anyone interested in doing research in the field of LGBT+ mental health. As mentioned above, they are very much aware of the realities and emerging trends from within the community, e.g. in relation to the needs of LGBT+ asylum seekers, to the specific challenges that people in same-sex relationships face, or to discrimination at work due to one’s gender reassignment status. Often organisations are interested in having access to evidence that will support specific areas of their work and which may be used when applying for funding, and therefore may be open to working collaboratively with researchers.

On the other hand, it is relevant to note that community based organisations face many challenges and demands on their time and resources. This means that the ‘ideal’ organisation to help with your research may not be available to do so for very valid reasons. In my role as the Research Manager at PACE I received requests for research collaboration or support almost fortnightly. Although many of these were relevant and sometimes even aligned with the organisation’s priorities, it would be impossible to handle this amount of collaborations with my team of two whilst still managing the RaRE Study and providing support for other areas of the organisation.

In any case, don’t let this deter you from approaching the key organisations that you think may be best placed to support you with your research interests. Here are some suggestions on how to do it in a potentially effective way:

- If you know anyone who works or collaborates with the organisation, contact them to inquire about a possible collaboration; although this gives no guarantee that your project will be prioritised, it is likely that it will receive more close attention, especially if you ensure your contact forwards it to the relevant party within the organisation.

- When preparing your email or letter of presentation, make sure to align it as much as possible with the organisation’s strategic priorities as stated on their website.

- If you don’t hear back from the organisation following your request, do persist; follow it up with another email within a couple of weeks and then with a phone call if there is no response.

- If possible offer some compensation for the time and resources that you are asking of the organisation; universities often have funds which may cover the costs of informant consultancy fees or of room rental, so make sure to utilise them.

- Plan and offer to be as autonomous as possible in your use of the LGBT+ organisation’s resources; the less you ask of them, the more likely it is that they will consider supporting your research.

**Think strategically about recruitment**

The internet has the great potential to provide access to research populations, many of which would be harder to reach through traditional offline strategies. This is especially true when studying potentially sensitive topics – such as mental health issues – and when trying to access groups affected by stigma and prejudice, such as sexual minority individuals. Whereas overall it is relatively easy to reach out and engage with sexual minorities for research purposes online, it is always worth developing a strategy that will provide the desired outcome within time-scales.

What population are you interested in engaging with in your research and what
defines it? Is it simply a specific sexual orientation or gender identity (e.g. cisgender bisexual people) or does it involve other relevant characteristics (e.g. lesbians identifying as having a physical disability; BAME queer identified young people)? Does your research have a national scope or does it focus on a specific geographical location (e.g. gay men living in the East Midlands). The more specific the research population, the harder it will be to find relevant people willing to take part, so resourcefulness is called for.

Make extensive use of social media; look for online groups that exactly or closely match those that you are interested in researching. Explain your research in a way that lay-people can understand including a section on how you think the research will be beneficial for their community or group (e.g. inform targeted interventions, increase mainstream acknowledgement and acceptance in the community, etc.).

Recruiting the participants you are interested in is also a numbers game. So while specific and targeted recruitment strategies such as the ones mentioned above are relevant, larger scale visibility for your recruitment materials and messages should not be underestimated. The wider you are able to circulate the information about the research, the more likely it is to be seen by the people you want to see it.

For specific topics and areas of interest it may be worth contacting key informants (e.g. community role models, the spokesperson for an emerging sexual minority subgroup). These may not only provide relevant data but also open doors, granting access to other members of the community and helping spread the word about the research.

Look for grey literature
Grey literature is generally not considered the most reliable source in scientific research. In most cases it has not undergone a double-blind review by peers and sometimes its quality is questionable. However, this does not mean that research published in reports, policy documents, theses or other grey literature formats is inaccurate or unhelpful.

Numerous LGBT+ research, namely that conducted by voluntary sector organisations, never gets published in peer-reviewed journals, even if it is conducted to the highest academic standards and benefits from the input of various specialists and community stakeholders. There are various reasons for this including the capacity issues of these organisations as discussed earlier. This means that valuable pieces of research reflecting the needs of the LGBT+ community will not necessarily be utilised or publicised by larger research centres, universities and funding bodies.

For example, the Albert Kennedy Trust published a report about LGBT youth homelessness in the UK in 2014. The report revealed that LGBT youth are disproportionately affected by homelessness and are at higher risk than non-LGBT young people in similar situations, because they are more likely to be affected by targeted violence, discrimination and sexual exploitation. However, only a very limited amount of research on this topic has been published in scientific literature, making this a potentially hidden issue for those seeking evidence in academic journals.

