

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme leading to the award of the degree of Professional Master of Education, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. I further declare that this dissertation has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this Institute and any other Institution or University. I agree that the Marino Institute of Education library may lend or copy the thesis, in hard or soft copy, upon request.

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Abstract

Schools are located as a site of heteronormativity for Irish LGBTQ teachers, which become sites which pose problems (Higgins et al., 2015; Neary, 2013). 2015 was a year of legislative change, with a referendum granting same-sex couple legal rights of marriage, the Gender Recognition Act and amendment of Section 37.1 of the EEA. These legislations show support and a changing landscape for LGBTQ teachers (Rhodes, 2015). This research seeks to explore how LGBTQ teachers perform their sexuality in Irish Primary schools in 2019. I conducted the research using a queer framework to explore this. Research was carried out using qualitative methods through semi structured interviews with a sample of six Irish primary school teachers. I found that Irish LGBTQ teachers, found the protection offered via security of tenure a vital feature to coming out in Irish primary schools. Following this school climate became another important feature which overrode concerns surrounding ethos in disclosing ones sexuality. A key unearthing, is that even as teachers try to undermine heteronormativity through a post-coming out and post-gay rhetoric, they create their identity through sameness of heterosexual teachers and in doing so makes non-normative LGBTQ identities more problematic. Clothing and appearance is found contrasting the literature as an arena in which management does not occur. Management does however occur in the staffroom in relation to Moira's camp performance, with Moira instead performing an inauthentic performances of self. This research calls for education and curriculum to be queered rather than discrete curriculum areas, to fully allow LGBTQ individuals a place in Irish primary schools.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge all those who helped me through this research and the PME over the two years. I will be forever grateful for your patience, compassion, support and confidence in me. Over the PME, I have had doubts of where my identity fits, with a profession in teaching. I want to include two quotes that supported me when I felt heteronormativity eclipsing my own queer identity.

“I will not agree to be tolerated. This damages my love of love and of liberty” - Jean Cocteau

“I was surrounded by people who were suffocating under the burden of a normal life. I knew I’d rather be wrong than safe” - Holly Hughes

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Introduction

This research sets out to explore the performances of LGBTQ sexualities in a selection of Irish Primary Schools in 2019. In selecting an area to study, I sought to add a queer perspective to the current literature in the surrounding fields of education and sexuality and how performances of sexuality are negotiated by teachers. As a queer and soon to be qualified teacher, on a personal level I wanted to truly understand the landscape of where teaching and Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) identities exist and how this would impact me, and I would impact on this, in the coming years.

A Crucial Resonation

A key incident which resonated with me occurred during the research. As I waited for one of my participants to join me in a room arranged through Marino Institute of Education (MIE), a homophobic slur was engraved onto a notice board, see Figure I. The dissonance of this casual homophobic discrimination in my institution of study and the reason why I was present in the room, was profound. It reminded me with a sharp tinge, of my own heteronormative environment and journey as a student of the Professional Master of Education and future career as a teacher. As I sat there and waited, I felt reminded of the importance of conducting queer based research and constructing a space in which non-normative performances, sexualities and identities could be expressed. The interview space should have been a queer space of safety, though feeling alienated, othered and let down, I was reminded of the work to yet be done.



Figure 1: Engraved homophobic slur.

Currently in an Irish context a rich vein of research exists in this area of sexuality and education (Neary, 2013, 2014, 2016). In 2019, Ireland has obtained equal rights in terms of Marriage Equality (ME), Gender Recognition and Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act (EEA) has been amended. Research indicates that homophobia, heteronormativity and homonormativity (Neary, 2016) feature in the lived experiences of LGBTQ teachers. It is within these experiences of LGBTQ teachers that I seek to explore and generate relevant data regarding.

Researcher's Positionality and Privilege

In undertaking this research it makes sense to discuss my positionality at the first opportunity, as in doing so will make the study transparent from the onset. As I informed participants through reflexive interviewing (DeVault, 2007), it is equally important to inform readers alike. I identify as a queer cisgender male and have previously explored queer theory and through a BA of English and Sociology and further study in a MA in Women, Gender and Society. As a pre service teacher I acknowledge my experience of teaching to my

apprenticeship through school placement. I have considered the research area alongside the participants and in researching this topic it allowed me an aspect of self-exploration through the research. From my own experience of LGBTQ community volunteering, such as with Transgender Network Ireland, I have developed a skill of talking emphatically with marginalised community members which I feel was vital throughout this study. By stating my own positionality to participants, I stated my position on working alongside the LGBTQ community. In choosing to pursue this research, the project aims to add to queer educational literature and to equally explore the landscape of LGBTQ teachers in Ireland.

Equally as important is acknowledging my own awareness of privilege in undertaking this research. Privilege to McIntosh is an “invisible package of unearned assets”, which one holds regarding their social identity and inadvertently shapes their experiences (McIntosh, 1988). In this I wonder how having a previous MA in relevant studies, my cisgender status, my queer identification and my own performance of sexuality and gender may have affected the manner in which I was perceived by participants and the data generated as well as how these experiences have shaped how I engaged with the data.

Dissertation Outline

This chapter addresses the rationale for research as well as discussing a crucial resonance from the study and the researchers positionality and privilege. Following this I critically examined relevant literature to my study establishing the current literature surrounding LGBTQ teachers, examining 2015 as a year of legislative change, Ireland’s educational context and finally examining queer perspectives using *Paris is Burning* as a theoretical tool in examining performances of sexuality of LGBTQ teachers through disclosure, behaviours and presentation. After this I examined the theoretical framework and

methodological approach to the study as well as how it was conducted. I explored my discussion between the data and the literature examined previously, focusing on four key anchors, security of tenure, school climate, authentic disclosures and authentic performances. Finally I concluded the study, with reiteration of salient findings as well acknowledging limitations of the research and areas for future study.

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter explores relevant literature to my research question, “How do LGBTQ teachers perform their sexualities in some Irish primary schools in 2019?”. The first segment of the chapter examines 2015 as a year of legislative importance and change with regards Marriage Equality (ME), Gender Recognition and Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act (EEA) being amended. The second segment establishes the context for education in Ireland whilst the final segment posits my theoretical perspective from a queer framework examining the intersection of queer theory, education, teachers and sexuality.

2015: Legislating Change

On 22nd of May 2015, 62% of the Irish electorate (Ryan, 2015) voted to extend the Irish constitution to allow marriage to occur between “two persons without distinction as to their sex” (Thirty-Fourth Amendment of the Constitution [Marriage Equality] Act, 2015). This reflected the shift away from and unweaving of Irelands unique relationship with the Catholic church. To many this legislative win was a miracle (Elkink, Farrell, Reidy & Suiter, 2015). This referendum meant that same sex couples were treated exactly the same as their heterosexual cohort in the eyes of the law under marriage legislation, bridging the gap of the short comings of Civil Partnership (CP) . In the same year, two months later, 15th of July the Gender Recognition Act was approved by the Irish Government, allowing trans people to achieve legal recognition of their chosen gender and documents to reflect this (2015). These legislations document a shift in attitudes towards the LGBTQ community (Rhodes, 2015).

LGBTQ teachers were specifically under threat of Section 37.1 of the EEA, which operated as a caveat to legitimise discrimination against any persons employed in any religious, educational or medical institution which has a religious ethos (Gowran, 2004; Fahie, 2016). This caveat underwrote the protection offered through the EEA for teachers of all sexualities but in particular LGBTQ teachers (1998). This meant that job appointments and promotions as well as dismissals, all occurred within an institution, where the institution could discriminate in the name of ethos preservation (Fahie, 2017). The emotionally charged work of ME overshadowed the amendment on Section 37.1 of the EEA, in which this discrimination can only occur being “objectively justified” (Equality Act, 2015). This created a more robust and protective framework of the EEA. This amendment is marked as a final “legislative barrier” for LGBTQ teachers in employment in education (Egan, 2016, p. 5). However Neary acknowledges that policy and legislative change have a limited effect on LGBTQ teachers (2013), when the ground to be gained lays more in socio-cultural arena. In Canada’s case even with legislative and legal protection, it didn’t end homophobia or socio-cultural discrimination for teachers (Grace, 2017).

