A Critical Social Psychology of LGBTQ+ Equality in Britain: Exploring LGBTQ Issues with Community Stakeholders and Members

Context and Previous Literature

In the UK today, despite the increasingly apparent celebratory rhetoric (Lawrence & Taylor, 2019) whereby it is often claimed that LGBTQ+ equality has been 'achieved':

- -LGBTQ+ people (and especially those who are transgender) are overall less satisfied with their lives.
- -Many LGBTQ+ people avoid being open about their sexual orientation/gender identity.
- -Those in the LGBTQ+ community have a higher prevalence of mental health issues, despite being more dissatisfied with health services in comparison to their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Government **Equalities Office, 2018).**

It is these issues, highlighted by the LGBTQ+ community themselves, which should be at the forefront of research; with more in-depth research needed on the complexities of LGBTQ+ experiences for progressive policymaking.

Much psychological research (and society generally) views the LGBTQ+ community as homogenous, for example, within British psychological literature, LGBTQ+ focused articles primarily focus on gay male homosexuality. This simple demonstrates the trend in psychology, that many identities within the LGBTQ+ community, such as transgender, non-binary or even bisexual identities are often neglected and rendered invisible (Jowett, 2020). Therefore, the LGBTQ+ community is not homogenous, and neither are their experiences, research, therefore, needs to take an intersectional approach towards understanding LGBTQ+ experiences.

Aims



The present aim of my PhD research is to develop an understanding of community LGBTQ+ issues nationwide; (1) to understand the social-psychological mechanisms at play within and across LGBTQ+ communities, especially for those identities which are often rendered invisible, (2) to identify barriers to inclusion and wellbeing and (3) to co-produce knowledge and facilitate positive social change.

Ultimately the aim across the PhD is to develop a critically informed LGBTQ+ social psychology of equality.

What will happen during the project?

Invitation

Gatekeeper will give consent for the researcher to work with the organisation / community group. Stakeholders will be given information sheets and consent forms to agree to take part, possibly participate in an interview and consent for the researcher to approach members for a world café / focus group.

Stakeholder Interview

Gatekeeper engages with researcher about current LGBTQ+ issues and / or agrees to take part in a short interview (approx. one hour long). This will be online, over the phone or in person and the time and place will be determined by the stakeholder. With questions being asked such as "What are the biggest issues facing LGBTQ+ people and your members?". This stage will inform the next stages of the research project.

Organisational Literature

Stakeholders will consent for their organisations' literature such as leaflets etc., to be included as data within the project.

Method



This will be explored through ethnographic observations with LGBTQ+ organisations; involving consultations with stakeholders and virtual/ in-person world cafés with community members. Mainly focused within Staffordshire, **Manchester and Brighton, due** to the differing social and political contexts. This involves consultations with stakeholders and virtual world cafés with community members.

World Café Member Participation Researcher will invite community Logistics The world café will take place (approx. one hour): talk will be members to participate in a world audio recorded and all sensitive, identifiable information will Community group will agree on café (online / face to face). be annoymised. Participants will discuss questions on their time / place that suits them to table with other participants, without input from the Community members will be given conduct the world café. researcher. E.g> "What are the issues faced by LGBTQ+ information sheets and consent forms to agree / disagree to take part. people in your community?". **Findings Further Research**

Findings will be used in my PhD work and may be published. This may include anonymous quotes from the world café. The researcher will give a presentation or materials covering the findings of the research to inform the group / organisation and participants.

Community members and groups will be invited to take part in further research in the future to help shape the organisation and to promote social change in the UK.

Analysis / Results

Findings will be interpreted using Social Representations Theory and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and will be utilised to inform subsequent research, involving how the community needs identified across the UK, can then be acted upon using community lead social change initiatives to challenge these issues and promote social change.

Currently study one, as detailed, is in its data collection phase but here are some quotes which are particularly emotive and indicative of participants' experiences:

"There's a long way to go with that and we need, you know, gender recognition for non-binary people. We need it for under eighteens... and there was a, a large amount of people who wanted self-identification" (Stakeholder 1)

"Everything I want to do is really about trying to make their lives just that little bit better" (Stakeholder 1)

Summary



Equality is far from "complete".

The LGBTQ+ community is not homogenous, and many identities rendered invisible and more likely to face discrimination and oppression.

community **Utilising** psychology principles and critical qualitative methods to understand LGBTQ+ equality from the 'ground up' to facilitate social change.

Next Steps & The Future



After stage one, which is still in its data collection phase, community needs, across the UK, will then be acted on using community lead social change initiatives to challenge these issues and promote social change, which may be focused on anything that community stakeholders and members believe are prevalent issues e.g. focus on health or wellbeing.

Due to the project utilising community psychology values, including co-producing knowledge, with the community themselves leading the project, findings have yet to be determined, as the project is in its infancy and is continually developing.

Annabel D. Roberts a.d.roberts@keele.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Katie Wright-Bevans

Faculty of Natural Sciences: School of Psychology

