

**“IT’S ALMOST LIKE AN OWNERSHIP OF MY BODY”:
NEGOTIATING IDENTITY AND MARGINALISATION IN THE
LIVES OF BISEXUAL AND OTHER PLURISEXUAL WOMEN**

Tara Pond

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Clinical Sciences

Auckland University of Technology

September 2020

Abstract

Bisexuality is becoming increasingly visible as the diversity of sexual identities is becoming more recognised in mainstream Anglo-Western societies. At the same time, rigid categorisations that views sexual identity as a heterosexual-homosexual binary remains entrenched in our social and academic contexts. As a result, bisexual people face suppression and erasure of their sexual identity. Further, recent movements within queer spaces have led to a shift in the languaging around bisexuality and attraction to multiple genders; bisexuality being only one identity under the plurisexual umbrella. However, little research has explored bisexuality alongside new plurisexual identities and the lives of people who identify with them. This thesis identifies large gaps in psychological literature surrounding the intersecting identities of plurisexual women and examines how discourses of sexual identity – and more specifically bisexuality and plurisexuality – shape plurisexual women’s social and intimate lives, and constructions of their sexual identity. Using a social constructionist epistemology, and underpinned by intersectionality theory and critical feminism, an exploratory mixed-method approach was taken. Data were collected from a community-based sample through interviews (n = 20) and a quantitative online survey (n = 994) with women who identified as attracted to multiple genders. This thesis uses descriptive statistics and a critical thematic analysis to critically explore the ways plurisexual women talk about their experiences and identities related to their plurisexuality and how this is informed by, or contravenes, dominant discourses around plurisexuality. The data indicated that bisexuality and other plurisexualities are fraught and contradictory. Plurisexual women experienced their sexual identities as spaces for political action and as sites for both community and empowerment, and alienation and marginalisation. Dominant and counter discourses were drawn on by plurisexual women to understand their sexual identities. These findings are placed in the context of how new knowledges can lead to changes in how plurisexuality is experienced, to better deconstruct the marginalisation of plurisexual women.

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature: _____ Date: 29/09/2020

Acknowledgements

This thesis felt like a work of many, each sharing a piece of guidance, knowledge, and/or encouragement with me. I firstly want to acknowledge my supervisory team – Dr Pani Farvid and Dr Paula Collens. Thank you to you both for sharing your expertise and passion for research with me. You both grounded me and help carve the path for this thesis. Thank you to Pani for pushing me and my potential which allowed me to create a work I am so proud of. Thank you to Paula for your consistently thoughtful guidance.

I would like to acknowledge how incredibly grateful I am to the interviewees and survey respondents – women that shared their stories, thoughts, and opinions with me. They challenged me, shaped my work and trusted me – thank you. Thank you to my transcribers and proof-readers – the time, effort, and care you placed into helping me was very valued. A special shoutout to Abby, Mum, and Sheryl for being so willing to read over my never-ending chapters. I would very much like to acknowledge and thank the bisexual women of Aotearoa, particularly the elders of the community including Sandra Dickson and Heather Came, for providing me with insights into the history of the mahi that went into building the community and freedom we have today and encouraging the new generation of activism and advocacy.

Finally, thank you to my family for supporting me through a three (and a bit) year passion project. Thank you for being so encouraging when I talked about my work and what was bugging me about how bisexuality was depicted on TV or the Internet that week. I do not know how to possibly thank my wife, Victoria, for everything but I will definitely try. I am so glad I did not take the advice to not talk to your partner about your thesis because it will bore them. You encourage my passion for relentlessly inserting bisexuality into almost every conversation, you have read every word of my thesis more than once, I don't know how many times you have had to repeat that my worth is not determined by my productivity. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Whakawhetai ki a koutou to everyone who joined me on this journey, no matter how long you walked beside me for.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE An Introduction: What Is Plurisexuality and Why Does It Matter?	1
A note on language.....	2
The plurisexual context.....	7
Thesis parameters and aims	10
Epistemological framework and theoretical positionings	11
<i>Social constructionism</i>	11
<i>Critical feminism</i>	12
<i>Intersectionality theory</i>	14
Thesis aims and overview	16
PART ONE	18
CHAPTER TWO Situating Plurisexuality: From Sexology to ‘Post-Bisexuality’	19
The creation of sexual orientation	19
‘Experts’ of sexuality.....	23
Gay liberation and the creation of the queer social identity	25
<i>Plurisexuality in Aotearoa/New Zealand</i>	29
Popular culture, Internet culture, queer culture.....	34
<i>Contemporary popular culture</i>	34
<i>The Internet and ‘post-bisexual’ culture</i>	39
<i>Post-bisexual identities</i>	42
Chapter summary.....	47
CHAPTER THREE Constructing a Plurisexual Identity: A Literature Review	48
Understanding sexuality: two paradigms	48
Sexual identity development theories.....	51
Sexual identity disclosure	56
Measuring plurisexuality.....	59
Rainbow identities.....	64
<i>Plurisexual and queer identities</i>	64
<i>Queer</i>	67
<i>Gay and plurisexual identity variances</i>	68
Chapter Summary.....	71
CHAPTER FOUR Experiencing a Plurisexual Identity: A Literature Review	73
Marginalisation and erasure	73
<i>Erasure and invisibility</i>	74
<i>Dominant attitudes towards plurisexuality</i>	76
<i>Stereotypes</i>	77
<i>Stigma and discrimination</i>	79
<i>Microaggressions</i>	81
<i>Community un/building</i>	82
Intersectional considerations.....	83

<i>Gender</i>	84
<i>Gender diversity</i>	85
<i>Ethnicity</i>	86
<i>Age</i>	88
Consequences of marginalisation	89
<i>Mental health</i>	91
<i>Physical health and risk behaviours</i>	94
<i>Interventions</i>	96
<i>Sexual assault</i>	97
Plurisexual women’s intimate lives	99
<i>Romantic relationships</i>	100
<i>Sexual relationships and behaviours</i>	105
Plurisexual research in Aotearoa/New Zealand	106
Project focus and addressing research gaps	107
<i>Research questions</i>	108
PART TWO	109
CHAPTER FIVE Capturing Plurisexual Lives: Method	110
Mixed methodology	110
Ethical concerns.....	113
Reflexivity.....	115
Phase one: qualitative interviews	117
<i>Recruitment</i>	117
<i>Participants</i>	119
<i>Data collection</i>	122
<i>Data analysis</i>	125
Phase two: Quantitative survey	132
<i>Design</i>	132
<i>Measures</i>	133
<i>Recruitment</i>	134
<i>Participants</i>	134
<i>Analysis</i>	136
Summary	138
CHAPTER SIX Survey Results: Characteristics of Plurisexual Women’s Lives and Experiences in Aotearoa	139
Sexual identity.....	139
<i>Sexual identity terms</i>	139
<i>Age</i>	142
<i>Sexual identity opinions</i>	145
<i>Social groupings and sexual identity</i>	146
<i>Opinions on sexual identity terms</i>	147
<i>Attraction</i>	149
<i>Sexual identity disclosure</i>	150

<i>Community</i>	153
<i>Experiences of binegativity</i>	154
<i>Media</i>	159
Relationships.....	160
<i>Past and current relationships overview</i>	160
<i>Relationship preferences</i>	162
<i>Relationships and sexual identity</i>	163
<i>Dating</i>	164
Sex.....	165
<i>Sex statistical overview</i>	165
<i>One-off or casual sex</i>	166
<i>Sexual health</i>	167
Mental health.....	168
Sexual assault.....	169
Chapter summary.....	170
CHAPTER SEVEN Discussion of Survey Results: Sexual Identity Characteristics and Experiences ..	171
Sexual Identity.....	171
<i>Sexual identity terms</i>	171
<i>Identification and disclosure</i>	176
<i>Attraction</i>	179
Social experiences and marginalisation.....	181
<i>Community</i>	181
<i>Bi-negativity and attitudes towards plurisexuality</i>	182
<i>Sexual Violence</i>	185
Romantic relationships.....	186
<i>Relationship types</i>	186
<i>Plurisexual women’s partners’ gender and sexual identities</i>	188
<i>Dating experiences</i>	191
Sexual experiences and sexual health.....	192
<i>Casual sex</i>	194
<i>Sexual health</i>	196
Chapter summary.....	198
PART THREE	199
PREFACE TO PART THREE	200
Bisexuality as socially unacceptable.....	201
<i>Bisexuals as hypersexual</i>	202
<i>Bisexuality as invisible</i>	205
<i>Bisexuality as transient</i>	208
CHAPTER EIGHT Negotiating Hetero-society.....	211
Heterosexuality as the default.....	211
Normativity and delightful rebellion.....	216

Discrimination and safety	220
Chapter summary	224
CHAPTER NINE The Labour of Plurisexuality	225
Becoming a bi expert	226
A decision to educate	231
‘I’m just me’ – a private identity	237
Chapter summary	241
CHAPTER TEN Theme Three: The Linguaging of Plurisexuality	242
(Pluri)sexuality is innate	243
The search for sexual ‘authenticity’	249
The regulation of plurisexuality	255
Gatekeeping and policing	262
Chapter summary	268
CHAPTER ELEVEN Negotiating Identity and Marginalisation as Plurisexual Women: Conclusions 270	270
Thesis summary	270
Conclusions and insights	271
<i>Responding to the research questions</i>	271
<i>Research limitations and future directions</i>	280
Final thoughts	284
REFERENCES	285
GLOSSARY	312
APPENDISES	314
Appendix A: Recruitment posters	314
Appendix B: Interview Participant Information Sheet	316
Appendix C: Interview Consent Form	319
Appendix D: Interview Guide	320
Appendix E: Demographic Form for Interviewees	321
Appendix F: Key Nodes for Survey Construction	322
Appendix G: Survey Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form	323
Appendix H: Summary Tables of Interest	326

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>The theorised structures of marginalisation and their outcomes for plurisexual people (adapted from Yoshino, 2000).</i>	74
Figure 2. <i>Sequential exploratory mixed method research design. Adapted from Cameron (2009) and Hesse-Biber (2010).</i>	112
Figure 3. <i>Original thematic map for one theme with initial titles and descriptions of each sub-theme.</i>	130
Figure 4. <i>Further refinement of theme from Figure 3. represented by a thematic map with updated titles and descriptions.</i>	131
Figure 5. <i>The number of survey respondents that identified with sexual identity terms when given the option of multiple choice.</i>	140
Figure 6. <i>A comparison of survey respondents sexual identity terms they prefer to identify with and the sexual identity term they use the most often.</i>	141
Figure 7. <i>The age that respondents began identifying with their sexual identity compared to the age that respondents began disclosing their sexual identity to others.</i>	144
Figure 8. <i>A comparison of survey respondents' opinions of whether bisexual and pansexual are inclusive terms.</i>	148
Figure 9. <i>A comparison of survey respondents' opinions of whether bisexual and pansexual are binary terms.</i>	148
Figure 10. <i>A comparison of survey respondents' opinions of whether bisexual and pansexual are transphobic terms.</i>	149
Figure 11. <i>A comparison of survey respondents' opinions about whether they felt misunderstood by straight men, straight women, gay men, and lesbians.</i>	156
Figure 12. <i>A comparison of survey respondents' opinions about whether they were seen negatively by straight men, straight women, gay men, and lesbians.</i>	157
Figure 13. <i>A comparison of whether survey respondents feel sexualised by society, people they know, and partners/potential partners.</i>	159
Figure 14. <i>Comparison of the sexual identities of past and current partners of respondents by gender.</i>	162

List of Tables

Table 1. <i>Demographics of Interview Participants</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 2. <i>Basic relevant information about interview participants</i>	121
Table 3. <i>Chi square test of difference between the sexual identity terms respondents used the most and the sexual identity terms they prefer to use</i>	143
Table 4. <i>Chi square test of difference between respondents answer to the question ‘Have you explicitly disclosed your sexual identity to my family?’ and their level of agreement with the statement ‘Disclosing sexual identity to people close to me is important’</i>	152

CHAPTER ONE

An Introduction: What Is Plurisexuality and Why Does It Matter?

*I am a river
Flowing at will
I curve and curl round craters and cracks
I roar and froth over boulders and roots.
Not for me the gated canals
Parallel, rigid
Separate or synked
Linked and constrained
By narrow artifice.
Neither dyked
nor straight,
I rush headlong
To the wild embrace of the sea (Porzolt, 1986)¹*

Bisexuality is a stigmatised term (Brewster & Moradi, 2010; Callis, 2013). For some, it invokes the AIDS epidemic – husbands cheating on their wives with men and stigmatising bisexual-identified men for decades to come (Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 1994). For others, bisexuality is performative – with women “hooking up” with each other at parties in order to titillate heterosexual men or viewing sexuality as fluid and unknowable (Fahs, 2009; Hayfield, Clarke, & Halliwell, 2014). Bisexuality is ‘lesbian until graduation’ or ‘barsexual’² (Thompson, 2006), bisexuality is plotlines in teen shows where bisexual women only date men, unless it is ‘sweeps week’³ (Corey, 2017; Diamond, 2005). Recently, bisexuality has come with different baggage; it can be seen as transphobic, as an atavistic orientation that invokes outdated thinking of gender (Elizabeth, 2013). Bisexuality is young, white, and feminine (Fahs, 2009; Ghabrial, 2019). Bisexuality is also seen as ‘trendy’, a perpetual phase (Angelides, 2001). Within and outside these perceptions sits bisexual-identified people – who may navigate such tropes about their identity on a daily basis.