Ireland’s Educational Context

Ireland’s education landscape is interwoven closely with the Catholic church and has been for much of our recent history (Inglis, 1997). Primary schools under religious patronage, represent roughly 90% of all Irish primary schools at present (DES, 2015), and account for 50% of secondary schools (Coolahan, Hussey & Kilfeather, 2012). Denominational education though holds the majority of school provision, alternative education models are slowly entering into the educational field, namely the multi-denominational school in the Irish context (Darmody, Smyth & McCoy, 2012), the Community National School and the more

popular Educate Together (ET) model. This variation in supply of education has also been facilitated by the New School Establishment Group as they understand parental preference as the means of supplying patronage to school (DES, 2019).

From this perspective, within schools, the schools must teach according to the ethos of the Patronage, which in this case is predominantly Catholic. The schools thus operate from the patronage, to teach and vivify that ethos' through the schools in their care. Ethos is understood to be the "distinctive range of values and beliefs, which define the philosophy or atmosphere of an organisation" (Darmody et al., 2012, p. 3), that infiltrates and trickles down on how the school operates and effects how the school operates (Monahan, 2000). From the ethos of the Catholic church, homosexuality is deemed as wrong, sinful and "always a violation of divine and natural law" (Carr, 2004), and as they are the majority providers for education currently in Ireland heteronormativity becomes the limiting norm for LGBTQ teachers (Neary, 2013). Heteronormativity will be discussed at greater detail later but for now it is useful to understand it as a presumption that heterosexuality is "the very model of inter-gender relations" (Warner 1993, p. xxi). This manner of relations pervades all aspects of social life (Hall & Jagose, 2013), and takes a prominent role in the Irish education system. Lillis notes that denominational faith schools in an Irish context do not offer a viability for LGBTQ teacher to express their sexuality, never mind being out, due to heteronormativity (2009).

In this Irish context Neary argues that teachers, are expected to teach from the heterosexual matrix which has been defined and inscribed with the values of the Catholic church and those who deviate from the normative aspect of heterosexuality encounter challenges within the school environment (2013). This context also locates same sex relationships along religious and secular borders with religion operating as a heteronormative straightening device (Neary, 2017). Lodge makes a bold claim that schools of Christian faith

in Ireland, fail to acknowledge their religious character which should be centred and “characterised by core Gospel values such as altruism, compassion, hospitality, creativity and dialogue” (Lodge, 2013, p. 11). Lodge suggests that in failing to allow LGBTQ teachers to be themselves they are failing at the very core ethos of Christianity.

Queer Perspectives

In approaching understanding LGBTQ teachers I do so through a queer perspective using queer theory as a lens to examine and engage with the study. Queer here is a term of identification which has political connotations, it is the appropriated insult which is “thrown back in the face of the oppressor...to undo oppressive gender/sex designations” and is centred on opposition to resisting discourses which normalise and reify (Morris, 2005, p. 10). Merging queer theory with educational discourse is a recent practice, “even as the political hour feels late...there is an urgency to this work” (Pinar, 2000, p. ix). In approaching this research question “How do LGBTQ teachers perform their sexuality in Irish primary schools in 2019”, I seek to draw upon a queer pedagogy that “aims to analyze discursive and cultural practices that create identities and privilege some over others” (Oswald, Kuvalanka, Blume & Berkowitz, 2009, p. 52). Though at times engaging queerly may seem abstract, it is very centrally “about competing narratives and entertaining the unthinkable (Morris, 2005, p. 11).

In entertaining the unthinkable, I want to look to ethnographic film documentary *Paris Is Burning (PIB)* (Livingstone, 1991), as a theoretical tool to engage with how teachers perform their sexuality. *PIB* captures insight at ‘balls’, in Harlem throughout 1987 and 1989, where Black and Latino ‘queens’, gay men and transwomen, compete against one another in terms of imitating ‘realness’. This realness involves, appropriating an identity which is alien to them, and performing as such a person would hoping to pass as ‘authentic’ in categories

such as Butch Queen, Military Realness, Executive Realness and High Fashion Realness. In each of these categories participants would wear appropriate clothing and walk on a catwalk, being judged by judges, participants and attendees of the 'balls'. Contestants compete against one another and are judged based on their 'realness' or their ability to pass in a given category. Realness in this sense was the ability to imitate heterosexual and most times white culture, by marginalised Black and Latino queer community members to performing an identity which they are authentically not (Livingstone, 1991). 'Realness' and passing as faux performances are thus understood in juxtaposition to authenticity, "Authenticity may be understood as an 'inherent quality of some object, person or process' and cannot 'be stripped away, nor can it be appropriated'" (Vannini & Williams, 2009, p. 2). In the context of *PIB* the authentic nature of the participants is that they are queer, however they can perform and appropriate different genders, sexualities and race performances to a mimicking perfection of quality denoting 'realness'. Ideas of the authentic self and performances of the self becomes articulated through representation (Vannini & Williams, 2009). It is these performances, be it as authentic or imitative realness of LGBTQ teachers that I am concerned with and how they perform their sexuality in a Irish context.

In line with this idea of performativity in *PIB*, Butler pushes our understanding of not only gender as performance but also sexuality and all identity categories (1991). Butler sees heterosexuality as:

an impossible imitation of itself, an imitation that performativity constitutes itself as the original, then the imitative parody of 'heterosexuality'... is always and only an imitation of an imitation, a copy of a copy, for which there is no original. (1991, p. 22).

This unoriginal faux performance, takes on a 'natural and normal' performance of sexuality through "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts... that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (1990, p. 33), however it is far from natural and innate.

For Butler "gay identities work neither to copy nor to emulate heterosexuality, but rather, to expose heterosexuality as an incessant and panicked imitation of its own naturalized idealization" (1991, p. 22-23). In such an exposure, it exposes and delegitimises assumptions and exposes them. Heterosexuality in a manner relies on this undercurrent of gay identities "to idealize, humanize and naturalize their own definitions" (Halberstam & Livingston, 1995, p. 5). Heterosexuality becomes the norm only via, defining all else as unnatural. There is a certain aspect of heterosexuality identity which works to delegitimise others, and in doing so "heterosexual privilege lies in heterosexual culture's exclusive ability to interpret itself as society" (Warner, 1991, p. 8). This interpretation as society is heteronormativity in a broad sense, as fully heterosexual and "natural".

Though heterosexuality is highlighted to be a faux performance of repeated configurations, heteronormativity becomes the assumption which is established on questionable foundations. Moving heteronormativity from the abstract and theoretical realm of academia, it exists in as "more than ideology, or prejudice, or phobia against gays and lesbians; it is produced in almost every aspect of the forms and arrangements of social life: nationality, the state, and the law; commerce; medicine and education" (Berlant & Warner, 1998, cited in Hall & Jagose 2013, p. 169). We see in an Irish context that schools are understood to be heteronormative (Neary, 2013; Higgins et al., 2015).

Heteronormative structures, do not remain unchallenged or void of critique. We see 'victories' of liberalist pushes, ME and CP, though the heteronormative structure itself goes

unchanged. These victories allow for heteronormative structures to be reproduced through “the appearance of equality and inclusion” working “towards the maintenance of the status quo”, as well as teachers constructing their sexuality in lieu of the collective good of the school (Neary, Gray & O’Sullivan, 2016, p . 16). Neary finds that LGBTQ people become normalised in discourses of love as CP and later ME ,would allow access to heteronormative aspect of marriage. Though these changes have allowed an advancement of rights it has also been “based on normalisation and sameness” and “ has implicit heteronormative constraints and consequences” (2016, p. 26). With such visibility this also creates a sense of what “good” subjectivities around love are and similarly bad. She finds that LGBTQ are told to engage with “certain kinds of sanitised, normal, monogamous sexual-subjectivities” (Neary, 2016, p. 25).