To be clear, grey literature should never replace the use of peer-reviewed articles which should still be the main source of reference when writing a scientific paper, as they provide a reliable foundation for creating new research. However, grey literature may provide much needed guidance and data when it cannot be found elsewhere.

Share your findings
This is less of a tip and more of a call to those willing to invest in this much needed area of research:
• Make sure to disseminate your research findings as widely as possible.
• Share the final report or paper with the
organisations and people who helped you conceptualise the research or recruit participants. They will welcome new evidence to support their strategic, advocacy or intervention work and may also help with the dissemination of the research via channels (e.g. webpages and social media accounts).

- Write and publish blog posts based on the findings.
- Tweet extensively about it.
- Ask your friends to repost and retweet about it.
- Consider publishing it in a local or university journal and in a scientific peer-reviewed journal.

The more visibility is given to the specific issues and needs that LBGT+ people face while growing up, in their day-to-day lives, in their relationships and when dealing with things like the social and health care systems, the more likely it is that other researchers will be inspired to pursue similar lines of research. It is also more likely that key stakeholders will be persuaded to incorporate these issues into the policies and strategic plans that they develop.

Research in LBGT+ mental health can have a real impact on the health and well-being of LBGT+ people and communities. It provides evidence and raises awareness of issues that would otherwise remain invisible or unsubstantiated.

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Hints and Tips:
Using the Crime Survey for England and Wales to research sexuality and criminal victimisation experiences: A magic bullet for exploring sensitive topics?
Laura Scurlock-Evans & Beré Mahoney

This article aims to shed light on how the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) may prove an invaluable tool for exploring relationships between sexual orientation and victimisation. We will also highlight some of the challenges to using the CSEW in psychological research and conclude with a few ‘hints and tips’ on how to access (and make sense!) of the datasets.

What is the CSEW?

The CSEW is a large survey conducted annually by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and is a vital source of information on the extent of victimisation and crime (both reported and unreported) in the United Kingdom (Jansson 2006, 2007; Shapland and Hall 2007). Each year approximately 50,000 households are invited to participate, resulting in a sample of approximately 35,000 adults (16 years and older). The survey has a rigorous sample design. It employs a stratified random sampling method using Royal Mail’s Address List (formerly the Postcode Address File); one of the best sampling frames for the general population available (ONS, 2012). It has been collected by the government since 1981 (called the British Crime Survey until 2012) and is used to explore changing patterns and trends in criminal victimisation. The government regularly releases reports based on the CSEW data exploring different trends, such as the Focus On series – which can be accessed here: http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/publications.

A value of the CSEW is that it asks questions about a broad range of issues, including the experience of certain types of crime (such as personal theft, sexual violence, hate crime), specific details of the crime (e.g. whether weapons were used), whether a person has reported or pursued the prosecution of a crime, and also the impact crime has had on a person’s life (e.g. quality of life (QoL)). Broader questions about crime concerns, including perceptions of the criminal justice system and the police and worry of victimisation are also asked (ONS, 2015).

Since 2007 the CSEW has asked respondents to self-identify their sexual orientation from a number of forced-choice options. Between 2007/8 and 2008/9 the options provided were: ‘heterosexual’, ‘gay/lesbian’, ‘bisexual’, ‘don’t know’ and ‘don’t wish to answer’. From the 2009/10 survey another category, ‘other’, was added. Including this question presents a world of research opportunities for exploring the criminal victimisation experiences of people from Sexual Orientation Minority Groups (SOMGs)¹. Indeed, the CSEW is an important tool for

¹ Individuals self-identifying their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian, bisexual, ‘other’, ‘don’t know’ and ‘don’t wish to answer’ are referred to using these specific labels or collectively as sexual orientation minority groups (SOMGs) to avoid the heterosexist connotations of the term ‘non-heterosexual’.
understanding patterns of victimisation and experiences of SOMGs (Dick, 2009; Stonewall, 2013), particularly as many crimes experienced by people from SOMGs go unreported (Stonewall, 2013) and are therefore invisible in police recorded crime statistics.

**How can the CSEW be used?**
An example... Our own research using the CSEW has three strands, the first of which has been published (Mahoney, Davies & Scurlock-Evans, 2014), with the second and third strands in development.