¹ For context, this poem is from a letter to the editor of New Zealand feminist magazine *Broadsheet* in 1986. It was written in response to an article in the previous issue of *Broadsheet* that the letter writer saw as alienating to bisexual women. The poem is reprinted here with permission from the author.

² These terms are intended to imply that bisexuality is an identity that only occurs at university or in social settings like parties, bars, and clubs.

³ ‘Sweeps week’ is a week that occurs four times a year where the data of television audiences are recorded. During these weeks, television shows often create sensationalised storylines to draw in more viewers.

In this introduction, the topic of interest in this thesis will be contextualised briefly. Following this, the questions this research aims to answer, and the goals and parameters of this thesis will be discussed. The theoretical and epistemological positions will also be described, as well as the specific approaches used to answer the research questions. Finally, there will be an overview of the thesis with a brief outline of each chapter.

A note on language

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, bisexuality is defined as “of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to both men and women” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The Oxford English Dictionary describes bisexuality in humans as “The state or quality of being sexually attracted to both men and women; bisexual character or identity” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018)⁴. Comparatively, The Bisexual Resource Center defines bisexuality as romantic and/or sexual attraction to more than one gender. Finally, Robyn Ochs, a bisexual activist, describes bisexuality thusly: “I call myself bisexual because I acknowledge that I have in myself the potential to be attracted –romantically and/or sexually– to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.” (Ochs, n.d.). The main difference between the former and latter two quotes is the gender of the object of attraction; Merriam-Webster and the Oxford English Dictionary talk about “*both* men and women”, Ochs and the Bisexual Resource Center emphasise *multiple* genders without naming men and women as the only genders. This reveals one of the largest tensions for bisexual people in recent decades and is one of the potential causes for the rapid expansion of terms which can be understood as having broadly similar definitions to bisexuality. Within this thesis, bisexuality is defined in line with bisexual activists – as the romantic and/or sexual attraction to multiple genders⁵.

⁴ Bisexuality is also used in biology to describe animals or plants that have two sexes.

⁵ Terms used in this thesis are defined explicitly in the glossary.

The languaging of sexual identity can be indistinct and muddled. Discourses of sexuality in academia and Western society are often equally unclear. Popular sexuality models often conceptualise sexual orientation as an innate mechanism that directs our sexual attractions, behaviours, and identity (despite these three variables not being found to be congruent in research) (Burr, 2015). While found in some sexuality research, models of sexual orientation that are binary (heterosexual-homosexual) or use three discrete categories (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual) have been critiqued as too broad to be adequately indicative of people's experienced sexual identities (Klein, Sepekoff, & Wolf, 1985). To attend to this critique, in recent decades some sexuality researchers have suggested intermediary categories (i.e., mostly heterosexual, mostly homosexual) as more nuanced but still discrete categories to be used as measures for sexual orientation (e.g., Savin-Williams, 2014). These intermediary categories have been popular in psychological research and led to a line of health research looking at the experiences of 'mostly heterosexual' people (e.g., Thompson & Morgan, 2008; Worthen, 2017). The problems that arise from this concept of sexual orientation (as made up of heterosexual, mostly heterosexual, bisexual, mostly homosexual, and homosexual) are twofold: these categories are not born from the identities that individuals actually use, and they conflate attraction, behaviour, and identity (Galupo, Davis, Gryniewicz, & Mitchell, 2014; Galupo, Mitchell, & Davis, 2015). The labels used in an academic context are distinct from those used in a community and/or social context (Galupo, 2018). Labels used "on the ground" at a community level to describe nuances in sexual identity and/or sexual orientation⁶ such as pansexual, queer, and fluid (defined below) are often ignored in sexuality research or mislabelled as bisexuality. Expansion of sexuality identity terms challenges notions of sexual orientation because they are based on *social* ideas of sexuality rather than concepts of sexual orientation as an innate drive (see **Chapters two** and **ten**). Further, these labels are often consciously chosen to challenge dominant categories of sexuality (Galupo, 2018). Therefore, it is important for psychological research to

⁶ The differences between the concepts of 'sexual orientation' and 'sexual identity' will be explored in Chapters two and three.

examine the identities that are being increasingly used by non-heterosexual people to signal their attraction to multiple genders. Researchers also need to explore how this may shift how identities such as bisexuality are seen and used by people who are attracted to multiple genders.

As some researchers try to be conscious of the social and/or community-based conceptualisations of sexual identity, language that attends to the critiques of the academic conceptualisations of sexual orientation has begun to be used and disseminated. For example, a movement away from 'sexual orientation' to 'sexual identity' in some sexuality literature reduces the focus on a biological model of sexual identity and instead places the agency of sexuality onto individuals to choose their identity terms (which may be irrespective of empirically measurable sexual and romantic attractions and behaviours) (e.g., Diamond, 2006b; Harper & Swanson, 2019; Rust, 1993a). For academics who work in the domain of bisexuality and attraction to multiple genders research, using terms to account for the diversity of identities is important. Therefore, there has been an increased popularity in the last few years for critical and social constructionist sexuality research to use the term 'plurisexual' as an umbrella for sexual identities such as bisexuality, pansexuality, and queer (e.g., Flanders, Anderson, Tarasoff, & Robinson, 2019a; Mitchell, Davis, & Galupo, 2015). The term plurisexual distinguishes the sexual identities of people attracted to multiple genders from monosexual identities (meaning identities that are defined by their attraction to a singular gender such as homosexuality and heterosexuality) and also allows for a breadth of sexual expression. Using the term 'plurisexual' as an umbrella term may benefit people with identities that would typically be erased in psychological research (and dominant three or five-identity models of sexual orientation) or amalgamated into bisexuality.

In this thesis, the term plurisexual is used as an umbrella term to encompass sexual identities that are defined by their attraction (or potential for attraction) to multiple genders. This includes identities such as bisexuality – which is ubiquitously associated with attraction to multiple genders, pansexual – which is becoming increasingly popular to signal attraction to people irrespective of

their gender (Galupo, Ramirez, & Pulice-Farrow, 2016), queer – a term that tries to avoid definition but is broadly used to “denote identities that do not adhere to heterosexual norms” (Schimanski & Treharne, 2018, p. 1), and other sexuality identities that are sometimes used alongside these terms. In this way, plurisexual individuals are able to individualise broad and ambiguous identities (including omnisexuality, polysexuality, and pomosexuality⁷) (Goldhill, 2018; Paasonen & Spišák, 2018).

Plurisexual research is in its early stages. Most sexuality research within and outside of psychology continues to regard bisexuality as the only identity ‘between’ heterosexuality and homosexuality, with pansexuality or other plurisexual identities considered ‘micro-identities’ under this umbrella (Cover, 2018a). Some research instead uses the term ‘non-monosexual’ as another umbrella term for attraction to multiple genders (e.g., Flanders, Robinson, Legge, & Tarasoff, 2016; Meyer, 2019) but this term has been critiqued for positioning monosexuality as normative (Mitchell et al., 2015). ‘Plurisexual’ as an umbrella term is intended to represent identities such as pansexual, queer, and fluid that have been predominantly ignored in psychological literature while also continuing to acknowledge the value of examining bisexuality (Mitchell et al., 2015). It is important to note, however, that ‘plurisexual’ is not a term used in community spaces. Instead, the term ‘bi+’ is often used in rainbow organisations to be inclusive of the heterogeneity of multiple-gender attracted people. It is essential to acknowledge that while plurisexual is a term that is not used by the population being studied, it has been carefully selected for use in this thesis to signal the broad identities and experiences that fall under attraction to multiple genders without erasing the experiences of people who identify with a specific sexual identity.

In this thesis the terms bisexual and plurisexual are not used interchangeably. The newness of the study of plurisexuality (and the limited social and academic recognition of plurisexual identities outside of bisexuality) makes speaking about plurisexuality as a broad category difficult. Academic

⁷ See glossary for definitions of these identities.

literature and sexuality discourses – both historically and presently – are dominated by the term ‘bisexuality’. In subsequent chapters, ‘bisexuality’ is used when discussing literature that refers explicitly to bisexuality and/or bisexual people; and equally, ‘pansexual’ is used when discussing literature that refers explicitly to pansexuality (and/or pansexual people). Yet when discussing people who identify as attracted to multiple genders more broadly, unless more specific terms are used (such as in the case of research participants) they will be described using the umbrella term plurisexual.

As a final note on the language used in this thesis, queer is used as both an identity (queer-identified) and as descriptor that encompasses all non-heterosexual sexual-identities (i.e. gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual et cetera). While this usage of queer is a common practice at a community level, in academic research on non-heterosexual identities the acronym LGB is most often used to denote these populations (e.g., Fredriksen-Goldsen, Kim, Barkan, Muraco, & Hoy-Ellis, 2013; Watson, Shahin, & Arbeit, 2018b) (although this may be changing, see Byron, Robards, Hanckel, Vivienne, and Churchill (2019); Schimanski and Treharne (2018)). However, as ‘LGB’ overlooks queer identities that are not lesbian, gay or bisexual, queer is deemed a more inclusive term to use in this thesis. Further, there are a variety of acronyms such as LGBT, LGBTQIAA+ used at the community level and in psychology to encompass transgender, gender diverse and queer sexual identities and communities. To be inclusive of the diverse number of marginalised genders and sexual identities within these communities the term ‘rainbow communities’ will be used throughout this thesis – a common practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand⁸ but not in academia largely. For clarity, the definitions of the common terms used in this thesis are described in the glossary (p. 312).

⁸ Aotearoa is the name originally given to New Zealand by Māori/tangata whenua (tangata whenua translates to the people of the land). Throughout this thesis, Aotearoa/New Zealand will be used to align with decolonising practices.

The plurisexual context

Conclusive statistics on what percentage of the population is plurisexual is near impossible to accurately acquire. This is due to reasons such as different sampling techniques, a high percentage of this population not having disclosed their identity, and debates on how to define and classify these identities. However, research *has* consistently found that there are more people who identify as bisexual than gay or lesbian (Copen, Chandra, & Febo-Vazquez, 2016; Gates, 2011). Research conducted in the United Kingdom and the United States have also found that the number of people identifying as bisexual and other plurisexual identities is increasing (Copen et al., 2016; Sanders, 2020).

The comparatively high proportion of people who identify with plurisexual identities is surprising because plurisexuality is seen in Anglo-Western society as fraught. Our society is heteronormative, meaning there is an “unspoken social contract that obliges consideration of heterosexuality as normal or natural and defines the boundaries of acceptable or normal heterosexuality” (Habarth, 2015, pp. 166-167). Heteronormativity creates an unwelcome social environment for people who defy social pressures to conform to heterosexuality (Habarth, 2015; Rich, 1980). Scholars have extended the well documented concept of heteronormativity to argue that we also live in a mononormative environment (i.e., one that privileges attraction to one gender) (Monro, 2015; Yoshino, 2000). Mononormativity is propagated by dominant discourses of sexuality that perpetuate the idea that there are two ‘natural’ and opposite sexual orientations – heterosexuality and homosexuality (which are described in this thesis as monosexual identities). Mononormativity is the widely accepted suggestion that people tend to be either heterosexual *or* homosexual and that anything ‘in between’ is a transient identity (Roberts, Horne, & Hoyt, 2015). Therefore, has been argued that plurisexual people experience ‘double discrimination’ in the form of heterosexism *and* monosexism (Friedman et al., 2014).

Monosexism has been found to lead to various negative outcomes for plurisexual people (Dyar & Feinstein, 2018). Monosexism can erase the legitimacy of plurisexuality in society (a concept known as bi-erasure) and alienate plurisexual people through 'bi-negativity' – the social, cultural and structural marginalisation of plurisexuals⁹ (Yoshino, 2000). On a systemic level, erasure and marginalisation perpetuates institutional, social, cultural and legal discrimination and violence against plurisexual identified people (Klesse, 2011; Marcus, 2018). Interpersonally, plurisexual people often experience stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination from heterosexual people and people within rainbow communities (Yost & Thomas, 2012). Rainbow communities, particularly gay and lesbian people have been consistently found to view plurisexual people as on the fence between heterosexuality and homosexuality due to their attraction to multiple genders (Alarie & Gaudet, 2013; Brewster & Moradi, 2010; McLean, 2008a). Further, research has repeatedly indicated that lesbians perceive bisexual women as untrustworthy and indecisive, and as a result are unlikely to associate with bisexual women (Friedman et al., 2014; Klesse, 2005, 2011; Matsick & Rubin, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2015; Mulick & Wright, 2002; Rust, 1993b). These stereotypes have been found to lead to plurisexual people often feeling ostracised from rainbow communities (Dodge et al., 2016; Hayfield et al., 2014).