These victories allow for queer people to become satiated and assimilated into the heteronormative structure, in what Duggan terms homonormativity (2003). Homonormativity is seen as non-heterosexual identities being assimilated and working from heteronormative structures (Duggan, 2003). Homonormativity, is a reproduction of heteronormativity with queers in compliance of it, working from the heterosexual norms that oppress queers. It sets norms, practices and conduct and doing so homonormativity creates an understanding of what a ‘good queer/gay’ is, those who comply with heteronormative structures and ‘bad queers/queer’ those who express themselves and exist outside this structure (Neary, 2016). Through this an understanding is created that certain LGBTQ identities are more valued and legitimate than others, those in compliance of hetero-structures. Homonormativity and this assimilation, leaves the experiences of homosexuals as “invisible and unexamined” (Van Eeden-Moorefield, Martell, Williams & Preston, 2011, p. 563) as well as privileging and hierarchising acceptable sexualities (Murphy, Ruiz, & Serlin, 2008) with only “conventional gays” being facilitated through homonormativity (Duggan, 2002, p. 179). This idea of

acceptable sexualities is a key one at play for LGBTQ teachers, as they become queers become teachers and their identities intersect. Homonormativity thus, creates an aspiration in the homosexual locus, to embody heterosexuals in everything but their partner choice. This aspiration is one which transgresses to the community as a whole, as the queer community thus becomes another nexus colonised by heteronormativity. Why is it the Sedgwick's first Axiom is forgotten, that "People are different from each other" and that this difference is lacking "conceptual tools...for dealing with this self-evident fact" (1990, p. 12).

Sexuality – Nowhere and Yet Everywhere

Queer theory understands the realm of education as, it is an arena in which sexuality is nowhere and yet everywhere (Epstein & Johnson, 1998). Sexuality in school is approached by three strategies according to De-Malach, the first two strategies being most important in Irish schools contexts; "(a) completely banning any sexual relations; (b) differentiating between good and bad sexuality and allowing the former into the classroom" (2016, p. 316). Sexualities absence in school is further from the truth, as heteronormative subtly infiltrates discourses through "casual expressions...wedding announcements, gendered pronoun use, etc" (Allan, Atkinson, Brace, Depalma & Hemingway, 2008, p. 27). Through this subtle infiltration heteronormativity values a specific form of sexual relations and similarly delegitimises others, legitimising heterosexuality and delegitimising all else, connecting the two strategies.

There is a "heterosexist obsession of keeping queers and queer education away from children" (Jiménez, 2009, p. 172) causing "immense moral panics" (Luhmann, 1998, p. 142). Not only are queer teachers an issue, but so is the curriculum. Schools need to be recognised "thus not as sexually innocent places" but spaces where same and different sex desires can be

found (Bhana, 2014, p. 369). The desirability of schools to be seen as asexual becomes a key issue, even though heteronormativity dominates the school day. This raises the question of how do you construct your sexuality or more specifically construct LGBTQ sexualities in a school environment.

Disclosure or A Continuum of Coming Out

A key aspect of how one performs their sexuality comes from disclosure or coming out of one's identity. Griffins continuum of coming out puts forward this idea of coming out on a continuum with many different stages of being out (1992). Though twenty seven years old it's framing of coming out in a continuum is valuable and still relevant. Disclosure of one's sexuality or coming out at work is understand to occur for two core reasons, encountering homophobia and/or intolerance (Day & Schoenrade, 1997). These reasons posits queer teachers into coming out for an activist functioning as opposed to personal reasoning, positioning coming out as politically beneficial (Rasmussen, 2004). Kissen importantly writes that there is "no 'good' way to come out" but that coming out as a practice is a vital resistance, due to heterosexism and heteronormativity (2004, p. 71).

For LGBTQ teachers there exists a contradictory of demands, "The space for simply existing as a gay person who is a teacher is in fact bayoneted through and through, from both sides, by the vectors of a disclosure at once compulsory and forbidden" (Sedgwick 1990, p. 70). In one's private life one is urged to be out but as McCarthy finds in a professional capacity, you must negotiate that part of your identity which prevents teachers "from bringing their whole self to their work" (McCarthy, 2003, p.180). This whole self, the immutable authentic self becomes something this research focuses on through its exploration of LGBTQ teachers performances.

Coming out, isn't a singular disclosure but as of heteronormativity's ever arching presence exists as "a lifelong and multi-contextual process" which happens in every new surrounding with every new person and becomes "part of the project of the self" (Gray, 2013, p. 712). Coming out is involves a host of private factors, such as different identities, race, age, religion, gender and for teachers is further complicated by a further range of professional factors, school community, School climate, ethos, Board of Management (Rasmussen, 2004). Regardless of state and school protections in the process of disclosing ones sexual identity the local school context and climate for teachers plays a vital role (Connell, 2014; Neary, 2013).

In Irelands context, CP created a legitimacy and confidence for teachers to come out in a school environment (Neary, 2014), as well as the latter ME referendum. Though in an Irish context the disclosure of ones sexuality or coming out, was met with a feeling of relief and received positively, even though "evidence of internal conflict and extreme self-consciousness" existed for the teachers (Neary, 2013, p. 22). Egan notes in her research that eight out of nine participants were out in some capacity in schools (2016), a shift from earlier research (Gowran, 2004). Something which Egan (2016) and McCarthy (2003) both pique is that job security becomes an important feature in LGBTQ teachers disclosing their sexuality identity and in performing their sexualities authentically. Egan notes that "concerns over job security" was a prime issue in her research, with specific concern being centre around temporary contracts (2016, p. 26). This trend was posited by Neary who gauged that even with a reconfiguration of Section 37.1 questions of job security would still exist (2013).

By coming out as teachers, we mark ourselves as different to other teachers, we risk marking the queer teacher as other, within a heteronormative school environment (Ferfolja, 1998), and opening LGBTQ teachers to claims of their professionalism (Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009). Whilst potentially marking queer teachers as other, coming out simultaneously works to normalise queers, as our "drive to assimilate accelerates" (Rofes, 2005, p. 102). In coming

out, we are as visible as our heterosexual counterparts. This act of coming out, or continuously needing to come out is also accompanied by a real sense of “interactive nature of identity negotiation” (Evans & Broido, 1999, p. 240), in which “divisions between public and private spheres must be constantly renegotiated by teachers and students who are not heterosexual identified” (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 147). In such renegotiation the reality of a queer teacher lies, in trying to authentically be themselves in a structure that presents challenges.

LGBTQ Teachers

Teachers represent a profession in which private and public spheres intersect. This aspect of intersection is commented on by Gray, who uses the term ‘professional’ as being more appropriate than public, as “public implies multiple and varied activities that are not limited to the workplace” (Gray, 2013, p. 702). Sexuality is constructed in social and political arenas and educational contexts, as being found in the private domain (Sedgwick, 1990). Through such discourses “the private world of a teacher is positioned within educational institutions as existing separately to the world of teaching, learning and pedagogy (Epstein and Johnson, 1998, cited in Gray, 2013, p. 704). These claims seem to hold frail to my own experiences in staffrooms. In this teachers private life and sexuality is confined to their private world or more so unacceptable sexualities are, as the structure is inherently heteronormative.