Our first paper explored patterns of victimisation for ‘any’ crime and specific types of crime for men and women from all CSEW recorded sexual orientation groups, across three years’ worth of data (2007–2010). Complex patterns of victimisation were identified, sometimes changing across years, although a number of differences between sexual orientation groups emerged overall. The research revealed that gay men, lesbian, and bisexual individuals had greater chances of victimisation from any crime and when broken down into specific types of crime such as personal theft, deliberate violence, threats of violence and sexual assault. Furthermore, there was evidence that men self-identifying as ‘other’, ‘don’t know’ or ‘don’t wish to answer’ were also at greater risk of victimisation than heterosexual individuals. Importantly, this was not specific to sexuality motivated hate crime. As individuals who are less certain or more ‘questioning’ of their sexual orientation may be at greater risk of experiencing victimisation than other sexual orientation groups (Poteat, Aragon, Espelage and Koenig 2009), this highlights the value of the CSEW capturing data for ‘don’t know’, ‘other’ and ‘don’t wish to answer’ groups. It allows researchers to explore nuances in victimisation experiences outside ‘heterosexual’, ‘gay/lesbian’ and ‘bisexual’ groups. Furthermore, it reinforces the importance of recognising that SOMGs are not one homogenous group and research should avoid the heteronormative practice of treating SOMGs as one ‘non-heterosexual’ group. The research also highlights the importance of considering gender alongside sexual orientation, in order to explore the complexities of criminal victimisation experiences.

Further patterns in the data, across a wider range of datasets (2007–2012) are now being explored in relation to the impact of crime and fear of crime on QoL for SOMGs (paper 2), and of patterns of worry of crime, perceived risk of victimisation and protective behaviours (paper 3). Such information would be helpful to understanding whether theories, such as the minority stress theory (Meyers, 2016), are reflected in victimisation survey data. In turn this could inform community development work and the practice of organisations providing support to victims (such as Victim Support).

Follow our ResearchGate profiles to see when they all become available if you would like to find out the findings of this research.

**What are the key challenges and rewards?**
We have encountered a number of challenges and rewards when using the CSEW, some of which I will describe here. For a fuller review of the methodology of the CSEW please see Tilley and Tseloni (2016).

In some respects, the CSEW is pioneering: it offers a choice of sexual orientation categories, rather than merely ‘heterosexual’ and ‘not heterosexual’. However, measuring sexual orientation in discrete, rather than continuous/dimensional terms is contentious. For example, Epstein and colleagues have developed the Sexual Orientation Range (SOR) – a continuous measure of the flexibility in people’s expression of their sexual orientation (Epstein & Robertson, 2014). From this perspective the CSEW is somewhat lagging-behind the psychological literature. Furthermore, the CSEW provides no definition for the response categories it offers, nor does it include follow-up questions to capture what respondents under-
stand the categories they choose, to mean. Another issue is that after the 2011/12 data collection period the item recording sexual orientation appears to have been moved from the end of the overall survey, to the end of the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) module. This may imply a link between sexually violent crime and sexual orientation and could be seen as a consequence of heteronormative thinking. Also, the IPV module is sometimes administered to a subset rather than the whole sample. Further research is required to explore the implications of this for psychological research.

The CSEW’s sampling strategy is both a strength and weakness. It offers very large samples, with weights available (to redress bias), and doesn’t rely on potentially biased sampling methods such as ‘outcropping’ (Sell, 2000; Tilley, 2016). However, it doesn’t collect data from people living in communal establishments (e.g. sheltered housing, nursing homes, halls of residence), which may mean that some groups who are more vulnerable to criminal victimisation are excluded. For example, individuals with severe mental issues receiving support from community health services in London were three times more likely to be a victim of any crime, and five times more likely to experience assault than CSEW respondents living in London from the same time period (Pettitt et al., 2013). However, Pickering et al. (2008) argue that the exclusion of these groups is unlikely to have great effect on overall CSEW estimates.

A core concern regarding the CSEW is the way in which questions are asked, and the response options which are provided. This is particularly true of the questions about fear of crime, or worry of crime as it is worded in the CSEW. For example, asking ‘How worried are you about being mugged?’ does not capture frequency of worry experiences. Furthermore, feelings of worry may not be as intensive as feelings of fear. This issue is not specific to the CSEW, but affects many victimisation surveys and calls into question the validity of research findings (Gray et al., 2008). Nevertheless, understanding patterns of worry of crime, which Gray et al. (2008) describe as a diffuse anxiety about the risk of victimisation, can still provide a useful understanding of how such anxiety differs across genders and SOMGs.