The social experiences and marginalisation of plurisexual people is highly gendered. Research has found that women are significantly more likely to identify as bisexual than men – with up to two-thirds disparity (Copen et al., 2016; Gates, 2011; Sanders, 2020). It has been theorised that this is due to the stigma that bisexual men acquired during the HIV/AIDS epidemic which has not yet dissipated (Mitchell et al., 2015). Other research hypothesises that women are encouraged to embrace fluid sexuality, while masculine sexuality is seen as more rigid, and thus men are more likely to identify with a monosexual sexual identity (Baumeister, 2000). Plurisexual men and women

⁹ Concepts such as 'bi-negativity' and 'bi-erasure' incorporate the marginalisation experienced by plurisexual people who do not identify as bisexual but the language surrounding these concepts has not caught up to include non-bisexual plurisexual people (yet).

have been found to experience discrimination differently; plurisexual men experience higher degrees of hostility from heterosexual people than plurisexual women (de Bruin & Arndt, 2010; Sarno, Newcomb, Feinstein, & Mustanski, 2020; Yost & Thomas, 2012). Plurisexual women's experiences, on the other hand, have been shaped by sexism and the exploitation of their sexuality for (heterosexual) men's consumption (Mitchell et al., 2015; Thompson, 2006). We can see this exoticisation of women's plurisexuality through the concept of 'performative bisexuality', where some women face increased pressure to perform same-sex behaviours, such as kissing or having sex with other women, in front of men (Fahs, 2009; Fahs & Koerth, 2018). Research has shown that heterosexual men find 'bisexual behaviour' between women sexually arousing (Feinstein, Dyar, Bhatia, Latack, & Davila, 2016; Yost & Thomas, 2012). Consequently, women's plurisexual identities have been sexualised in media, including in television shows, award shows, films, and pornography (Fahs, 2009). The outcomes of sexualised depictions of plurisexual women have been far reaching. Bisexual women are often perceived as 'hyper-sexual' and 'deviant' (Callis, 2014). It has also led to plurisexual women being perceived as 'risky' partners because of fears that 'highly sexed' plurisexual women cannot be monogamous and are thus more likely to cheat on them (Klesse, 2005). Due to the gendered differences in experiences between plurisexual men and women, it is important not to amalgamate their experiences. To highlight their unique experiences, this thesis will focus solely on plurisexual women.

In the Aotearoa/New Zealand psychological literature, very little is known about plurisexuality. Plurisexual identities are typically combined with other queer populations thus continuing to render their unique experiences invisible. However, this academic invisibility is not unique to Aotearoa/New Zealand. Within existent academic research, and particularly within psychology, plurisexual people are an understudied and overlooked population (Barker & Langdrige, 2008). Often, understandings of sexuality as dichotomous prevail in psychological research. When research *does* include plurisexual populations (and predominantly only bisexual individuals), they are often amalgamated with gay and lesbian populations. By not separating the different sexual identities of gay and

plurisexual people, and acknowledging the different experiences gay and plurisexual people may have from one another, research can homogenise all queer experiences, often conflating findings between and across those who are gay and lesbian, and plurisexual (Barker et al., 2012).

Thesis parameters and aims

I have thus far situated the marginalisation of plurisexuality in both rainbow communities and broader society and outlined the complexity of different plurisexual identity labels. However, little is known about how plurisexual women make sense of their sexual identities. Plurisexual women navigate identifying with and disclosing their sexual identity, understanding their own attractions and preferences, moving between queer and heterosexual spaces, relationships, and intimate experiences. Research is *beginning* to get a picture of these experiences but these complex facets of plurisexual women's lives are still largely unfamiliar in psychological literature.

Plurisexual women construct their identities in a contradictory context that both objectifies their behaviour and marginalises their sexual identities, while Anglo-Western society is also becoming increasingly more aware of the importance of inclusivity and acknowledgement of diversity. With the rise of plurisexual activism and an increase in visibility of plurisexual people, narratives of plurisexuality are changing. This thesis seeks to create a better understanding of what it means to be a plurisexual woman in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The goals of this thesis are to understand how the social discourses that underpin understandings of sexual identity operate in plurisexual women's lives, both in their self-construction of their sexual identity and their social experiences of being plurisexual. A further goal is to look at how plurisexual identities are understood and navigated by plurisexual women as society moves away from viewing plurisexuality as limited to bisexuality. Finally, I want to understand how the characteristics of plurisexuality for plurisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand relate to current scholarly representations of plurisexuality.

Epistemological framework and theoretical positionings

This thesis aims to look at plurisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand as a collective to understand their experiences. This research also seeks to examine the social discourses that underpin individual and collective experiences of plurisexuality. To do so, a social constructionist epistemology with a critical feminist foundation and intersectional lens is used.

Social constructionism

Social constructionism is a theoretical and philosophical perspective (or metatheory) within psychology and social sciences that has been born out of the postmodern and poststructuralism movement (Gergen, 1985). This mode of thinking is centred on key epistemological and ontological assumptions. These assumptions could be thought of as reactionary to positivism and essentialism¹⁰ which social constructionists argue needs to be critiqued for its 'taken-for-granted' objectivity and understanding of reality as predetermined (Gergen, 1990). These assumptions underpinning social constructionism pertain to critical stances towards knowledge, where knowledge is not seen as static but historically relative, derived from social processes and linked to social action (Burr, 2015). Questioning of essentialism and realism, and a focus on language are also key features of a social constructionist approach (Burr, 2015).

A social constructionism approach to sexuality argues against sexual essentialism, noting that our understanding and experience of sexuality is driven by language and meaning-making practices within a given social context and is informed by our cultural and social histories (Burr, 2015). This is in contrast to the dominant understanding of sexuality as internal and biologically driven. Within this social constructionist understanding, sexuality is seen as fluid and bounded by social structures (Tiefer, 2004). Thus, sexuality and sexual identities that are seen as dominant and naturalised (such as heterosexuality) have more power and legitimacy in our society than other 'types' of sexual identities.

¹⁰ Essentialism and positivism are outlined in detail in Chapter three.

In this project I draw on ‘macro social constructionism’ – which sees the constructive power of language as related to social structures and institutionalised practices (Burr, 2015). Concepts and issues of power are privileged in this perspective, particularly how power produces social inequality. This view asserts that language shapes our (social) realities and experiences. Language, therefore, is productive as it *constructs* rather than reflects an already existing reality (Edley, 2001). In addition to examining language, macro social constructionism also focuses on identity construction. In relation to sexuality, sexual identity is positioned as constructed from available social discourses (Cunliffe, 2008). Therefore, while most research in the sexuality domain of psychology examines ‘sexual orientation’, this thesis uses language that moves away from essentialist notions of an innate and/or fixed orientation¹¹. Instead, sexual identity is understood as informed by our social environments and mutable.

Critical feminism

Critical feminism is a branch within the broader school of feminist thought. Feminist scholarship takes feminist concerns – such as conceptualising gender, questioning masculine power, and furthering equity for women – and uses them to debate and examine phenomena inside and outside of academia (Beres & Farvid, 2010; Gavey, 1989; Kitzinger, 1991; Tiefer, 2004). Within this area, critiques of scientific thought as purportedly objective has arisen. This discussion within feminist theory crosses over with other schools of thought including critical psychology and social constructionism which too critique scientific thought as objective (Qin, 2004). This has made way for research that makes visible the hidden biases that are taken as value-neutral in psychology and social sciences more broadly (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). Feminist research also examines women’s experiences of their everyday lives. By doing so, the hidden realities of how women’s lives

¹¹ While in some sexual orientation research social environments are seen to influence sexual orientation, it is still seen as a primarily biological and fixed phenomena.

are informed by social structures and institutional power structures are made visible (Gavey, 1989; Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019).

Within this broad school of feminist academic thought (including within psychology), several feminist epistemologies have arisen. The three dominant feminist epistemologies are often termed feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and critical feminism/feminist social constructionism (Gergen, 1990; Gergen, 2001; Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). Feminist empiricism engages most actively with empirical science, often seeking to disrupt research norms by acknowledging the value-laden but often unacknowledged consequences of hegemonic research (Harding, 1987). This approach uses traditional research methods and perspectives but modifies them to create work that attempts to dismantle hegemonic research biases (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). Feminist standpoint theory, in contrast, leans on qualitative methodologies to argue that all experiences of 'reality' come from different standpoint positions (Harding, 2004). Feminist standpoint research focuses on examining the perspectives of women, resulting in simultaneously individualist and broad communal stories of women's lives (Gergen, 1990).

The final broad area of feminist thought is critical feminism, which is also described as a postmodern/social constructionist position due to sharing aligned goals with these epistemologies. Critical feminism maintains feminism's goal as an emancipatory political movement, but extends feminist thought by prioritising producing knowledge that uses concepts of agency, subjectivity, language, and social processes to understand unequal power relations and identify areas for change (Gavey, 1989). Critical feminism, like intersectionality theory (discussed below), see social identities as "forged, reproduced, and contested within asymmetrical relations of power" (Qin, 2004, p. 297). For critical feminism, it is particularly imperative to emphasise the disingenuity of universalising experiences and phenomena and presenting them as a-historical (meaning, not the result of specific historic and social discourses) (Gavey, 1989).

In critical feminist sexuality research, one example of this approach is critiquing research that presents heteronormativity as the only possible 'cultural system' (Chevrette, 2013; Rubin, 1975). Research from a critical feminist perspective draws out the social, historical, and cultural specificity of the topic its examining and acknowledges the plurality of power-laden discourses that inform the perspective (Gavey, 1989; Qin, 2004). For example, some critical feminist work has focused on the ways in which patriarchal power shapes women's identities in all aspects of their lives (e.g., Crawford & Unger, 2004; Fahs, 2011; Gavey, 2018; Ussher, 2011). By drawing on a critical feminist framework, this thesis centres women's experiences (while acknowledging the plurality of them) and also aims to explore the discourses that shape plurisexual women's experiences.

Intersectionality theory

Another important theory that underlies this research is intersectionality theory. Intersectionality was a lens born of critical race theory in the 1990s. Kimberly Crenshaw, inspired by notable activists such as bell hooks and Angela Davis, argued that current feminist theory did not adequately capture the complexity and diversity of all women's experiences, particularly black women (Crenshaw, 1990). Within feminism, according to Crenshaw (1990), intragroup differences – such as between white women and women of colour – were conflated or ignored. Crenshaw (1990) continued to argue that as women's experiences are shaped by more than their gender and feminist scholarly work of the time overlooked the complexities of intersecting identities.

Since then, intersectionality has been developed as an important and inclusive framework to underpin feminist research (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Intersectionality theory allows a multidimensional approach to examining data and understand the complexity of oppression based on intersecting identities that individuals experience (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Through deconstructing and making visible the normative groupings and related power relations in society, attention is paid to the way identity groups are interconnected (Fotopoulou, 2012). Specifically, intersectionality theory is concerned with the ways these identities reveal interlocking experiences of structural social

inequality (McCall, 2005). An example of this is described by Yuval-Davis (2006) who argued against viewing Black women's societal marginalisation as 'triple oppression':

"When it was first presented, the 'triple oppression' notion was basically a claim that Black women suffer from three different oppressions/ disadvantages/ discriminations/ exploitations. They suffer oppression as: Blacks, women and members of the working class. (...) We argued that each social division has a different ontological basis, which is irreducible to other social divisions. Any attempt to essentialize 'Blackness' or 'womanhood' or 'working classness' as specific forms of concrete oppression in additive ways inevitably conflates narratives of identity politics with descriptions of positionality as well as constructing identities within the terms of specific political projects." (p.195)

Intersectionality theory presents identity categories not as fragments but as "dynamic, shifting and multiplex constructions" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 195). Emphasised in this theory is the recognition of multiple subject positions that people occupy. For example, the social identities of a cisgender, white, bisexual, and middle-class woman are not fragmented aspects of her identity but inform the subject positions she occupies. Intersectionality theory's concern with power, subject positions, and subjectivity indicate that its values and perspectives align with social constructionism and critical feminist theory (Brah & Phoenix, 2004).

The above quote how illustrated Black women's 'triple oppression' can be re-examined through Intersectionality. Similarly, plurisexual people are often framed in literature as experiencing 'double discrimination' in the form of monosexism and heterosexism (e.g., Mulick & Wright, 2002) (Explored in detail in Chapter three). On top of this, plurisexual women have been shown to experience gendered forms of marginalisation and oppression (Fahs, 2009; Fahs & Koerth, 2018).

Intersectionality, therefore, presents a useful theory for examining the mutually constitutive experiences of multiple social identities that plurisexual women experience. Further to this, intersectionality theory argues that examining social identities at the individual level of experience makes visible the structural inequalities that often covertly underpin individual experiences (Bowleg, 2013). Therefore, Intersectionality theory can provide a relevant and valuable framework to guide the current research project and interpret plurisexual women's experiences of their sexual identities.