The staffroom for many teachers represents a nexus of intersection of their professional and private lives, which is steeped in heteronormativity, the heterosexual matrix and heterosexual activities (Epstein & Johnson, 1998). Through such a nexus, LGBTQ

identities are silenced and falsely misrepresented as being absent from school life. Non-heterosexual identities thus lack a certain “social heterosexual capital to participate fully” which contributes to ones “sense of belonging”, shaping “feelings of isolation, otherness and a need to keep quiet about their private worlds at school” (Gray et al., 2013, p. 708). This leads to those in deficit of heterosexual capital having difficulty “in establishing the trust upon which networking and mentoring relationships are built” (Day & Schoenrade, 1997, p. 148). Though McCarthy’s study deals with a transwoman Kelly, a key aspect of this nexus for her was wanting to “avoid personal questions at all costs”, those that were pertaining about partners and the type of “things that I did over the weekend” which may intentionally or not disclose her sexuality (McCarthy, 2003, p. 173). This concept of LGBTQ teachers editing and omitting to “pass” as heterosexual is also found in an Irish context (Higgins et al., 2015). The staffroom thus becomes an arena of contestation for LGBTQ teachers in performing their sexuality.

King a teacher, becomes aware how he constantly monitored his behaviour in school so as to not indicate his sexuality (2004, p. 123). Not only are behaviours being monitored by LGBTQ teachers but so too is their physical presentation (Clarke & Turner, 2007), based on the setting that they find themselves in (Brower, 2001). Appearance and behaviour “are not constructed in a vacuum, they reflect and enshrine societal stereotypes and expectations of women and men including assumptions about gender and sexuality” (Brower, 2013, p. 499). Strategic decisions about dress and appearance, occur every day consciously and unconsciously operating as a signifier to illustrate or hide ones sexual identity (Davis, 2015). It became evident to Khayatt that students could engage and recognise their teachers sexuality through the presentation and behaviours of teachers (1999). One’s presentation and behaviour elaborates, if one fits into the heterosexual matrix of heteronormativity or doesn’t. In instances when one presents queerly as a teacher it brings in questioning of

professionalism and competency. Gay men minimise their sexuality and display norms that are similar to heterosexual men in order to oppose negative views of the LGBTQ community and in turn seem more professional (Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009).

That is not to say LGBTQ teachers, are not active agents of change against homophobic and heteronormative practices, rather LGBTQ teachers potentially enter a role as agents of resistance as they negotiate their identity via the nexus of school (Neary, 2013). Ghaziani puts forward the idea that one possible way LGBTQ teachers exist is as post-gay (2014). In this there are new and varied diverse manners to belong to what was once understood as gay, post-gay being one of them. This in a manner should create space for authentic performances to be enacted through dissonance, and queers to define themselves outside of a reified discourse. With this in light should teachers not begin to reflect something more than, a certain homogenous identity of teacher that is constructed and perpetuated (Jackson, 2010). We see when looking at Rofes this was not the case “I sacrificed parts of my identity that did not comfortably fit into the world’s sense of what is appropriate conduct for a teacher” (2000, p. 449).

Conclusion

This literature above is the most pertinent to the research question “How do LGBTQ teachers perform their sexuality in Irish Primary schools in 2019?”. I explored the context of 2015 as a year of legislative change for LGBTQ teachers, as well as Ireland’s educational context and finally explored queer perspectives, employing *PIB* as a theoretical framework for authentic performances whilst also discussing the intersection of sexuality, schooling and LGBTQ teachers.

Research Methodology

Introduction

This study explores how teachers who identify as LGBTQ perform their sexualities in a selection of primary schools in 2019 Ireland. Through exploring 2015 as a year of legislative change, Ireland's educational context and performances of LGBTQ teachers, I identified literature which would help me explore my research question, "How do Irish LGBTQ teachers perform their sexuality in a selection of Irish primary schools in 2019?".

This chapter will first establish queer theory as the paradigm used for the study as well as framing the research as qualitative research. It will then explore my sample and how data was collected as well as how analysis occurred via coding. Finally it will discuss ethical considerations and trustworthiness related to the study.

Queering Qualitative Research

Queer theory opposes the assumed through a subversive stance, allowing for new understandings to be established (Sedgwick, 1990). In this subversion it destabilises, the "natural", it delegitimises it and in the process as a framework allows for challenges surrounding epistemological knowledge, "it does not represent a cohesive movement/paradigm" but "through its interrogative, reconstructive and reclamatory essence- it resists normative, logical understandings of sex and intimacy (Fahie, 2017, p. 13). Queer theory stemming from post-structuralism, understands truth and the self, constructed *vis-à-vis* power and knowledge discourses (Sullivan, 2003).

In employing a qualitative research design, I chose to explore the depth of experience of non-heterosexual teachers that “involves gathering informants’ reports and stories, learning about their perspectives, and giving them voice in academic and public discourse” (DeVault, 2007, p. 173). Qualitative research is “rich and emancipatory” (Ragin, 2000, p. 22) and it facilitates a queer reading “to understanding and deconstructing the intersectional systems of power and privilege” (Fish & Russell, 2018, p. 17), and in doing so better grasping the experiences of marginalised communities. In adapting this as my paradigm to the research, I am using a queer theoretical framework alongside qualitative methods to critically examine and offer insight into how LGBTQ teachers perform their sexuality in Irish primary schools.

Sample Selection

I obtained a sample selection of six participants. It is noted in an Irish context studying LGBTQ issues of teachers proves a sensitive issue and accessing a sample is challenging (Egan, 2016; Fahie, 2014, 2017). This sample was a purposive sample, “so that only people with certain experiences...would respond” (Murphy, 2015, p. 266), non-heterosexual identified or LGBTQ teachers currently employed by the Department of Education and Skills. I contacted the INTO LGBT Teachers Group, ShoutOut, BelongTo, personal contacts through my own network of LGBTQ peers and through teaching professionals including Principals, teachers and pre-service colleagues, in searching for participants willing to participate in the interviews, see Appendix I for a sample of the invitation to participate in that was circulated. My six participants came through the INTO LGBT Teachers Group.

Figure II below refers to the sample of participants I interviewed. The sample consisted of four males, one female and one non-binary identified teacher. All of the teachers except one was currently teaching in Dublin. Participants aged in range from twenty five to fifty four, with the median age being thirty five. All of the teachers held permanent contracts in the schools in which they were working. Five of the schools were co-educational with one school being a boys national school and all of them vertical schools. Three of these schools were under Catholic Patronage, two schools being minority faith schools and one school a multi-denominational school. Participants identified as gay, bisexual, lesbian and queer. One participant also identified as non-binary and used gender neutral pronouns. The interviews themselves lasted between twenty six minutes and eighty three minutes, with the average interview lasting fifty two minutes.

Name	Sex (self-defined)	Age	Contract Type	School Type	Continuum of coming out (Griffins, 1992)	Sexuality (self-defined)	Interview Duration (mins)
1.Michael	M	31	P	Catholic Boys Vertical	Implicitly out (assumes their sexuality is known)	Gay	83
2.David	M	32	P	Catholic Co-ed Vertical	Implicitly out	Gay	37
3.Kevin	M	32	P	Multidenominational Co-ed Vertical	Implicitly out	Gay	51
4. Patrick	M	54	P	Catholic Co-ed Vertical	Totally closeted	Bisexual	26
5.Alex	X	25	P	Minority Faith Co-ed Vertical	Explicitly out (has disclosed their sexuality)	Queer	58
6.Moira	F	34	P	Minority Faith Co-ed Vertical	Explicitly out	Lesbian/ Queer	56

Figure II: Sample Demographics.

Data Collection

Data was recorded through audio-recording on two devices and brief note taking on the day, which was conducted through a private room booked in MIE, whilst one interview was conducted in the participant's home. The data was collected over a fortnight with multiple timeslots made available for the participants. The interviews themselves were semi-structured interviews, resting between a structured schedule of questions and *carte blanche* approach (Brown & Danaher, 2019). My interview guide was used to monitor, that discussion gravitated around the questions to offer insight into my research question, see Appendix II. The semi-structured interviews became more akin to a conversation and had natural flow to it, participants were allowed the space and time to let their experiences and narrative be heard and represented in the data.

