

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

## Context and Previous Literature 1

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.

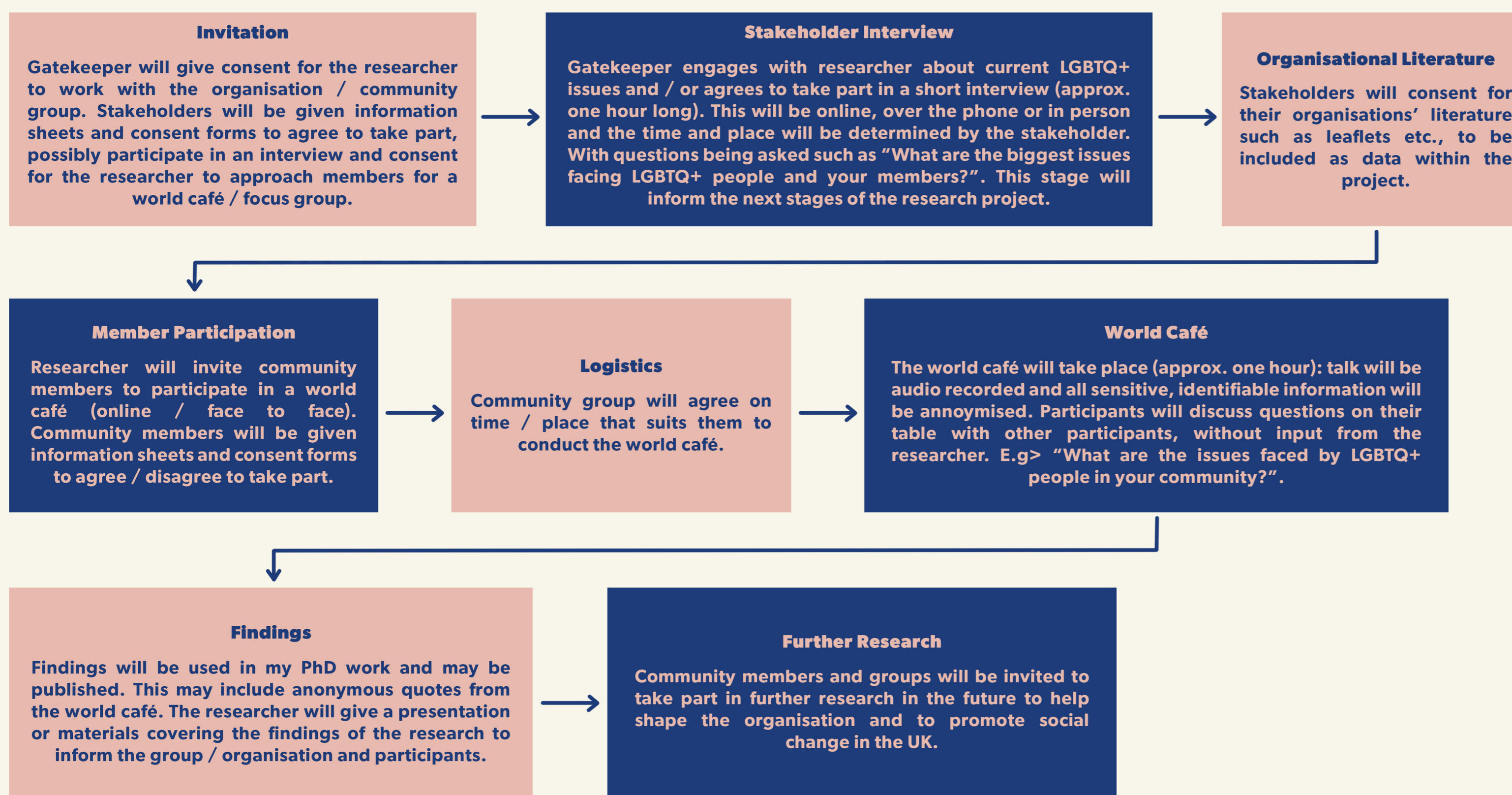
Much psychological research (and society generally) views the LGBTQ+ community as homogenous, for example, within British psychological literature, LGBTQ+ focused articles primarily focus on gay male homosexuality. This simple demonstrates the trend in psychology, that many identities within the LGBTQ+ 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 2

The present aim of my PhD research is to develop an understanding of LGBTQ+ community 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 social psychology of LGBTQ+ equality.

## What will happen during the project?



## Method 3

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.

## Analysis / Results 4

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 5

Equality is far from "complete".

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

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

## Next Steps & The Future 6

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.

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