Thesis aims and overview

The intention of this research is to examine plurisexual women's experiences in order to begin to obtain a critical understanding of how women's plurisexual identities are constructed and underpinned by broader discourses of sexuality. This thesis is divided into three parts as each section has its own aims within the overall goal of the thesis to identify and examine plurisexual women's experiences related to their sexual identities.

Part one will situate our current understandings of women's plurisexuality in its social, historical, and academic context. This section is comprised of three chapters: **Chapter two** provides one reading of a history of (women's) plurisexuality both broadly in Anglo-Western societies, and in the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. By presenting a history of plurisexuality, the construction of the discourses that constitute plurisexual identities are made visible. **Chapter three and four** is comprised of a critical review of the academic literature on plurisexuality and positions the present study in relation to past literature. Chapter three focuses on sexuality constructs and theories in psychological literature and Chapter four examines the psychological literature on how plurisexuality is perceived and experienced in society. The fourth chapter ends with a presentation of the questions that guided the research.

Part two introduces the methodology that informed this research project and presents and analyses the survey data. **Chapter five** presents the mixed method research design and outlines the two phases in which the data was collected. **Chapter six** presents the results of the survey data using descriptive and inferential statistics. **Chapter seven** concludes this section by analysing the survey results in relation to previous literature to better understand the experiences of plurisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In the final section, **Part three** presents the results of a critical thematic analysis of interviews with plurisexual women. The preface to the section introduces the governing theme *Bisexuality as socially unacceptable* to introduce the threads that ground the subsequent themes. **Chapter eight**

discusses the first theme, *Negotiating hetero-society*, which explores how plurisexual women grapple with heteronormativity in relation to their lives and sexual identities. Following this, **Chapter nine** presents *The labour of plurisexuality*, the second theme which argues that plurisexual identities are politicised and therefore come with hidden forms of labour that plurisexual women take on or resist. In **Chapter ten**, the final theme *The languaging of plurisexuality* interrogates how language used by interviewees to describe sexuality reflects contradictory beliefs about the 'aetiology' of their sexual identity and the regulation of inclusive language. This thesis concludes with **Chapter eleven** which explores with the implications of the analyses in relation to the research questions and presents directions for future research.

PART ONE

“Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct” (Foucault, 1978, p. 105)

CHAPTER TWO

Situating Plurisexuality: From Sexology to ‘Post-Bisexuality’

What constitutes bisexuality has shifted over time. Prior to examining the psychological literature and scientific knowledge on plurisexuality and sexual identity (Chapter three), this chapter will examine the cultural and social context of plurisexuality. The history of plurisexuality is fraught, yet it crucially shapes the present marginalisation of plurisexual identities. This review of the history of plurisexuality, spanning the 18th to 21st century, will demonstrate the impact of science and psychology on the construction of bisexuality as a sexual identity and other subsequent plurisexual identities. It will also examine the position of bisexuality and other plurisexual identities in the forming of rainbow communities within Aotearoa/New Zealand and in other Western countries. Primarily, this chapter will look at how bisexuality was turned from a behavioural category to a crucial part of sexology’s theory of sexuality, to a social-, political-, sexual-, and self-identity. This contextualising will provide an understanding of plurisexuality’s positioning in society, as well as how plurisexuality was formed alongside heterosexuality and homosexuality. To that end, this chapter relies predominantly on examinations of *bisexuality* to contextualise plurisexuality as identities other than bisexuality (i.e., pansexual and queer) have little social, academic, and historic resonance. These more recent terms to describe plurisexuality are returned to later in the chapter.

The creation of sexual orientation

The basis of our current cultural constructions of sexuality and sexual identity can be situated within early sexology research at the end of the 19th Century. During this era, scientific thought rose to importance to override the church as the dominant social influence in what is seen as ‘truth’ (Farvid, 2012). Alongside this scientific movement, sexology as an academic and scientific study of human sexuality rose to academic prominence. Sexologists such as Havelock Ellis (1885) and Karl Heinrich Ulrich (1864) developed theories of human sexuality which created the basis of our current understandings of human sexuality within the Western world.

The term 'bisexuality' has described several different concepts in its modern use. In the mid-19th century, anatomists and physiologists such as Charles Darwin (1859) used 'bisexual' to describe what we now classify as 'hermaphroditism' or 'intersexuality': lifeforms that have biological characteristics of males and females (Monro, 2015). Bisexuality was originally a term applied to plants but was later expanded to apply to human embryos and people with physical characteristics associated with the 'other' sex (this can include a range of anatomical and biological phenomena such as males with uteruses, females with ovo-testes, et cetera). Early anatomists used secondary sex characteristics (such as nipples on males) as evidence to argue that early humans/hominids were originally anatomically bisexual (MacDowall, 2009; Wilder, 1874). Evolutionary theory further developed this idea to argue that bisexual traits in humans were evidence of poor sexual differentiation not favoured by natural selection, and as genetically "primitive" and "defective" (Jacobi, 1895; MacDowall, 2009). Historians have argued that the theory of bisexuality informed the construction of the 'two-sex' model of sexual difference that we understand today¹², and bisexuality continued to be associated with animalistic human inferiority (Angelides, 2001).

Drawing ideas from these evolutionary and physiological theories, in the early 20th century sexologists used bisexuality as the basis for understanding monosexuality. The invention of bisexuality as a sexual pathology has largely been credited to Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1892). Krafft-Ebing was a psychiatrist who helped shift Western culture from seeing non-heterosexual behaviour as a 'perverse activity' to being the manifestation of an underlying mental illness (Angelides, 2001; Weeks, 2010). Non-heterosexuality therefore shifted from being perceived as a behaviour in and of itself to the symptom of a deviant identity. Following this change, 'psychic bisexuality' was conceptualised by sexologists as a phase that everyone passes through in order to develop their (hetero)monosexuality (Angelides, 2001). During this transition stage the psyche was seen as having to wrestle with masculinity and femininity before coming to their 'natural' (hetero)monosexual

¹² This theory separated gender and sexual identities into its own discrete categories (of heterosexual and homosexual, man and woman) that make up individual ontology (Angelides, 2001).

attraction (Garber, 2000). Homosexuality, through this bisexual theory, was seen as the outcome of the psyche making the wrong choice (Angelides, 2001). During this era, bisexuality was central to Sigmund Freud's theories of sexuality (Garber, 2000).

Through his psychosexual theory of development, Freud upheld previous Darwinian understandings of bisexuality as innate in humans and a predisposition and evolutionary atavism, but extended this idea to call *psychological* bisexuality (i.e., sexual attraction to men and women) a "manifestation of biology" (Freud, 1905/1920). Freud's theories have been extremely influential on psychological theories of sexuality with some bisexual activists and historians arguing that his work has contributed to the systemic erasure of bisexuality by rendering it a theoretical rather than a viable identity (i.e., Angelides, 2001). According to sexologists such as Freud, one can only hold either a homosexual or heterosexual identity at any given time, with bisexuality therefore an impossibility (Angelides, 2001; Bowes-Catton & Hayfield, 2015; Freud, 1905/1920). Within Freud's work, however, he also acknowledged that there are many different sexual behaviours and attractions beyond what we now perceive as homosexuality and heterosexuality (Freud, 1905/1920). For example, his description of "amphigenously inverted sexual inverts" where their sexual object "may belong indifferently to either the same or to the other sex" (Freud, 1905/1920, p. 9) invokes descriptions of plurisexual people who do not factor gender into their attraction. Nevertheless, bisexual activists have argued that conceptualisations of bisexuality today as a 'transitional phase' or that perceptions of bisexuals being 'on the fence' between homosexuality and heterosexuality are likely a result of Freud's conceptualisation of bisexuality as an immature form of sexual desire (Eisner, 2013; Freud, 1905/1920).

During this time of early sexuality theory, bisexuality was used to refer to both people with psychic¹³ and/or physical characteristics of males and females (or masculinity and femininity), *and* sexual

¹³ 'Psychic bisexuality' is a psychoanalytic concept defined by "either a man or a woman appear[ing] either masculine or feminine and feel subjectively either male or female and choose as sexual objects either men or women or both" (Smith, 2002).

attraction to males and females (Bowes-Catton & Hayfield, 2015; Freud, 1905/1920). Sexology, during this time, moved away from behavioural-based theories of sexuality into creating and defining the categories of heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality (Bowes-Catton & Hayfield, 2015). Since the early sexology era of the late 19th century and early 20th century, bisexuality as a description of intersexuality fell out of style but the definition of bisexuality as a sexual attraction to ‘both’ males and females endured into the 20th and 21st centuries (Bowes-Catton & Hayfield, 2015). This classification of bisexuality constructs its etymology as a ‘mix’ of heterosexuality and homosexuality, which lays the ground work for more recent theories of sexuality whereas bisexuality is seen as a middle ground between the two more ‘legitimate’ sexualities (Klesse, 2005).

If the early decades of the 20th century involved theorising about (bi)sexuality, then the next few decades were influenced by the “political economy of truth” (Angelides, 2001, p. 77). According to Michel Foucault, science is enmeshed in social structures, and the “political and economic structures of society”. It is therefore not possible to separate science from its social context¹⁴ (Foucault, 1978; Rabinow, 2010, p. 51). Foucault also emphasised the recent importance (during the 19th and 20th centuries) placed upon science and scientific intellectuals, giving them political power to propagate scientific ‘truth’ (Foucault, 1978). In this context, the construction of homosexuality as a psycho-medical disease was sought in order to gain knowledge about the ‘erotic species’ of homosexuals that was forming a group identity (Angelides, 2001; Callis, 2014). During this time, in order to label certain sexual practices as deviant, the sexual attractions that were seen as the cause of the deviant behaviour became understood as a large part of a person’s self-identity. The creation of biological categories of sexual identity was pervasive, and ‘deviant’ sexual acts now came with the label of homosexual. This created a hierarchy of sexual classification based on exclusive binary categories of sameness (heterosexuality) and difference (homosexuality) where bisexuality was seen as a form of

¹⁴ Foucault stated that he was mainly referring to biology, medicine, and psychiatry rather than sciences like theoretic physics and organic chemistry as it is “excessively complicated” to look at the relationship between those types of science and its context.

homosexuality (Callis, 2014). This sameness/difference dichotomy became entrenched in Anglo-Western society and historians argued that this led to a medicalisation of (homo)sexuality in the name of 'scientific truth' (Callis, 2014; Weeks, 2012).

'Experts' of sexuality

Freud's theories fell out of scientific and psychological favour in the early to mid-twentieth century.

As a result, bisexuality ceased being used as the basis of theories of human sexuality, and bisexual behaviour was largely classified as homosexual (Angelides, 2001; Carr & Spandler, 2019). Within this time, binary discourses of sexuality dominated social and medical understandings of sexuality.

Academic examination of bisexuality reappeared with the publication of the Kinsey's reports in 1948 and 1953 (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1953; Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). The 'Kinsey Scale' was developed from interviews with over 5,000 predominantly white American men, followed by a further 5,000 interviews with predominantly white American women¹⁵. It measured sexuality on a continuum from a Kinsey 0 (exclusively heterosexual) to a Kinsey 6 (exclusively homosexual), with an X signifying asexuality. During this time, sexual orientation was seen to manifest through behaviour, whilst presumed to be based on innate attraction 'orientations' towards certain genders/sexes. Kinsey criticised academic understandings of sexual orientation as discrete categories of sexual behaviour. He theorised that heterosexual behaviour was not a human universal and 'mixed-sex' and homosexual sexual behaviour within humans was a normal occurrence that should not be pathologised (Allen et al., 2017; Kinsey et al., 1948; Yoshino, 2000).

Kinsey Scale was hugely influential in scientific studies – and lay understandings – of sexuality by demonstrating that many people behaved in ways against the heterosexual norm that other sex research perpetuated (Allen et al., 2017). The Kinsey reports and scale led to significant changes in how sexuality was looked at in psychology, with a shift away from psychoanalytic theories of

¹⁵ While Kinsey had critiqued other sexology research for its dearth of racial diversity, due to segregation laws hindering his data collection, Kinsey's work also oversampled white men and women (Allen et al., 2017).

sexuality to theories that were less 'moralistic' – according to Kinsey – and therefore more 'neutral' in its essentialism (Allen et al., 2017; Farvid, 2011). By not assigning a moral or deviant value to sexualities, Kinsey perceived his work to be objective (although other scholars were critical of this assumption) (Allen et al., 2017; Churchill, 2002).

A dominant debate in sexuality research in the latter half of the 20th century focused on how to determine one's 'true sexual orientation' (e.g., De Cecco, 1981; Kinsey et al., 1953; Kinsey et al., 1948; Masters & Johnson, 1979). A small sub-section of this work included bisexuality, with researchers such as Klein et al. (1985) and Zinik (1985) creating popular theories and measures of bisexuality (see chapter 3 for a review of these measures). Research conducted at this time, aside from notable exceptions such as Kinsey, predominantly relied on pathologizing homosexuality and bisexuality (Seidman, 2015). This 'disease model' of sexuality continued into the 20th century.