My first interview I treated as a pilot interview, and no changes occurred from this to the interview structure or layout. The pilot interview was rich in data and was included in the sample. Whilst interviewing, I was aware of the sensitive nature of the interviews (Egan, 2016; Fahie, 2017) and practiced a technique what DeVault understood as reflexive interviews, allowing “for strategic disclosure on the part of the interviewer, whether that means sharing personal information or a willingness to reveal research interests” (2007, p. 181). This strategic disclosure assisted me in creating rapport and established my own positionality for the participant, something which I made transparent from the onset of the interviews.

However, it is important to note that over rapport could lead to bias and yet still a failure of rapport could lead to a failure of disclosure (DeVault, 2007, p. 179), so I negotiated this performance as researcher carefully, using appropriate language and formality when in contact with participants by email and in person, by reminding participants of the rigour of

the study and by signing consent forms at the start of the interviews for obtaining consent. Participants were asked questions that were informed from my literature review examined previously, based on the topic of performing sexualities as a LGBTQ teacher in the Irish context.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word, in a naturalised approach, with “idiosyncratic elements of speech, involuntary sounds and non-verbal signals” included (Brown & Danaher, 2019, p. 80). These aspects were of importance as communication occurs not just in the verbal but in other manners too. Gordon aptly puts the functioning of the data, in line with an understanding of the role of queer theory, in that it should “affect you, baffle you, haunt you, make you uncomfortable, and take you on unexpected detours” (Gordon, 1977, cited in DeVault & Gross, 2011, p. 216). There were some key moments in the research that I felt did just that, from a homophobic slur engraved on an interview room notice board (Figure I), to being present whilst a participant realised her colleagues lacked genuine interest in her and one participant accepting himself as a closeted teacher. These data were gathered, from the moment I met with participants and from this gathered data, audio recording and field notes, I began to code.

Coding in this instance is a “short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2008, p. 3). I treated everything from my initial greeting with participant as codable. I approached coding, informed by my paradigm, as heuristic, meaning to discover, rather than just the act of labelling and in doing so it led me “from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea” (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 137),

allowing for “essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity – a pattern – they actively facilitate the development of categories and thus analysis of their connections” (Saldana, 2008, p. 8).

The lines were double spaced and numbered, and indented from the right to allow for coding. The pages were also numbered and a pseudonym was used and allowed for a code to be created consisting of pseudonym initial, page number and line number e.g. M.17.14-20. This allowed me to organise my codes and reference its original location allowing for an audit trail (Driessen, Van Der Vleuten, Schuwirth, Van Tartwijk & Vermunt, 2015). Coding should be allowed to happen as many times as required to refine the data (Salandra, 2008). I coded in two main cycles, the first cycle to discover and represent data with a code and the second cycle to prepare and organise and analyse these thematic codes for relevance and for concepts to be drawn from them. During the first stage of coding, the data was closely examined and trends became apparent from coding. I coded at a sentence level and where appropriate paragraph level, see Figure III below. Codes came from other sources as well as audio recording as noted previous.

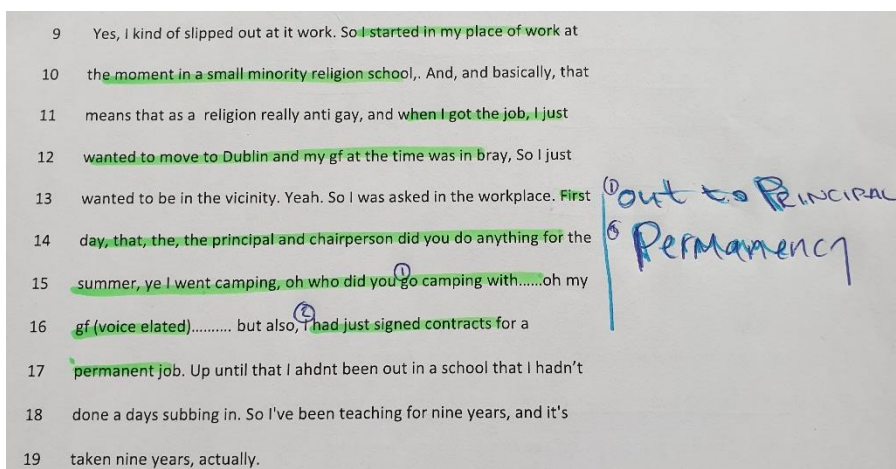


Figure III: Example of first cycle coding.

During the second cycle of coding I further combed these themes to check for miscoded data and to organise these themes in preparation of analysis and extrapolation to my discussion. This second cycle of coding and organisation shaped the data under broad thematic codes with all of the participants' data alongside each other for that relevant theme. The steps above in creating an audit trail, was invaluable to illustrate which code belonged to which participant. The nature of the study's queer paradigm made me in conflict with seeing the extrapolated findings through themes, but instead choose to construct them as anchors, sites in which LGBTQ teachers performances of sexuality gravitate around.

Ethical Consideration

This research project received ethical clearance from the Marino Ethics in Research Committee. It was carried out as a thesis as a part of the Professional Masters of Education in MIE. A key concern for me researching this data would be that the identities of the participants were protected. This was done through using pseudonyms and where relevant omitting details to protect the participants to ensure their anonymity. The data itself, both the audio files and the transcripts of the interviews were protected on a password protected computer. Participants read, and filled out consent forms reminding them of these features as well as their right to withdraw from the research at any given time. Participants signed consent forms iterating all of the above prior to the interview making them aware of the nature of the research and that it may be published, see Appendix III. The ethical consideration of this study may have had an impact on the sample size, as well as three participants choosing not to go ahead with interviews after initial contact.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is praised for being “rich and emancipatory” giving meaning to individuals narratives and in the same breath comes under scrutiny as being “soft and subjective” (Ragin, 2000, p. 22). Coming from a queer perspective, I acknowledge that the data exists in a subjective form, but I am equally governed in the process by concepts of confirmability, credibility, dependability and transferability which contribute to the study’s trustworthiness and establishes it as such (Xerri, 2018).

Confirmability’s prime concern is that the research is approached in a neutral manner. This may mean that the researchers own perspective, viewpoints, interests and motivations should be explored in a transparent manner with regard to the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Xerri, 2018). This is explored through examining my own positionality and privilege critically so as to understand my stance at approaching the research.

Credibility deals with “the degree to which the phenomenon under study is faithfully described” (Liao, 2015, p. 28). Various steps were taken to ensure credibility of the interviews; member checking after interviews were transcribed, examining my own subjectivities via reflection, thick description, as well as examining negative case analysis of the data.

Dependability refers to the consistency of the data, that if the procedures of the research are repeated the results would be consistent and reliable. This is ensured through an audit trail, in which the process is documented and facilitates an external check (Driessen et al., 2005). With the data I constructed a coding sequence which would make such an audit trail easy and simple to consult.

Transferability is the “aspect of applicability”, the “degree to which the results....can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents” (Korstjens & Moser,

2018, p. 121). As a researcher it was my duty to provide context as well as experiences and behaviours, to facilitate readers to make a transferability judgement of the findings to their specific setting. This transferability judgment was facilitated throughout the research by using “thick description”, where the description doesn’t exist solely at surface level but includes a sense of relevant context, in order to allow for a thick quality interpretation (Ponterotto, 2006). As well as thick description, rich descriptive data provides information around “setting, sample, sample size, sample strategy, demographic... inclusion criteria, interview procedure and topics... and excerpts from the interview guide” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122). This facilitated the data to become opaque and a transferability judgement to be made at those critically examining the study.

Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

The discussion in this chapter centres around anchors exploring the data heuristically. These anchors are often times at odds with one another, but are vivid nexuses of LGBTQ teachers performances and experiences of Irish primary schools in 2019. The anchors present are security of tenure, school climate, authentic disclosure and authentic performances. What they all have in common is that they explore how participants authentically or inauthentically perform their sexualities in Irish primary schools.