Many constructs, such as QoL, are measured using single-items in the CSEW. Although this reduces burden and response fatigue for respondents, historically there have been methodological concerns over their use (Hoeppner et al., 2011). However, there is growing evidence that single items can robustly measure some psychological constructs (including QoL) (Loo, 2002).

Another key issue is whether or not a detached methodological approach is appropriate for studying sensitive topics, and if authentic research involving the researcher directly is to be preferred (Milne, 2005). We would argue ‘yes and no’: such a complex, multifaceted and critical topic requires exploration from multiple perspectives (Green, 2012; Moore & Riggs, 2013). Indeed, incorporating insights gained from research using the CSEW with insights generated from qualitative research may take us one step closer to the ‘radical middle’. The radical middle position argues that mixing methods (and methodologies) can produce new method and theory, avoid balkanization and working in silos, provide multiple perspectives on complex critical issues and ultimately produce socially just, productive and impactful research (Brannen, 2005; Greene, 2012; Moore and Riggs, 2013; Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

Ultimately, the core reward of using the CSEW is the richness of the data available: it is an invaluable tool for inspiring research on new topics.

What might the future hold?
Scope for using the crime surveys, in some respects, is growing – with researchers now able to combine numerous of the large datasets collected by the government and explore wider trends and patterns.
For example, Jennings et al., (2015) have combined approximately 30 years’ worth of CSEW datasets with British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA), British Election Study’s Continuous Monitoring Survey (BES-CMS), annual official recorded crime statistics, and many, many more. These datasets have been prepared specifically with their re-use by other researchers in mind: for them to perform secondary data analysis, and to modify them for their own research questions, PhD studentships and teaching activities. The datasets have now been deposited with UK Data Archive and can be found here: https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=7875&type=Data%20catalogue

Such ‘Big Data’ could be invaluable when exploring individual level variables (such as sexual orientation) against a backdrop of wider social attitude and crime data and offers the potential for a new insight into the experience of criminal victimisation of SOMGs.

**Conclusion**

Despite its issues, the CSEW represents the largest and most continuous measure of reported and unreported criminal victimisation of people in the UK who self-identify their sexuality. It is a much underused resource with a number of valuable features: it has largely unheard of sample sizes in sexuality research and gathers data in a way which is less typical in sexuality research. It therefore offers psychology researchers a chance to explore criminal victimisation attitudes, experiences and consequences from a fresh perspective. In this way, the CSEW should not be seen so much as a magic bullet, but rather one of many tools which researchers can use to achieve a better understanding of the victimisation experiences of people from different sexual orientation identities. Only through this can we offer better support to victims of crime and find ways of ending the victimisation of people from SOMGs which is endemic in our society (Stonewall, 2009).

**Hints and tips for using the CSEW in sexuality research**

- Visit the UK DATA Archive: it holds all the CSEW data, documentation and many other datasets (quantitative and qualitative). You won’t be disappointed! http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/
- Don’t skimp on your reading of the technical documentation! The question piping, sampling and different datasets take time to understand. This will also give you a ‘heads-up’ if the ONS have changed questions or the response options offered between survey years.
- Get to know the datasets: each year of the CSEW comprises a number of datasets: The non-victim form (individual-based data), victim forms (incident based data pertaining to someone from the non-victim form) and separate self-completion modules. These self-completion modules comprise data on drug use; drinking behaviour; interpersonal violence, and; low-level geographic variables. Since 2009 data has been collected with 10–15 year olds using a separate questionnaire.
- Think about which datasets you really need to access and why: you’ll need to put together a case and submit this to UK Data Archive which must be approved before you can access any datasets.
- To access data requires two types of permission. Access to hate crime variables and the IPV module are controlled through Secure Access, requiring you to go through training to become an accredited Approved Researcher by the UK Statistics Authority. All other datasets/variables are controlled by the Special Licence procedure which is quicker to manage.
- If you analyse any data held under the secure access restrictions, your results and reporting of your results must be scrutinised by a trained member of the Archive team, under Statistical Disclosure Control (SDC), before they can be disseminated in any way. This is primarily to protect respondents’ anonymity.
To analyse Secure Access data you’ll either need to acquire a campus-based static IP address (so you can access the virtual SecureLab), or travel to one of their physical secure labs.

Join the CRIME-JUSTICE-STATS@JISCMAIL.AC.UK mailing list: you’ll receive updates about the survey and related training, conferences and events.