The regulation of sexuality in this era was highly gendered, with the criminalisation of homosexuality falling solely on men, but the pathologisation of homosexuality also influenced women's experiences of non-heterosexuality (Carr & Spandler, 2019). During this era of pathologisation, bisexuality was largely ignored both socially and academically – (with the exception of work such as Klein (1978) and Zinik (1985) – subsumed under homosexuality or same-sex attraction. Dichotomies of normal/abnormal that dominated the mid-20th century left no place for bisexuality within culture or scholarship; as a result, both current and historic academic texts on how sexuality was (scientifically) constructed largely left bisexuality out of the narrative (e.g., Seidman, 2015; Weeks, 2010).

The era from the mid to late 20th century cemented sexuality – and sexual orientation – as having a biological origin. The biological models of sex that originated from sexology situated sexuality in physiology and the genetic makeup of humans. This era was dominated by ideas of 'human nature', believed to be 'discoverable' through scientific testing, observation, and interviews. Finding a biological basis for sexuality served an important purpose beyond academia: it was a way to regulate the social world through promoting 'normative' behaviours which were typically racialised,

heterosexist, and gendered (Seidman, 2015). Prior to homosexuality and bisexuality's development as social identities (discussed below), they were socially positioned as pathologized orientations that manifested through 'deviant' behaviour and same-sex attraction. In this space, homosexuality (and bisexuality) was simultaneously seen as abnormal yet as biologically destined.

Gay liberation and the creation of the queer social identity

Scientific constructions of sexual orientation and the pathologisation of queer identities made way for the gay liberation movement from the 1960s onward. The rigid regulation of sexuality through laws, institutions (particularly medical and scientific institutions), and norms surrounding hegemonic heterosexuality provided rigid boundaries for what type of behaviour — and therefore *identities* — were acceptable or stigmatised (and sometimes criminalised) (Seidman, 2015). Until this point, bisexuality had not been viewed as a separate entity to homosexuality, subsumed under the 'homosexual' label of mutual pathologisation (Angelides, 2001). Once a homosexual (and, to a very lesser extent, a bisexual) identity was established, this allowed for the possibility of advocating for the rights of homosexuals, which further cemented homosexuality's role as a sexual orientation and social identity (Seidman, 2015).

According to some sexuality historians such as Seidman (2015) and Weeks (2010), during World War II people in countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom were able to explore their same-sex attractions more easily because of the all-man and all-woman environments that occurred during war time. These new environments were also typically far away from established families and communities allowing for more freedom of expression. Post-war in the late 1940s and 1950s, this led many same-sex attracted people to relocate to cities that were more tolerant of homosexuality and forming environments, networks, and friendships centred around queerness. The stigmatisation of this newly visible group in a time of social anxiety and rigid social regulation led to the formation of organisations (often divided by gender) that worked towards homosexual social reform (Weeks, 2010). As this newly formed social movement gained traction from the 1950s to the 1960s, changes

were made within this movement that has influenced how rainbow communities are perceived today. For example, the term homosexual was replaced with terms less associated with mental illness: 'gay' and 'lesbian'. As this movement gained traction, individual queer identities became social and political identities and were subsequently weaponized to gain more civil rights for gay and lesbian people (Weeks, 2010).

While bisexual politics is rarely examined as distinct from gay and lesbian politics, some bisexual activists and historians have argued that bisexuality's position within sexual politics and history – especially throughout the gay liberation movement – has led to the norms surrounding sexuality today (Angelides, 2001; MacDowall, 2009). It is largely accepted that bisexual people were a part of – and at the forefront of – the gay liberation movement (particularly in the United States, where openly bisexual people such as Brenda Howard guided gay liberation from the Stonewall riots¹⁶ to the Pride celebrations that occur today) although their bisexual identities are rarely acknowledged (Funk, 2019; Goodman, 2019). However, as the gay liberation movement grew, the 'ethnic model' of identity framed the argument for civil rights for gay and lesbian people (Esterberg, 2016). Esterberg (2016) describes this model as: "lesbians and gays are an identifiable, relatively "fixed" percentage of the population and, like other "minority" groups, in need of civil rights protection." (p. 209).

Within the 'ethnic model', a strong dichotomy of ingroup and outgroup membership provided clear boundaries as to who belonged in the gay and lesbian community and movement. However, bisexuality was viewed as disrupting this dichotomy with its sexual fluidity (Esterberg, 2016).

Lesbian feminists positioned womanhood at the centre of their social identity which extended to a strong lesbian community, sans men and heterosexuality (Seidman, 2015). Bisexual women, with their attraction and potential for relationships with men, were often alienated from this section of the rainbow communities (Wandrei, 2018). Lesbian feminists saw bisexuals as disrupting their

¹⁶ The Stonewall riots were a series of demonstrations by queer and transgender people in New York in 1969 following a Police raid at The Stonewall Inn. This event has been attributed as one of the inciting moments of the gay liberation movement (Armstrong & Crage, 2006).

lesbian culture and “sponging off lesbian struggles” and as “gate-crashes at the party who didn’t stay to clear up afterwards” (Sabbage, 1989, p. 16). As a result of this separation, and a desire to forge a distinct bisexual identity, there was an increase in establishing bisexual specific organisations and groups (Dworkin, 2000). The main goals of these groups was to raise awareness of bisexuality as its own distinct identity, increase acceptance of bisexuality within mainstream and rainbow communities, and give legal recognition and protection from discrimination to bisexual people (Dworkin, 2000).

During the 1970s and the 1980s, rebellion against hegemonic constructions of sexuality was encouraged within liberal and counterculture spaces. During this time, bisexuality was simultaneously a trendy and stigmatised identity. Mainstream culture became increasingly aware of bisexuality but largely framed it as a ‘fad’ through the ubiquitous use of ‘bisexual chic’ (invoking Freudian theories of ‘immature’ bisexuality) (Seidman, 2015). During this era, celebrities such as David Bowie and Elton John declared their bisexuality (not without garnering criticism), and popular magazines such as *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, and *Newsweek* ran articles about bisexuality, framing it as “an age-old but still largely mysterious life-style” (Brody, 1974, p. 57). The invisibility of bisexual identities was not decreased by the media’s commodification of bisexuality (Esterberg, 2016). During this era, bisexuality was framed as a fun but transient phase of individuals and the culture, with bisexuals perceived as a miscellaneous group in the gay rights movement and community (Esterberg, 2016).

During the gay rights era, radical queer activism fought to deconstruct sexual norms and identities including monogamy, heterosexuality, and the nuclear family (Seidman, 2015). However, gay liberation succeeded most when it sought to normalise and ‘de-pathologise’ homosexuality at the expense of groups that could not easily fit within existing (yet increasingly liberal) norms – such as bisexuals. This resulted in the creation of a new ‘homonormative’ subject (Weeks, 2010). As Yoshino (2000) argued, this led to a strengthening of monosexuality, as both homosexuality and

heterosexuality had mutual benefits in suppressing less clearly defined groups such as bisexuals (see Chapter four for a discussion of this theory). The heterogeneity of bisexuality worked against many bisexuals activists' goals of a recognition of a stable bisexual identity; the vacillation of bisexual identities, and the invisibility of bisexuality in monogamous relationships, meant that the social erasure of bisexual identities was, and still is, maintained (Angelides, 2001; Rust, 2000a).

At the tail end of the gay rights movement in the 1990s, inclusivity overtook separatism within rainbow communities in Anglo-Western countries. This included the beginning of popular usage of the now ubiquitous acronym for the rainbow communities – LGBT (and subsequent acronyms such as LGBTQ, LGBTQIA+). The intention of this acronym was to acknowledge the different sexual and gender minorities that were regarded as oppressed and considered 'other' to heterosexuality alongside gay and lesbian (Weeks, 2010). This has succeeded in some respects, as it has led to rainbow organisations and activities including 'bisexual' and 'transgender' in addition to 'gay and lesbian' in their names (Esterberg, 2016). However, some queer activists have argued that this inclusivity only exists at face value and the acronym does not mean that the 'LGBT community' is a "singular, coherent or inclusive" group (Hayfield et al., 2014, p. 359). Instead, rainbow communities continues to be dominated by mostly cisgender, white, gay (and, to a lesser extent, lesbian) voices, and the marginalisation of plurisexuality (alongside non-white and non-cis groups and identities) within the gay liberation movement is preserved (Hartman, 2006).

Alongside the liberal inclusivity of 'LGBT' was queer politics, which had more radical intentions than the gay liberation movement. Queer politics focused on fighting heteronormativity and defined itself as separate from the politics on which the gay liberation movement was built (Clarke, Ellis, Peel, & Riggs, 2010). Identity categories, such as gay and lesbian, are critiqued by queer politics (and its academic associate, queer theory) as being constrained by 'regulatory regimes' that seek to limit the complexities of sexualities (Butler, 2006). Within queer politics, the goal of challenging traditional social structures and gender and sexual binaries is believed to be aligned with the monosexual-

disrupting nature of bisexuality (Esterberg, 2016). While some plurisexuals are satisfied with plurisexuality being subsumed under a queer politics/theory banner, other plurisexual activists have resisted and critiqued queer politics. These activists argue that queer theory perpetuates the erasure of plurisexual identities through ignoring the unique marginalisation of bisexuality in society (Hartman, 2006). Furthermore, Clarke and Peel (2007) argued that by focusing on critiquing heteronormativity exclusively, queer politics leaves the relationships that different groups have to heterosexism under examined.

By the end of the 20th century, bisexuality had established its own niche in academia with a sharp rise in bisexual scholarship (e.g., Garber, 2000; Hall & Pramaggiore, 1996; Rust, 2000a; Weinberg et al., 1994). However, outside of this microcosm, bisexuality was largely absent from sexual discourses despite the creation of the 'LGBT community'. While sexual identity was being both constructed and deconstructed, bisexuality existed largely outside of sexuality theorising, except when brought in by bisexual activists themselves.

Plurisexuality in Aotearoa/New Zealand

The history of plurisexuality in Aotearoa/New Zealand is largely unknown but is presumed to parallel the rest of the Anglo-Western world. Gay and lesbian history in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been recorded and archived digitally with a section of Archives New Zealand dedicated to this history (LAGANZ, 2019). Other websites have collections and timelines of gay and lesbian Aotearoa/New Zealand history and several books have been published on the topic (Laurie, 2001; Te Awekōtuku, Tamihana, Glamuzina, & Laurie, 2018). Unfortunately, due to being part of a smaller community, systemic erasure, and less funding, few parts of bisexual history in Aotearoa/New Zealand has lasted digitally. This section relies predominantly on unpublished work, discussions with older bisexual women who took part in historic political bisexual groups, and magazine articles from past decades to contextualise plurisexual and queer history in Aotearoa.

Queer sexual identities in Aotearoa/New Zealand is not a Pākehā import. Aotearoa/New Zealand has a history of sexual fluidity and acceptance of same-sex relationships prior to colonisation (Kerekere, 2017). Aspin and Hutchings (2007) argued that “historically, Māori society was based on sexual diversity and acceptance of difference. There is evidence that [Māori] ancestors had multiple partners throughout their lifetimes and that same sex relationships were not uncommon” (p. 416). For example, the word takatāpui was defined in an early Māori dictionary as an “intimate companion of the same sex”, and was used in a popular love story (of Hinemoa and Tūtanekei) from pre-colonial times (Kerekere, 2017). Since then, precolonial queer history in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been suppressed when the teachings of Christianity were first brought over by European colonists in the mid-19th century until recently (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007). As a result, most – if not all – of Aotearoa’s current dominant sexual identities are taken from Western scientific discourses and concepts. This includes essentialist discourses that uphold mononormativity and traditional discourses that favour monogamous heterosexual marriage. As a consequence, traditional Māori sexuality has been subjugated and their queer sexuality suppressed (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007).

In recent decades, queer Māori activists and scholars have worked to draw attention to the influence of patriarchal colonial paradigms on Māori sexual diversity. There has been recent emphasis on centring Māori perspectives of sexuality, including reclaiming language that represents Māori queerness (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007; Kerekere, 2017). Specifically, a movement started in the 1980s to use takatāpui as an identity term to describe non-heterosexual sexuality for Māori (Kerekere, 2017). Modernising a concept from Māori history displaces Western scientific belief that sexuality is innate and a-cultural. Instead, the use of the term takatāpui “embraces both cultural and sexual components of one’s identity with fluidity being a key feature” (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007, p. 424). Takatāpui connects with many aspects of Māori culture – particularly whakapapa¹⁷, identity,

¹⁷ Whakapapa describes geneology and ancestral lineage and is an important part of Māori culture.

and mana¹⁸ (Kerekere, 2015). According to Kerekere (2015), takatāpui is an identity that reflects and connects to the past through whakapapa, and the mana of this identity is used to advocate for takatāpui communities. By bringing together important aspects of Māori culture into building and strengthening takatāpui as a reclaimed identity, a greater congruence between sexuality, identity, and culture can be achieved for queer Māori. Takatāpui is being increasingly acknowledged as a sexual identity in rainbow cultures and communities in Aotearoa. However, like many aspects of both queer and Māori culture, takatāpui is overlooked or suppressed in mainstream environments including healthcare fields, mainstream media, and academia.