Security of Tenure

Michael, David, Kevin, Alex and Moira perform authentic performances of themselves through disclosing their sexuality facilitated by the security of tenure. Signing a permanent contract allowed the teachers to feel more capable of performing their sexuality and being more authentic. Both Alex and Moira disclosed their sexuality to the principal in the literal moments after signing their permanent contracts. Alex informing their principal they are living with their girlfriend (though Alex identifies as non-binary they still present as female in a school environment and so came out as lesbian), on a similar note Moira told her principal her reasoning for moving up to Dublin, “to live with my girlfriend”. This phenomenon of permanency is best captured by Moira “having permanency is a relief, they can’t get rid of me.... It’s a huge difference. I let my guard down, but it only came down when I had the contract signed, that was the defining moment”. This defining moment, recognises what Egan understands as ‘precarity’, apprehensions surrounding job security (2016). The process of gaining permanency allowed Moira to disclose her sexuality. Though

Neary notes that legal protection is not enough to protect LGBTQ teachers (2013), through the permanent contract Moira felt enabled to perform a more authentic understanding of herself in the work environment for the first time in nine years.

In Moira referencing letting her guard down, she is illustrating a deliberate disclosure of her sexuality facilitated by a permanent contract. This disclosure granted by permanency also illustrates the previous modulating and editing that had been done prior to disclosure in the upkeep of her performance of an inauthentic self (Clarke & Turner, 2007). Moira recognises obtaining permanency as a phenomenon that allowed her to become herself and perform an authentic version of herself rather than imitating and appropriating a version of herself. However though permanency is understood by these participants as granting them the ability to perform more authentically, Michael and Alex suggest even in light of an amended 37.1 (Equality Act, 2015), that job precarity still exists as an LGBTQ teacher. Michael indicates that the amendment to 37.1 though is a step in the right direction is not enough “I’d still be conscious of 37.1” and that a misinformation has led some teachers into a sense of job security that on closer examination, the threat still exists to LGBTQ teachers via 37.1 though in an amended form.

Illustrating how the phenomenon of signing a permanent contract facilitates LGBTQ teachers to perform a more authentic version of themselves, we see a potential situation where this permanency is removed for the participants. Moira notes that in future interviews she would go back into the closet “No, ummmmm, I don’t think I’d be out in the interview”. Even the hesitation here conveys a self-annoyance and disappointment at performing an inauthentic version of herself and going back into the closet. This is reinforced by Michael and Alex who says that they did just that leaving out LGBTQ volunteer work from recent job applications. This reinforces the idea as coming out as “a lifelong and multi-contextual process” (Gray, 2013, p. 712), as in this instance Michael and Alex went back into the closet. They did this

and omitted LGBTQ volunteer information, minimising LGBTQ indicators. This echoes what Rumens and Kerfoot found that teachers minimise their sexual identity to make themselves seem more professional and competent (2009). This omission and monitoring of LGBTQ indicators only became apparent for these two participants when they failed to have the security of a permanent contract. Of the five participants who are out, all recognise the role of their legal permanent contract in them disclosing their sexual identity, even in schools which host hospitable school climates. Though interrelated, permanency is a more important feature than school climate for these participants. This data contrasts what Connell understands, as legal protections having a limiting effect, whilst school climate being a more important feature (2014) to LGBTQ teachers performing their authentic sexualities.

School Climate

Two participants Moira and Alex, both work in minority faith schools in which they recognise that the ethos shouldn't support them, in performing their LGBTQ identity, however both of them are out in terms of their sexuality, Moira to the wider school community, principal, staff, board of management and Alex to principal and staff. All of the five participants who are out, comment on the fact they are all teaching in denominational faith schools and still can be out.

Ethos of a school is defined by Darmody et al., as a “distinctive range of values and beliefs, which define the philosophy or atmosphere of an organisation” (2012, p. 3). Though the schools are under religious patronage and ergo it should teach from these perspectives, just like interpretation of faith, interpretation of ethos becomes a subjective entity to be engaged with and interpreted, so the reality is often different from the prerogative. With Alex and Moira's case is considered, both participants understand the school should be anti-LGBT

in theory due to the patronage, but due to the school climate and how the school is run the school facilitates them in performing their sexuality. This is interesting as Neary reports that religion works as a straightening device for LGBTQ teachers (2017), whilst the data in this sample reflects a different reality in terms of disclosure. Alex acknowledges, though the ethos of the school they teach in currently, in theory shouldn't agree with their sexuality, they aptly put it "it's the best of a bad bunch.... they're not homophobic and I'm not being singled out for anything because of my sexuality". The data contrasts what Lillis understands that LGBTQ teachers in denominational schools aren't left with an option to be out (2009). We see for five of the six participants that they are out in denominational schools and comfortable in doing so, even two participants of minority faith schools. There is a misalignment of how schools should be run and are run. In this sample this misalignment facilitates a space through which LGBTQ teachers can perform their sexuality authentically, as school climate becomes a more important feature of the participants than the religious patronage of the school. Through this misalignment Christian schools espouse their lost core Gospel values and allow schools to be reshaped as sites of compassion (Lodge, 2013).

In this sample, non-denominational schools who support LGBTQ identity through its patronage are found to be sites of inauthentic performance for LGBTQ teachers. None of the sample currently teach in non-denominational schools, but Kevin discusses his negative experiences of when he did. Kevin wanted to teach in a ET school as he was "trying to put myself into a position that I was protected under a patronage which valued my sexuality". Kevin first stated the ethos of the school was the problem, but on probing acknowledged it was the leadership of the school which made him uncomfortable. Kevin went on to say that the principal made him feel so uncomfortable that his "sexuality never came up" and instead performed an inauthentic version of himself. Connell's understanding of the importance of school climate here (2014) becomes vital as the leadership didn't facilitate for him to be his

authentic self, even in a school whose ethos offered protection. In this instance school climate again effects how Kevin is authentically himself in all regards and similarly effects his performance of sexuality.

Kevin conflates ethos and school climate, though the line is fine between the two and at times are interrelated. For Kevin school climate “I think boils down to people in the school and more importantly, the leadership ... which would probably be the principal”, Moira further notes that in her specific context the parents help to inform the school climate too, “I kind of landed in a really good place where the parents are massive feminists, who were out canvassing for the repeal campaign”. For this sample it becomes clear that the principal, staff and parents construct the school climate. This becomes a more important feature of a school than its ethos when we consider LGBTQ teachers performing their sexuality in an authentic manner. Ironically, under patronage’s which understand LGBTQ teachers as problematic, teachers in this sample could perform a more authentic version of their self because of the school climate. This is juxtaposed against school’s whose ethos is more welcoming to LGBTQ teachers, but ultimately school climate didn’t facilitate these authentic performances.

Something which becomes clear is that school climate is not a permanent but a fragile reality, as the school climate can shift with the entry of new teachers, principals, board of management members, parents and other school community members. This fragile construction can alter to favour or work against LGBTQ teachers in their performances of the self. Equally this school climate is effected and altered by LGBTQ teachers and in this LGBTQ teachers working against heteronormative structures are seen as far from passive. Though school climate overshadows ethos for these participants, both are minor in comparison to the importance of securing tenure for this study.

Authentic Disclosure

Five of the six participants are out in some sense in their school environment. This echoes Egan's research in which eight out of nine participants were out in some capacity in school (2016). This shift represents an optimistic contrast to earlier research produced in an Irish context (Gowran, 2004). However there seemed to exist a post-coming out and post-gay rhetoric amongst Michael, David and Kevin. Though Griffin's continuum of coming out is twenty seven years old (1992), its value and construction of coming out on a continuum is invaluable. Borrowing this sense of implicitly is also useful, in understanding this post-coming out practice (Griffin, 1992). In this, implicitly, is understood in being out, that is having your sexuality assumed. These participants don't believe in coming out in a grandiose explicit sense, as coming out of the closet has become known to be but rather disclosure in an unassuming manner.