Finally, why not attend the Crime Survey Users Conference? It’s a fantastic chance to hear about cutting-edge research using a variety of surveys and also speak with the people who manage them. For details visit: https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/newsitem/?id=4692

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References
Dates for your Diary

12–13 December 2016
BPS Division of Sport and Exercise Psychology Annual Conference, Mercure Cardiff Holland House Hotel and Spa, 24-26 Newport Road, Cardiff.

4–6 January 2017
BPS Division of Occupational Psychology Annual Conference
Hilton Hotel, Liverpool city centre.

18–20 January 2017
BPS Division of Clinical Psychology Annual Conference
Hilton Hotel, Liverpool city centre.

23–25 March 2017
Northern Ireland Branch Annual Conference
The Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

3–5 May 2017
BPS Annual Conference
Hilton Brighton Metropole, Brighton.

13–15 June 2017
Division of Forensic Psychology Annual Conference
Mercure Bristol Grand Hotel.

The BPS website has a full list of BPS events: www.bps.org.uk/events
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About PsyPAG

PsyPAG is a national organisation for all psychology postgraduates based at UK institutions. Funded by the Research Board of the British Psychological Society, PsyPAG is run on a voluntary basis by postgraduates for postgraduates.

PsyPAG’s aims are to provide support for postgraduate students in the UK, to act as a vehicle for communication between postgraduates, and represent postgraduates within the British Psychological Society. It also fulfills the vital role of bringing together postgraduates from around the country.

- PsyPAG has no official membership scheme; anyone involved in postgraduate study in psychology at a UK institution is automatically a member.
- PsyPAG runs an annual workshop and conference and also produces a quarterly publication, which is delivered free of charge to all postgraduate psychology departments in the UK.
- PsyPAG is run by an elected committee, which any postgraduate student can be voted on to. Elections are held at the PsyPAG Annual Conference each year.
- The committee includes representatives for each Division within the British Psychological Society, with their role being to represent postgraduate interests and problems within that Division or the British Psychological Society generally. We also liaise with the Student Group of the British Psychological Society to raise awareness of postgraduate issues in the undergraduate community.
- Committee members also include Practitioners-in-Training who are represented by PsyPAG.

Mailing list
PsyPAG maintains a JISCmail list open to all psychology postgraduate students. To join, visit www.psypag.co.uk and scroll down on the main page to find the link, or go to tinyurl.com/PsyPAGjiscmail. This list is a fantastic resource for support and advice regarding your research, statistical advice or postgraduate issues.

Social networking
You can also follow PsyPAG on Twitter (twitter.com/PsyPAG) and add us on Facebook (tinyurl.com/PsyPAGfacebook). This information is also provided at www.psypag.co.uk.
Contents

Editor’s Column
Jimmy Couzens ................................................................. 1

Chair’s Column
Emma Norris ........................................................................ 3

Guest Author:
An introduction to the field of LGBTQ Psychology and the BPS Psychology of Sexualities Section
Dr Adam Jowett & Dr Joanna Semlyen .......................... 4

Section review:
The Psychology of Sexualities Section (PoS) of The British Psychological Society: Psychology of Sexualities Research
Dr Joanna Semlyen & Jimmy Couzens .......................... 7

Discussion papers:
Teaching sensitive issues – 10 Theses on teaching gender and sexuality
Dr Christian Klesse ................................................................. 15

On the measurement of sexual orientation
Gu Li ................................................................................ 20

Inclusive Masculinity Theory:
Review and interview with the founder
Luis Emilio Morales ............................................................. 25

Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and the increased health risks in the LGBTQ+ community
Lauren T. Bolam & Elizabeth A. Bates ............................................................. 30

The fairer sex – literally: A brief review of sexual fluidity
Charlotte Wesson ................................................................. 34

Humans don’t fit in boxes: Reconfiguring female (a)sexualities for the 21st century
Aoife Sadlier ........................................................................ 37

Book Review:
Love, loss, and the space between:
Interview with Professor David Sbarra
Dennis Relojo ........................................................................ 42

Research in Brief:
Creative group work using community music with LGBTQ youth: Reflections on resilience
Catherine Pestano ............................................................ 45

Hints and Tips:
Doing research in LGBT+ mental health
Dr Nuno Nodin ...................................................................... 50

Using the Crime Survey for England and Wales to research sexuality and criminal victimisation experiences: A magic bullet for exploring sensitive topics?
Laura Scurlock-Evans & Beré Mahoney .................................. 54

Dates for your Diary ............................................................... 60

PsyPAG Committee 2015/2016 ............................................ 61