The social history of queer identities and politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand post-colonialism follows those of other countries in the world and includes the regulation of sex and 'gay' behaviours. Male homosexual sex was illegal when Aotearoa/New Zealand became part of the British Empire in 1840 and punishable by death (this was downgraded to life imprisonment in 1967, then removed in 1986), whilst sex between women was socially rather than legally regulated (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2017). In the recent history of gay and queer activists, fighting for legal equality was at the centre of community activism and groups (Te Awekōtuku et al., 2018). Such lobbying included fighting for the decriminalisation of men's homosexuality (which was achieved in 1986 with the Homosexual Law Reform Act), outlawing discrimination against queer and transgender people (which was achieved through the 1993 Human Rights Act), and giving same-sex couples legal recognition (which was first achieved with the 2004 Civil Union Act and then the 2013 Marriage Amendment Act). The organising of rainbow community groups from informal to formal paralleled the United States and the United Kingdom. The end of World War II fostered and facilitated queer networks across Aotearoa/New Zealand (Te Awekōtuku et al., 2018). Queer historians also believe that the gay liberation movement in the United States (including key events such as the Stonewall riots) influenced similar events in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Te Awekōtuku et al., 2018).

¹⁸ Mana is another important concept of Māori culture, and can be described as a supernatural force in a person, place, or object that imbues it with prestige and influence.

Until the 1990s, lesbian and gay groups were largely separate from each other, as “the sexism of the men, with their differing goals and agendas, made co-operation difficult” (Te Awekōtuku et al., 2018, para. 31). Most lesbian groups had a feminist orientation and were both socially and politically focused on women’s issues, Māori issues, and lesbian rights concerns (Te Awekōtuku et al., 2018). Many of these groups explicitly excluded bisexual women (Sabbage, 1989). Critiques of bisexuality in Aotearoa’s rainbow communities also paralleled concerns abroad; it was believed bisexuals were diverting attention away from gay and lesbian issues, they did not belong in the lesbian community due to their association with men, and were ‘on the fence’ about their sexuality (by not choosing heterosexuality or homosexuality) (Sabbage, 1989). However, one of the only studies of lesbians in Aotearoa, that was created and distributed within the community, included bisexual women. Rankine (2001) sought to survey the discrimination experienced by lesbian and bisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1992. The survey intended to identify differences between lesbian and bisexual experiences but used a convenience sample of mostly lesbian networks. This resulted in only 12% of women surveyed identifying as bisexual, likely because bisexual women were not welcome in many lesbian spaces and were therefore underrepresented in the sample.

Due to the isolation from the rest of the rainbow community, bisexual specific groups and events were formed throughout Aotearoa. During the 1990s, bisexual support groups were launched in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch (Came, 1992). Unlike gay and lesbian groups, these groups were not separated by gender. However, they were largely organised by women, and women also dominated the membership (“Bisexual Support Group,” 1992). These groups fought for legal recognition and protection for bisexuals alongside other gay and lesbian political groups in Aotearoa. This was in spite of queer, gay, and lesbian groups that actively fought for, or passively erased, bisexuality’s importance in legal queer rights. For example, Came’s (1992) Master’s thesis on bisexual politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand documented the tensions between lesbians and bisexuals during submissions for the Human Rights Amendment Bill, that went on to become the 1993 Human Rights Act that made discrimination against anyone for their sexual identity illegal. Came’s (1992)

interviewees – bisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand – were frustrated by lesbian action groups erasing bisexuality through dichotomising heterosexuality and homosexuality, leaving no room for bisexuality in their politics. While bisexuals formed their own groups to make social change in Aotearoa/New Zealand – with goals that often aligned with lesbian and gay political goals – exclusionary tactics made successful community-building difficult for bisexuals.

Prior to the dissolution of separate bisexual and gay groups, a small but strong network of bisexuals formed throughout Aotearoa. This resulted in the creation of an annual bisexual conference which was only held for a few years in the early 1990s. This conference included workshops around communities, discrimination, safe sex, networking, relationships, and parenting ("Bisexual Support Group," 1992). Alongside bisexual exclusive groups, bisexual people continued to engage with the thriving feminist and queer movements in Aotearoa. Content on bisexuality started appearing in the prominent Aotearoa/New Zealand feminist magazine *Broadsheet*, which indicated that bisexuality was leaking into other forms of politics. This included articles with discussions of bisexuality, advertisements of bisexual group meetings, and letters to the editor with poems and impassioned discussions of bisexual erasure (Porzolt, 1986; Sabbage, 1989).

In parallel to the USA, separatism of the rainbow communities fell out of social favour. During the 1990s, while bisexuals were still actively disliked and unwelcomed by lesbians in Aotearoa, more inclusive language was taken up by many queer rights groups and organisations. Queer organisations in Aotearoa/New Zealand such as Gayline (a phone service to support gay men across Aotearoa) and Auckland Lesbian and Gay Youth (a youth run community organisation) changed their names to OUTline and Rainbow Youth, respectively, in order to recognise the diversity of the rainbow communities¹⁹. When the Aotearoa/New Zealand New Zealand 1993 Human Rights Act outlawed discrimination on various grounds, 'bisexual' was named as a sexual orientation of which discrimination against is prohibited ("Human Rights Act ", 1993). Once legal protection from

¹⁹ In some groups, plurisexual people believe this inclusivity was predominantly in name only, with structural erasure of plurisexuality still in operation in rainbow groups in Aotearoa.

discrimination was achieved, many queer, gay, lesbian, and bisexual groups and organisations disbanded as less formal means of social and political organising were needed (Te Awekōtuku et al., 2018). As the Internet grew in popularity, online communication became more popular, further reducing the need for in-person organising groups (Te Awekōtuku et al., 2018). While one bisexual group currently remains in Aotearoa/New Zealand (the Wellington Bisexual Women's Group) most queer political and social groups have been subsumed under the term 'rainbow'. This integrates plurisexuality more effectively with the rainbow communities and creates a structurally stronger support network for plurisexual people. However, it also leaves little space for the uniqueness of plurisexuality to be recognised, and the need for plurisexual politics to advocate for its visibility.

Popular culture, Internet culture, queer culture

Popular representations of (pluri)sexuality both inform, and are informed by, current and historical understandings of sexual identity. In the last decade, the rise of popular mainstream and queer media, the Internet, and the growth of queer post-modern deconstructions of sexuality has shaped bisexual identities and the rise of other plurisexual terms used to describe attraction to multiple genders. In this final subsection of this chapter, I will be discussing how these elements contributed to current discourses around bisexuality and situate bisexuality, and other plurisexual identity terms, within this context.

Contemporary popular culture

Popular culture covers a broad intersection of media and culture that "we may not be able to define it but we know it when we see it" (Parker, 2011, p. 147). Popular culture is imbedded in and informed by our social, political, and economic contexts. It can be described as contemporary artefacts within our capitalist market economy that are largely produced by those that hold dominant power and those who are favoured by people (Parker, 2011). This may include products made by minority groups (such as queer, transgender, and gender diverse people) but predominantly covers mass produced and mass consumed, commercialized and commoditized

culture and artefacts (Parker, 2011). In our current culture (and dating back to post-WWII times) media (news, articles, television, film, books, et cetera), and particularly digital media, are the most prominent and discussed forms of popular culture (Betts & Bly, 2012).

Popular culture can impose and limit possibilities for acceptable categories and identities – including race, gender, and sexuality – as well as reflects ‘mainstream’ society’s notion of these identities (Betts & Bly, 2012). According to Seidman (2015), popular culture is one of the most important social forces that shapes our sexual lives. Thus, an examination of contemporary popular culture is important to situate plurisexual identities in our current social and cultural context. Popular culture is often an individual’s first contact with non-heterosexuality and therefore greatly informs their perception of non-heterosexual identities (Cover, 2000). This visibility of queer people in a heteronormative medium can “educate a mass audience of a “truth” of lesbian/gay identity: that is, the productions produce an easily-read fiction of fixed sexual categories and identities” (Cover, 2000, p. 75). This means rainbow representations in media provide audiences with a script of queer identity construction that shape perceptions and discourses surrounding non-heterosexual and non-normative identities.

Media representation of rainbow people in the mid-20th century were often relegated to counter-culture productions created *by* queer people *for* queer people (Cover, 2000). Yet in the late 20th century, mainstream or larger production media – including film and television – began discussing or representing queer, transgender, and gender diverse people and themes in their content (Sender, 2003). This boom in rainbow representations was predominantly, if not completely, focussed on gay and lesbian themes and/or characters (Diamond, 2005). In the previous decades, gay people were portrayed in films as villainous, but from the 1990s onward more positive representations of gay and lesbians began to surface (Diamond, 2005). This inclusion of gay and lesbian identities in media reflected a wider acceptance for the ‘gay and lesbian citizen’ – with the caveat that rainbow people must fit within various conventional norms and integrate with ‘normal’ society (Seidman, 2015).

Groups that sat outside of this norm – such as plurisexuals, with its associations with non-monogamy, sexual promiscuity, and disruption of monosexuality – were considered deviant (Seidman, 2015). Therefore, whilst gay people have been (mostly) integrated within mainstream and popular media, plurisexuality and media have a more complicated relationship.

As plurisexuality activists have argued, plurisexuality does not occupy as large a space in popular culture or media as gay and lesbian identities, which is often described as a form of bisexual erasure (e.g., San Filippo, 2013; Wilkinson, 2019; Yescavage & Alexander, 2003). Further, when plurisexuality *is* represented, it is usually constructed as “disingenuous, transitional, performative or confused” (Wilkinson, 2019, p. 2), or not overtly addressed as a plurisexual identity (Ferguson, 2016). Examples of these depictions of plurisexuals are numerous and span decades throughout diverse forms of media. For example, media covering stories of bisexual-identified celebrities may represent them as manipulative (Dingle, 2016), present them as both allies and outsiders to the LGBT community (Tenbarge, 2019), or refer to them as gay (e.g., Hempenstall, 2018). Films such as *Basic Instinct* (Verhoeven & Marshall, 1992) and television shows such as *House of Cards* (Willimon, 2013) present plurisexual people as Machiavellian and sexually exploitative (White, 2001). Media created by queer people often represent plurisexuality in similar ways. For example, television show *Glee* (Murphy, Falchuk, & Brennan, 2009) was highly revered for its “ground-breaking” depiction of gay teenagers while leaning on bisexual tropes in its depiction of bisexual characters – such as their promiscuity, and declaring bisexual myths such as having to worry that bisexual partners will “stray for penis” (Miller, 2014). Additionally, when plurisexual people *are* represented, their plurisexual identity is not salient. One of the often cited examples in popular culture is *Orange is the New Black* (Kohan, 2013), a television show with several (assumed) bisexual characters. Despite being hailed as one of the most diverse shows on television, plurisexual characters in *Orange is the New Black* were described as having a “lesbian phase” or “not into labels”²⁰ (Ferguson, 2016; Swartz, 2018). Plurisexual activists

²⁰ It is important to note that there is nothing wrong with not using labels to describe their sexual identity. However, the use of this phrase is a part of a pattern of avoiding overtly recognising plurisexual identities in media.

have argued that the avoidance of the 'b word' in media promotes bisexual erasure and restricts the opportunities for plurisexual people to see themselves in the media and build a positive self-image of their plurisexuality (Corey, 2017; Richter, 2011).

Numerically, the amount of queer people depicted in media (particularly visual media such as films and television shows) is increasing, including the amount of plurisexual or behaviourally plurisexual people²¹ (GLAAD Media Institute, 2018, 2019). However, plurisexual characters continue to be underrepresented, and specific forms of plurisexuals – cisgender, white, conventionally attractive women – occur most often (GLAAD Media Institute, 2018). Media is one of the areas where the gendered gap between attitudes towards – and experiences of – plurisexual men and women is most evident; statistically, plurisexual women are more commonly depicted on television than plurisexual men; according to GLAAD (2018) 27% of LGBT+ characters in television in 2018-2019 were under the bisexual umbrella (117 characters), and 72% of these characters were women.

Beyond the numbers, the way plurisexual people of different genders are depicted reflects gendered notions of plurisexuality. Academically, there has been little examination of representations of plurisexual men in media. Scholars have noted that bisexual men were framed as villainous in films from the 1980s to 1990s, likely because of the association between bisexual men and AIDS in dominant social and political discourses (White, 2001). Bisexual men were highly stereotyped in 20th century films as men hiding their sexuality from their wives, as dangerous and aggressive, or disturbed by their bisexuality (Bryant, 2000; Pitt, 2007). Within contemporary media, examinations of plurisexual men in media have primarily focused around the film *Brokeback Mountain's* (Lee, Ossana, & Schamus, 2005) (mis)representation of bisexual characters, and the popular discourse surrounding this film (e.g., Brod, 2007; Pitt, 2007).

²¹ Behaviourally plurisexual people are people who have had sexual and/or romantic relationships with people of multiple people but may not identify with a plurisexual-identity, or has not disclosed any specific sexual identity.