The participants in these data are performing an authentic version of their selves, through post-coming and post-gay rhetoric. Even though it is authentic, on closer examination it has another effect than anticipated. Kevin captures this post-coming out ethic, noting how he never came out at school as a teacher, but was always out, "I don't think I felt the explicit need to come out.... it's not a big deal for me". In Kevin not coming out, he is trying to reduce the need for disclosure of one's sexuality explicitly, undermining the closet and coming out as oppressive experiences. Through this undermining and marking himself through sameness, he works in a manner to how Butler understands that gay identities "expose heterosexuality as an incessant imitation of its own naturalization" (1990, p. 22-23). By not coming out, the presence of his sexuality alongside heterosexuality works to expose and delegitimise heterosexuality as normative and natural.

This essence of Kevin's sexuality not being "a big deal" captures his understanding of his sexuality. As indicated his sexuality doesn't require enormous mental and emotional inputs as it may for other people, or as it may at other stages in his life, but Kevin still is disclosing his sexuality. Allan et al., notes heteronormativity subtly infiltrates the school environment (2008) and in a similar manner Kevin employs the same subtle strategy informing his sexuality, through discussing his "night out in the George...RuPauls Drag Race" and his boyfriend. For Kevin coming out has become inconsequential to himself as a process, but that does not mean the process is absent from his practice. Gray's claim of coming out as a multi-contextual practice (2013) becomes evident here through using indicators and identifiers which are built off of stereotypical assumptions. This post-coming out rhetoric involves LGBTQ teachers, carefully treading on the bayonets blade that Sedgwick notes, one that calls for him to be out in his private life but yet professionally closeted (1990). In practicing a post-coming out ethic, teachers are avoiding marking themselves as a queer teacher and as other (Ferfolja, 1998), they are equating themselves to their cohort. Though this circumventing we lose the subtleties of difference between LGBTQ teachers and straight teachers.

David builds on from this rhetoric and elaborates to how he views his sexuality "it's one facet of me, I don't think it's that important". It's hard not to think of LGBTQ teachers who edit and minimise their presentation to seem less LGBTQ and more competent in the process (Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009) . David here isn't discussing his presentation or behaviours, but is reducing the importance of his sexuality. In doing so he is equating sameness with non-LGBTQ teachers. These practices of post-coming out and post-gay are interconnected. Even though post-coming out undermines the function and role of the closet, it alongside with post-gay work to erode the difference that separates LGBTQ teachers and straight colleagues. LGBTQ teachers are treated through this lens of sameness, when in fact

they should be celebrated through Sedgwick's Axiom 1 centring on difference (1990). This sameness though is focused on "equality and inclusion" but in fact becomes essential in "the maintenance of the status quo" (Gray et al., 2016, p.16). Through this sameness and invisibility of LGBTQ identities, these LGBTQ teachers are seen to be working to maintain heteronormativity, a practice known as homonormativity (2003). Homonormativity thus doesn't allow for difference to be extoled, but works from the ideas and structures of heteronormativity and produces what Duggan understands as "conventional gays" (2002, p. 179). Not only is this key, but through these practices, sexualities which don't fit in with 'conventional' gay sexualities, become tarnished as unacceptable, deviant and other. Though post-coming out and post-gay rhetoric are authentic performances of sexuality these LGBTQ teachers engage with, these performances on examination reinforce the oppressive regime and structures of heteronormativity in schools for LGBTQ teachers.

Authentic Performances

Clothing and physical appearance as being a site of contestation with LGBTQ teachers was a prominent feature in the literature (Brower, 2013; Clarke & Turner, 2007; Davis, 2015). From my sample this was not the case in an Irish context in 2019. All of my participants, those who were out and closeted, felt that they didn't edit their physical presentation, in terms of clothing and appearance. If the participants presentation, works as a to illustrate or hides ones sexual identity (Davis, 2015), there seems to be no modulation of presentation that happens in private versus in that of their professional lives for the participants of the sample. A possible idea may be around Irish school dress codes, with dress codes being more informal in Ireland. In this regard physical presentation, and that of

clothing and appearance are authentically performed by LGBTQ teachers in the construction of their sexualities.

In looking to authentic behaviours, David talks of a an experience at the start of his career eight years ago when he wasn't out, where a child called him out on how he was sitting on his stool "why do you cross your legs like a woman", he shifted how he was sitting and became more conscious of this. In this assumption David was sitting in a way that was stereotypical of a female to sit and this was recognised by a child in his class. He stated after this, that he didn't sit like this, but "at the time I was in the closet and it was a big concern". Here his gender performance operated as a an indicator of his sexuality. We also what see what Khayatt discusses in that children can make assumptions of teachers sexuality (1999). This presence of children's ability to make assumptions based on their schemas of knowledge surrounding sexuality is one which becomes part of school life for teachers and students. David mimics heterosexual performances of gender in creating an inauthentic performance of himself and manages how he sits. David is imitating teacher 'realness' and in doing so the gender stereotypes that come with the assumption, leaving no room for his own authenticity in this instance.

Another key practice that becomes apparent is that Moira feels that she cannot be herself and has to edit her behaviour in the staffroom, even though she is out to school personal. This site of the staffroom is recognised as a site of prime tension for LGBTQ teachers (Higgins et al., 2015). Moira feels she can't be her authentic self and edits her camp behaviour and mannerism "I just have the expansive nature of a stereotypical gay male. Sometimes I can be soft butch and other times femme. I'd limit my campness in the staffroom.... I've been expressive using my hands but in staffroom I've had to reign it in". This editing of behaviour is a clear conscious management of one's self (Clarke & Turner, 2007) and in turn ones authentic self. In this Moira performs a 'realness' and imitates non-

LGBTQ behaviours and what she feels is expected of her. In doing this she is delegitimising her authentic self and in turn legitimating a homonormative identity, a LGBTQ identity working from the confines of heteronormativity, to support it and reproduce it. Moira is performing her sexuality through heteronormative means and to heteronormative judgement and acceptance. Not only does this delegitimise her own identity, but in turns delegitimises other potential non-normative identities in the school.

The stark contrast to this particular performance is that when the context changes from fellow teachers to students, so too does Moira's ability to be authentically herself though her camp nature "the kids would see more of that..... children don't see something wrong with it until they are told there is something wrong the behaviour". Moira still at present is involved in this identity negotiation between her authentic self and teacher 'realness'. Even though she is out to all in the school, this 'realness' is still performed. What is quite a contrast, is that with David previously he was being policed by his students but for Moira her students allowed her to be authentically herself.

Conclusion

In exploring how LGBTQ teachers perform their sexualities, it is clear that presently it is still a mixture of authentic and inauthentic performances which are found in the data. A key point that arises from the data is that even authentic performances of sexuality can have a dire consequence, as these performances make any other such performance that doesn't fit in with heteronormative structures as a deviant, and other. These heteronormative structures construct LGBTQ performances of sexuality through the homogeneity of heterosexuality. Sedgwick's Axiom rings clear to me that we should understand people as different to each other (1990) and begin to construct the tools to do so ourselves.

Conclusion

Findings

This study set out to explore LGBTQ teachers performances of sexualities in a selection of Irish primary schools. These performances were engaged with through a queer lens. This study found that the phenomenon of signing a permanent contract was the most important aspect in LGBTQ teachers performing an authentic version of themselves, with Alex and Moira disclosing their, previously hidden, sexuality instantly after gaining tenure. This study also found that in situations where this permanency is removed participants performed an inauthentic version of themselves, regarding their sexuality in interviews. The threat of 37.1 though not as pronounced, still exists for some LGBTQ teachers who were sceptical of it even through its amended configuration.

Another finding was that participants of denominational and minority faith schools were still capable, post permanency of performing authentic versions of their sexuality, with five of the six participants being out in some manner. At the same time Kevin notes their attraction to the ET model as it valued his sexuality, however as of the school climate and more specifically leadership, he felt he couldn't be his authentic self. School climate is found to be in this sample a more important feature of the school than ethos when we consider LGBTQ teachers performing a more authentic sexuality.