Feminist and bisexuality scholars have examined and criticised representations of women's plurisexuality in popular media, including video pornography, for its objectification of bisexual women for the past several decades. Diamond (2005) argues that there has been a surge in 'heteroflexibility' in women in media, which she defines as "presumably heterosexual women hinting at or experimenting with same-sex sexuality" (p. 104). This includes the highly publicised kiss between pop singers Madonna and Britney Spears, and Madonna and Christina Aguilera while performing at the 2003 MTV Video Music Awards. It also includes kisses or sex between heterosexual-identified woman characters on television shows such as *Glee* (Murphy et al., 2009) and *Riverdale* (Aguirre-Sacasa, 2017). Trivializing plurisexuality by reducing it to 'experimentation' has been invoked by the media since the 1970s (San Filippo, 2013). These representations of plurisexuality predominantly occur between two women. Scholars suggest that 'heteroflexibility' presents women's plurisexuality for the titillation of (heterosexual) men consumers (Diamond, 2005). Portraying women's plurisexuality for the heterosexual male gaze in media can delegitimise plurisexuality as sexual identities and places men at the centre of women's sexuality (Diamond, 2005).

Outside of bisexuality, little media representation of people with other plurisexual identities has occurred. While shows such as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (Collins, 2003), its modern iteration *Queer Eye* (Collins, 2018), and cult gay show *Queer as Folk* (Cowen & Lipman, 2000) use queer in the show title, queer was not used as a sexual identity in the shows themselves and most characters identified as gay. In digital media, discussions of pansexuality have increased with celebrities such as singers Miley Cyrus, Brendon Urie, and Janelle Monáe identifying as pansexual in media interviews (e.g., Chatel, 2018; Peswani, 2019). However, whilst some media characters have mentioned their sexual fluidity, few characters in film or television have yet to explicitly identify as pansexual, queer, or use other plurisexual terms.

The Internet and 'post-bisexual' culture

The rise of the Internet, and digital and social media has shifted the way rainbow communities – and everyone else – interacts and organises (Haag & Chang, 1997; Munt, Bassett, & O'Riordan, 2002). It also represents a move from private to public for social and intimate lives as our thoughts, identities, and experiences are shared publicly online (Haythornthwaite, 2005). The Internet has created an ease of gathering to discuss and debate our identities which has had repercussions for how sexuality is performed and constructed (Seidman, 2015). As sexual orientations shift into social, sexual, and political identities, the Internet facilitates discussions and collective action around these identities (Crowley, 2010a; Downing, 2016).

For queer people, the Internet has been said to be 'transcendental and liberating' (Maliepaard, 2017a). It has provided easier access to networks of similar individuals and create environments where queerness can flourish. The rainbow communities' embracing of the Internet can be attributed to the easier access to community than offline; the Internet has been a useful tool for the rainbow community in forming social relationships with other queer people because it has the potential for less barriers than offline (DeHaan, Kuper, Magee, Bigelow, & Mustanski, 2013). These benefits may be geographical, as people in smaller towns are less likely to have queer, transgender and gender diverse people, and spaces. Online spaces also increase the ability to form more specific groups, as many groups cater for rainbow communities broadly and may not feel appealing to people that are marginalised within queer spaces such as plurisexual people, people of colour, and disabled people; and finally the Internet provides more anonymity and therefore safety and comfort (Hillier & Harrison, 2007; Hillier, Mitchell, & Ybarra, 2012). The Internet has also become a useful tool for sexual purposes for queer people. This includes connecting with people to meet offline for sex (Pond & Farvid, 2017; Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014), or engaging in sexual activities online (e.g., cybersex) for enjoyment or a 'trial run' of sexual exploration (Daneback, Ross, & Månsson, 2008). Further to this, the Internet is a valuable pathway for queer people to develop and explore their sexual identity, through being able to access numerous resources about different identities, locating

stories of other people's sexual identity development and disclosure, and being able to present and rehearse their queer identities online (Craig & McNroy, 2014; Szulc & Dhoest, 2013).

Plurisexual individuals engage in the same activities as other queer people online. This includes using the Internet as a resource to learn about sexual identities, to facilitate sex with people of different genders, to receive support around their identity, and to build communities (Daneback et al., 2008).

Scholars have emphasised the value of plurisexual 'safe spaces' online for plurisexual people (Crowley, 2010b; Maliepaard, 2017a). These spaces are beneficial as plurisexual people have been found to receive less support when exploring their sexual identity than gay and lesbian people (Maliepaard, 2017a). Further, online rainbow 'spaces' often carrying mononormative assumptions, which can alienate plurisexual people (Maliepaard, 2017a; Monro, 2015). As there are few plurisexual-specific spaces offline, the Internet has been able to centralise plurisexual communities to promote plurisexual activism and provide bisexual-specific support networks (Maliepaard, 2017a). Prior to the Internet, the creation of these spaces had previously only been in large, urban, queer friendly areas limiting the amount of plurisexual people that could be part of these groups. By having a space free of geographic and other offline constraints, online communities allow visibility for previously invisible identities (in certain contexts).

While the Internet has been a place for support, resources, and community for queer and plurisexual people over the past few decades of use, it is also viewed as a place that reproduces dominant and sometimes harmful discourses about queerness and plurisexuality (Munt et al., 2002). For instance, Maliepaard (2017a) notes that bisexual forums sometimes perpetuate monosexual ideas of 'choosing a side' and replicate arguments about bisexuality being a binary (and therefore non-inclusive) identity. Other scholars have noted that online communities can reproduce pre-Internet anti-bisexual discourses and conflicts between lesbians and bisexual women (Crowley, 2010b; Munt et al., 2002). Alongside this, in recent years 'post-bisexual' discourses have flourished both on and off the Internet. Post-bisexual discourses can be defined as criticising sexual identities – specifically

lesbian, gay, and bisexual – as labels that restrict sexual expression by being too discrete/fixed. As the Internet has centralised rainbow communities, it has also become a place to discuss and debate the meanings and discourses of sexuality.

Rejection of terms rooted in essentialist and medical historical contexts has become more common in recent years (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). The increasing visibility of queer people (both online, offline, and in popular culture) leads non-heterosexual people to ‘push back’ against dominant essentialist and heterosexist discourses that dominate their offline lives (and sometimes their online ones) (Downing, 2016). As one of the original essentialist sexual orientations, counter-discourses and deconstruction of identity terms has led to bisexuality being heavily criticised by non-heterosexual people, particularly young and emerging adults. Bisexuality is critiqued as operating within dichotomous models of sexuality that are viewed as ‘outdated’ and problematic (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). This, as well as other arguments against bisexuality, has led many to reject identifying as bisexual, while continuing to acknowledge their plurisexual attraction. As scholars have noted, much of this discourse takes place online. For instance, within lesbian and bisexual groups on Myspace (a popular social network during the mid-2000s), plurisexual women frequently discussed a preference not to label their sexual identity (Crowley, 2010b). Justification for this preference frequently varied from identity confusion, bisexual as a stigmatised identity, and viewing identity labels as restrictive (Crowley, 2010b). Tumblr (a microblogging and social media site) has been located as an online environment for queer people to “engage with counter public or subcultural discussion that would likely be disrupted elsewhere” (Byron et al., 2019, p. 2244). Tumblr’s ‘queer architecture’ has been attributed to the anonymity (or pseudonymity) the site’s design facilitates, in comparison to other social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram whereby it is harder to be anonymous/pseudonymous. Further, Tumblr provides users the ability to curate their own blogs and communities without the impediment of capitalist-driven additions to the site (Byron et al., 2019). This has fostered an environment where queer people can engage with sexuality and gender-related discussions, including debates around plurisexual terms such as

bisexual and pansexual, and to use these debates as a way to form opinions about counter-discourses and their relationship to terms such as bisexual (Byron et al., 2019).

Alongside the post-bisexual discourses within queer and plurisexual online communities is the use of terminology to describe plurisexuality that signals more inclusivity than the term bisexual. As previously mentioned, bisexuality is viewed as inherently binary because of the 'bi' prefix. This has led both transgender and cisgender queer people to suggest that bisexuality only includes attraction to males and females, excluding people outside of this gender binary (i.e., gender diverse people), and transgender people (Lapointe, 2017). Bisexual people of all genders have discredited this assertion, arguing that bisexuality is inclusive of attraction to multiple genders. Nevertheless, similar narratives, discussions of which have been located offline and online, scholarly and socially, view bisexual as an inadequate identity term. These discourses of bisexuality, and a surge in valuing inclusivity in our society, has led plurisexual people to seek or invent terminology that they believe more appropriately encapsulates their desires (Callis, 2016; Oakley, 2016). For some, declaring they have no label for their sexuality is sufficient. However, as categorisation is the main means of describing sexual identity in an Anglo-Western social context, there has been a rise in plurisexual people both online and offline using various terms instead of heterosexual/straight, homosexual/gay/lesbian, and bisexual to describe their sexual identity and reflect their 'true self' (Oakley, 2016).

Post-bisexual identities

While this chapter has briefly situated the multiple and contradictory meanings of bisexuality in its historical and socio-cultural contexts, it is also important to locate and discuss other plurisexual terms that are used increasingly within rainbow communities. As mentioned earlier, while bisexual was the primary term to describe attraction to multiple genders during the 20th century, other terms have since risen in popularity. Bisexual continues to be the term most frequently used to describe attraction to multiple genders, but other identity terms are also used by plurisexual people to

replace or use alongside bisexual. These include terms such as queer, pansexual, polysexual, omnisexual, and pomosexual (see glossary for definitions of these terms).

'Pansexual' has its origins in Freud's psychoanalysis theory in his argument that all our urges were motivated by sex (hence, pansexual), and was subsequently used when discussing or critiquing psychoanalysis (e.g., Haberman, 1914). Pansexual started being used in relation to desire and sexuality within rainbow communities in approximately the 1970s (Them, 2018). It was often equated with kink communities, or used as an umbrella term for sexual identities and behaviours that were considered deviant (such as fetishism, masturbation, and sadomasochism) (Drobac, 1998; Lenius, 2001). The goal of pansexuality, similar to how 'queer' is currently used, was to deconstruct hegemonic categories surrounding sexuality and gender (Drobac, 1998). Studies suggest that pansexuality began to be used during the mid-1990s by plurisexual people (Belous & Bauman, 2016), whereas historical artefacts – such as feminist magazines from this era – have used pansexual in conjunction with bisexual since at least 1980 (i.e., Brooks, 1980). Through surveying bisexual people and the terms they used to describe their sexual identity in the 1990s, Rust (2000b) suggested that the increase of terms such as pansexual (as well as polysexual, pansensual, and ambisexual) was due to some in the plurisexual community finding culturally available categories inadequate. Bisexual was seen as an insufficient term to encompass and describe their 'sexual sense of self' to themselves and others (Rust, 2000b). Therefore, use of multiple terms enables plurisexual people to forge their individual sense of self and describe their sexual identity with more complexity. Today, Rust's (2000b) justification for the use of terms beyond pansexual is largely agreed amongst scholars (Galupo et al., 2016).

Between the 1990s and today, there has been an increase in widespread use of the term pansexuality. While pansexual is largely framed as an unfamiliar identity to people outside of rainbow communities, this may be shifting with high profile individuals openly describing themselves as pansexual which has resulted in a substantial increase in online searches of the word via Google

and other online dictionaries (Them, 2018). Currently, pansexual is a sexual identity with multiple definitions (Belous & Bauman, 2016). Individuals who identify as pansexual emphasize the ‘pan’ prefix, originating from the Greek prefix for *all*, meaning that pansexuality is defined as the potential to be attracted to people of *all* genders (Gonel, 2013). Other pansexual people, and scholars, have classified pansexuality as attraction *regardless* of gender (Belous & Bauman, 2016). Narratives surrounding the first definition – attraction to all – are often emphasised in relation to the dichotomy implicit in the ‘bi’ prefix of bisexual. Through this, pansexuality is situated as more accepting of diverse genders and disruptive of binary systems of sexuality and gender than bisexuality (Elizabeth, 2013). Pansexuality, through the latter reading of its definition, is seen to compliment bisexuality. Bisexuality’s placing of gender at the centre of desire and attraction can be seen as unappealing for people who argue that society needs to move away from its hegemonic centring of gender (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). Thus, pansexuality’s emphasis on attraction to people beyond their gender identity and gender expression is seen as more appealing to some plurisexual people, and indicative of future destabilisation of current notions of attraction.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, ‘queer’ is a term that has been in popular usage throughout recent rainbow history. It has multiple meanings and usages: as a pejorative term – which leads some people unwilling to reclaim it; as a non-specific umbrella term for all non-heterosexual people and identities; and as its own sexual identity that is intentionally vague and functions outside of hegemonic categorisation of sexuality (Callis, 2016; Morandini, Blaszczyński, & Dar-Nimrod, 2017). The extent to which these meanings are used varies across countries and cultural contexts. For example, queer’s negative connotations are more salient for rainbow people in Australia and much of the United States than Aotearoa, due to its ubiquity as a derogatory slur (Barker, Richards, & Bowes-Catton, 2009). In more urban and liberal environments, such as London, New York, and Wellington, the term has largely been reclaimed, and has more positive associations (Barker et al., 2009). Unlike pansexual, where usage of the term is predominantly situated in online rainbow circles, the term ‘queer’ bridges online and offline, and young and older rainbow people and

communities. The term is valued by plurisexual people because it is seen as counter to “narrow, limiting or oppressive” associations with terms such as bisexual (Morandini et al., 2017, p. 911). However, some researchers have warned against classifying queer as a plurisexual term as those who are not attracted to multiple genders use queer to signal their commitment to deconstructing hegemonic and limiting sexual orientations (Mereish, Katz-Wise, & Woulfe, 2016).