An insightful unearthing is that half of the sample, engaged with an authentic post-coming out rhetoric. This rhetoric undermined the closet and the desire to come out pushing LGBTQ teachers to normalise themselves against their teaching cohort. This normalisation leads to a construction of the LGBTQ teacher through sameness, of straight teachers. This homogeneity becomes vivified through a post-gay rhetoric which reduces the importance of

LGBTQ teacher's sexuality. This sameness equates to LGBTQ teachers practicing homonormativity. In doing so LGBTQ teachers shed their unique difference of sexuality and assimilate to heteronormativity in what is deemed to be conventional gay sexualities.

Another finding is that LGBTQ teachers do not edit their physical presentation or appearance between that of their professional and private lives. A possible insight may be due to Irish school dress codes being informal, it hasn't been an issue. The research indicates that Moira doesn't perform an authentic version of herself in the staffroom whilst she edits her performance of herself to seem less camp. In doing this, Moira denies her authentic self a place in her professional life. A stark contrast exists that with students Moira feels she can be authentically herself as a camp woman. When Moira performs an inauthentic version of herself which her colleagues accept, Moira does so though homonormative inauthentic performances.

These findings through the anchors position LGBTQ teachers as performing a mix of performances of sexualities. It is quite evident the role that security of tenure plays in LGBTQ teachers disclosing their sexuality, supported by school climate. We see even from authentic performances of disclosure, that a post-coming out and post-gay rhetoric equates LGBTQ teachers through a lens of sameness which ultimately becomes damaging for LGBTQ sexualities that fail to assimilate to heteronormativity or as framed as deviant. Similarly LGBTQ teachers perform their sexuality mediated through heteronormativity and heterosexual structures and in Moira's case can perform her sexuality more authentically with students in the classroom than with her colleagues in the staffroom. Performances of LGBTQ teachers sexuality are at times in conflict with one another but what is clear is that these performances are happening in a heteronormative environment, and through examining them from a queer perspective we can begin to critically examine and dissect the reality for LGBTQ teachers.

Limitations

As with all research there exist limitations, but as with acknowledging one's own positionality by making transparent the limitations it acknowledges the locus of the study. A concern would be, that the data collected for the most part, five of the participants are employed in Dublin, with one being employed in a rural setting. The data comes from Dublin, which is understood by participants as being a very different landscape for a LGBTQ teacher than in rural Ireland. Another limitation of the study is the sample size. I tried to access further participants, using various lines of enquiry as noted previous but these weren't successful. With the sample itself, accessing it through INTO LGBT Group means that the participants had to be out in some capacity, be it a personal one or within a work environment, meaning that the views of people who are fully closeted are not represented in the data.

Future Research

From the study conducted, possible areas of future research became apparent. An area that was highlighted by multiple participants was the role of community and specifically the INTO LGBT Teachers Group and its role in gaining political reform as well as it operating as a support network. Another aspect which also would be an area for future research would be an exploration of trans or non-binary identified teachers into their experiences in an Irish context. A future research project may be how as teachers we can queer heteronormative curriculums complimentary to a discrete LGBTQ related curriculum.

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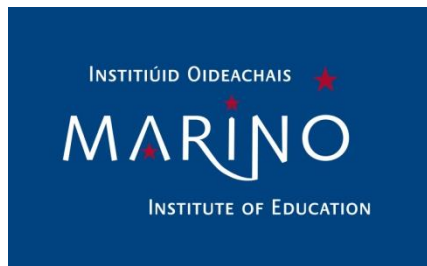
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Appendix I - Invitation to Participate



Information Letter for Invitation to be Interviewed

Dear...

This document is an invitation to consider participating in research that I am engaged with as part of the Professional Master of Education in Marino Institute of Education, under the supervision of Dr. Rory McDaid. I will be exploring non-heterosexual identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) teachers in Irish Primary Schools.

This interview is about capturing the experience and performance of sexuality of LGBTQ teachers.

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and identity. While the interviews will be recorded, the recording will be saved on a password-protected computer and will be destroyed in line with MIE requirements. Your name will not appear on the transcripts of the interviews, though with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Information shared is completely confidential. The interview will deal with areas of school life and sexuality, that some participants may feel are sensitive in nature, namely coming out and how teachers perform their sexuality. As I am aware this may be sensitive for some participants, I want to ensure that care and diligence to the subject topic I will provide. At any time, even after interviews are carried out, you can withdraw your participation from this research by contacting myself or my supervisor Dr. Rory McDaid.

Participation in this research will require an **hour** approximately of your time. During this time, you will be interviewed on your personal experience as a LGBTQ teacher. The interview will be conducted in a safe space of your choice (e.g. a private office in Marino Institute of Education).

If you have any questions regarding this research, or would like any additional information, please contact me at xxx xxxxxxx or by e-mail at mielgbtqresearch@gmail.com. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Rory McDaid, by e-mail at xxxx

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Marino Ethics Research Committee (MERC). If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact the chair of the MERC, Seán Delaney, at 01-xxxxxxx.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Appendix II - Interview Question Guide

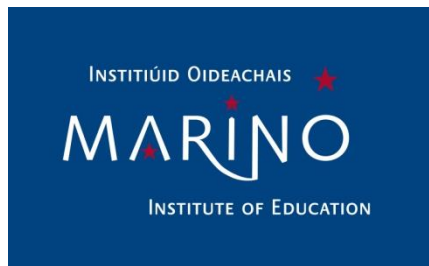
Briefly explain the focus of the research./ Positionality

Questions:

General Context:

1. How do you identify? A bit about yourself?
2. Do you acknowledge your sexuality as important to your teaching?
3. Do you feel like when at work you are your authentic self?
 - a. Is it important for teachers to be themselves whilst teaching?
 - b. What are the barriers from allowing you to fulfil this?
4. Do you deal with issues around gender and sexuality as they appear in class or pre-emptively?
 - a. How have you felt approaching these issues?
 - b. Have you experienced any negativity in the school and community surrounding approaching queer topics?
5. Have you disclosed your sexuality to someone?
 - a. When did you disclose your sexuality to other people? Family? Friends? Principal? Parents? Students?
 - b. Was there a reason you came out ?
 - c. Were there any obstacles to coming out?
 - d. How did you come out and what was the reception ?
 - e. Have you come out to pupils?
6. What was your experience at the time of Marriage Equality within the school?
 - a. Would you like to get married?
 - b. Have children?
7. Do you feel your presentation in school expresses you? – Can you present in school how you would like to present? Why? – Where and when can you present as you would like to?
8. What are your experience in the staffroom?
 - a. Are you included with conversation with others? What type of conversation is it? What is discussed? Are you authentic in the conversation?
 - b. Do you discuss how you spent your time at the weekend, summer holiday plans, midterm plans etc? Do you include partners/gay friends or leave them out?
 - c. Do you ever discuss queer related things in the staffroom? What reception does it get? Queer specific events?
 - d. Did you discuss ME or other queer social issues in the Staffroom?
 - e. Are you ever invited to socialise outside of school context? In what context? What activities? Do you ever organise any of these?
 - f. Do you feel like that there are queer allies in the staff?
 - g. How is the climate of the school as a whole? Is it inviting to difference?

Appendix III – Consent Form



Consent Form

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Darragh Horgan as part of the Professional Master of Education in Marino Institute of Education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher or contacting his supervisor.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Marino Ethics Research Committee (MERC). I was informed if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Chairperson of MERC, Seán Delaney, at 01-xxxxxxx, or the supervisor of this study, Dr. Rory McDaid, at 01-xxxxxxx.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

- Yes
- No

I have agreed to have my interview tape recorded.

- Yes
- No

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

- Yes
- No

Participant's Name (please print) _____

Participants Signature _____ Date _____

Researchers Name _____

Researchers Signature _____ Date _____