While pansexual and queer are the most common terms adopted outside of bisexual to describe plurisexuality, other terms such as polysexual, omniseual, and pomosexual are also used by plurisexual people. Despite being largely attributed to current ‘Internet culture’ and shifts in (micro)identity politics, diverse plurisexual terms have been in use prior to the rise of the Internet and social media (Rust, 2000a). Nevertheless, the increase in diverse plurisexual terms to describe plurisexuality and sexual fluidity has been attributed to the transformation in access to sexuality discourse and experiences (Cover, 2018a; Paasonen & Spišák, 2018). Social media and video hosting sites such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, YouTube, and TikTok provide the public with an entry point to learn about counter-discourse discussions of sexuality and gender that they may not have encountered offline (Paasonen & Spišák, 2018). In this space, sexuality expands further from an orientation to a sexual identity “forged...through [socio-cultural] mediation, consumerism and the development of lifestyle” (Attwood, 2011, p. 86). Cover (2018a) described the broad range of sexual identity terms and descriptors as ‘micro-minority terms’. He argues that while these terms have the goal of deconstructing hegemonic sexuality descriptors, young adults also see these terms as beneficial self-descriptions that describe aspects of their (sexual) identity and values that normative terms fail to accomplish (Cover, 2018a).

Researchers have noted that women are more likely to reject using sexual identity labels – or identifying with labels outside of heterosexual/homosexual/bisexual – than men (Callis, 2016; Savin-Williams, 2005). Scholars have argued that this may be because explorations of sexual fluidity and identifying with a plurisexual identity is more socially acceptable for women. This disparity between

women and men may be due to more patriarchal acceptance for women's sexual identities that are viewed as men's fantasies (Thompson, 2006), or because women's sexuality is more influenced by social factors including feminist and queer activism (Baumeister, 2000; Katz-Wise, Reisner, Hughto, & Keo-Meier, 2016). Additionally, gender diverse and transgender people are more likely to identify with a plurisexual identity than a monosexual one (Katz-Wise et al., 2016). And terms such as 'queer' have been found to be favoured by transgender people over 'bisexual' (Katz-Wise et al., 2016). The differing relationship of people of different genders to post-bisexual identities reflects a possible tension between hegemonic sexuality discourses and counter-discourses. Increasingly, queer and gender diverse people are rejecting dominant labels of sexual identity and shifting the taxonomy of sexuality to a more diverse lexicon. Cisgender men, however, are largely left out — or opt-out — of taking up this counter-discourse. This may be because of hegemonic restrictions on their fluidity of sexual expression and identity inhibiting queer men taking up post-bisexual identities.

The increasing popularity of the 'post-bisexual' movement alongside mononormativity and compressing of rainbow identities into a singular 'non-heterosexual' sexual orientation provides two popular yet competing discourses of sexuality that diminish bisexuality by positioning it as essentialist and binary. This tension between new and old identities may be creating a social context where plurisexuality is increasingly normalised but bisexuality is seen as a contentious identity.

Scholars have suggested that this is in large part to (mis)attributions about bisexuality's definition and who can be described as bisexual (Barker & Langdrige, 2008; Hayfield et al., 2014). Namely, bisexuals are attracted to men and women to a similar or equal degree, and abundantly focus on gender as the central feature of attraction. Bisexuality disrupts binaries of sexual identity yet is associated with categorical notions of sexuality because it is seen as situated along a hetero-homo continuum.

Chapter summary

This chapter provided a context to how bisexuality and other plurisexual identities are viewed in society and its position within discourses of sexuality. Bisexuality has gone through various definitions – sometimes concurrently – and its position within scientific, social, and queer history is contentious, as well as largely underwritten. Hegemonic ideals of heterosexuality, and more recently homonormativity, leaves plurisexual identities out of dominant discourse despite its long history within social, political and scientific contexts. Bisexuality is at once seen as a human ideal and norm, a pathologized identity, an insufficiently queer and marginalised queer identity, and a reinforcement of gender binaries. Further, the demonising of bisexual men and the heightened objectification of bisexual women demonstrates the intertwining of gender and sexuality in our culture and the regulation of gendered sexual expression. In the next chapter, the contextualisation of bisexual and plurisexual identities will extend to a review and discussion of psychological literature.

CHAPTER THREE

Constructing a Plurisexual Identity: A Literature Review

In this chapter, research from both essentialist and social constructionist domains will be presented and discussed in order to present a broad contextualisation of current understandings of plurisexual identities and experiences. Specifically, how psychological literature constructs and/or measures plurisexual identities including theories of how plurisexuality develops, disclosure of plurisexual identities, and research into the different identities under the plurisexual umbrella will be examined.

Understanding sexuality: two paradigms

There are two dominant epistemological frameworks that underpin psychological and other research into understanding sexual identity/orientation: social constructionism and essentialism. An essentialist lens primarily positions sexuality as internal with an underlying psychological and/or biological origin (Seidman, 2015). As touched upon in Chapter two, dominant essentialist notions of sexuality originate in sexology during the 19th and 20th century (Race, 2015; Weeks, 2010). In addition, Freud has been one of the singularly influential figures in essentialist sexuality thought (Carr, 1987; Murphy, 1984). Freud extended the belief of sexologists that there is a biological/psychological basis to sexuality to argue that sexuality is at the *root* of humans psychology (Freud, 1905/1920). Since then, the key concepts of an essentialist sexuality perspective have been successfully embedded into Western culture – although not without critique from other academic perspectives (Johnson, 2016; Tiefer, 2004). According to Seidman (2015), the reverence afforded to science provides essentialist perspectives with an authenticity that has been complicit with embedding these ideas into our minds and culture. As a result, dominant discourses that underpin and organise Western cultural thought largely maintain an essentialist view of sexuality as biological. Specifically, sexuality is thought to be an innate drive in humans that directs our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour (Tiefer, 2004).

Within this essentialist perspective, sexual orientation is viewed as a mechanism that organises and directs sexual desire (Burr, 2015). The categories of homosexual and heterosexual are often framed as innate and dominant sexual orientations that remain static across the lifespan (Diamond, 2003a). Sexual orientation is largely understood through essentialism to be dichotomous; the existence of plurisexuality thus can confound essentialist perspectives and challenge conceptualisations of sexual orientation (e.g., Jacobson & Joel, 2018). Some essentialist research seeks to avoid this incongruity by ignoring plurisexuality or by referencing it in passing, while others combine bisexual and gay participants without acknowledging the differences between these groups (Barker et al., 2012; Hegarty, 1997). However, some sexuality theorists also view bisexuality as an innate orientation, and use essentialist theories to study and theorise about plurisexual people and plurisexuality (Although there has been very few studies to date about plurisexual identities other than bisexuality) (e.g., Klein et al., 1985; Zinik, 1985). Empirical psychological research into sexuality predominantly draws on essentialist theories of sexual orientation as it provides a focus on measurable experience of sexuality that fits into discrete categories. With an essentialist epidemiology, “you can theorize motivations, experience, and meaning in a straightforward way, because a simple, largely unidirectional relationship is assumed between meaning and experience and language” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). Contrastingly, social constructionism provides a more nuanced, and complex interpretation of sexuality.

A social constructionist approach positions sexuality as socially, historically, and culturally situated, rather than internally located (Tiefer, 2004). This view argues that shared socio-cultural meanings inform how we understand sexuality – both culturally and individually (Burr, 2015). Crucially, a social constructionist view sees sexuality as an unstable phenomenon with its meaning shifting across time and place, dependant on norms and discourses (Burr, 2015; Seidman, 2015; Tiefer, 2004). As well as informing many aspects of social constructionism, Foucault’s examination of the history of sexuality was greatly influential in informing social constructionist theories on sexuality (Foucault, 1978; Tiefer, 2004). Foucault challenged notions of ‘natural’ innate sexuality, proposing that discourses –

that are organised around power – *create* society’s understanding of sexuality (Foucault, 1978). In addition to Foucault, sociologist’s Simon and Gagnon (1984) sexual script theory has been significant in shaping social constructionist models of sexuality. This theory proposed that sexuality is governed by sexual scripts which inform all aspects of our sexual lives (Simon & Gagnon, 1984). These scripts conceptualise human behaviour as shaped by sociohistorical paradigms, instead of individualised motivations (Simon & Gagnon, 1984). Sexual script theory has been applied in psychological literature to assist in understanding phenomena such as gendered interactions in sexual interactions (e.g., Gavey, 2018; Masters, Casey, Wells, & Morrison, 2013).

Sexuality is framed within a social constructionist perspective as actively constructed by people within the confines of cultural and social understandings of sexuality (Clarke et al., 2010). Therefore, sexuality research with a social constructionist lens eschews views of sexual orientation as a passive process involving people ‘discovering’ their innate sexual identity (e.g., Mathers, Sumerau, & Cragun, 2018; Rust, 1993a). This move away from discrete categories of sexuality provides more room to acknowledge the various identities plurisexual people take up and, as such, commonly underpins queer research (Callis, 2009, 2014).

These two epistemologies underpin psychological literature on sexual identity – either implicitly or explicitly. While dichotomous in their perspectives, social psychology often negotiates between the two approaches, maintaining that identities are largely understood as a “individual and cultural meanings of the selfhood” (Comeau, 2012, p. 322). Both psychological and cultural processes, including social categorical systems are therefore are believed to shape people’s identities and self-concepts. Sexual identity is specifically seen as extending beyond an intrinsic sexual orientation, to reflect personal subjectivities within an interpersonal and social context (Diamond, 2006b). Agency of individuals, as well as the interplay of environmental factors are emphasised in scholarly descriptors of identity. For example, Weinberg et al. (1994) described sexual identity as involving the “choice of a particular perspective from which to make sense of one’s sexual feelings and

behaviours” (p. 292). They continued on to stipulate that the socially structured understandings of sexual desire organise individual sexual identity and preferences (Weinberg et al., 1994).

Considering the different epistemologies of sexual identity, the following sections will examine how plurisexual/bisexual identities are seen to be constructed and managed in psychological literature.

This will include a discussion of models of sexual identity development and sexual identity disclosure, and an examination of current and past literature on different plurisexual identities and research that draws comparisons between gay and plurisexual identities.

Sexual identity development theories

Within psychological literature, the dominant way of understanding sexual identity is through a sexual identity development model. Sexual identity development has been credited as a central aspect of one’s identification with a non-heterosexual identity (Harper & Swanson, 2019). Sexual identity development includes the cognitive, affective, and behavioural management of a non-heterosexual sexual orientation, and the integration of this identity into one’s overall self-concept (Cass, 1984). Various models have been developed in psychological literature since the 1970s to describe the formation of a non-heterosexual identity. These models are based on the assumption that identifying with a sexual orientation is developed over time through environmental and personal processes (Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014). While some sexual identity models make explicit mention of plurisexual identities alongside gay identities, other models have examined gay identities and have subsequently been applied to bisexuality (e.g., Cass, 1979). A third category of sexual identity model proposes a model that places plurisexual identity development independent of gay identities. Some scholars have been critical of amalgamating plurisexual and gay identities or applying gay identity models to plurisexuality (Harper & Swanson, 2019; Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014). Scholars believe that it is important to acknowledge the differences between the identities due to the broad variability in what constitutes a plurisexual identity, and the differentiation in experiences between plurisexual and gay people (Harper & Swanson, 2019; Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014). These

models assume that as heterosexuality is framed as the norm in our society, heterosexual people do not go through a development process prior to 'claiming' a heterosexual identity (although the heteronormativity of this implication is rarely stated) (Weinberg et al., 1994). Some scholars argue that many heterosexuals do not *identify* as heterosexual, instead defining their self-identity through other characteristics such as their gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, and occupation (Eliason, 1996). In comparison to the passive identity of heterosexuality, queer identities are seen as a significant feature of one's self-construct.

Scholarly work on sexual identity development of plurisexuality and other queer identities has largely focused on developing and utilising linear models that represent different 'stages' of identity development. Cass's (1979, 1984) 'Homosexual Identity Formation' model has been the dominant model in sexuality literature. This model suggests that once individuals acknowledge they are not heterosexual, they move through four to six stages of sexuality development before reaching congruence with their sexual identity (Cass, 1979, 1984). While based on monosexual queer identities (i.e., gay and lesbian), Cass's (1979) model has been suggested to be applicable to plurisexual identities. However, this model was critiqued for the limitations of a linear stage model as it was seen as too simplistic to accurately fit the experiences of queer people, namely the complexity and fluidity of sexual identity (Kennedy & Oswalt, 2014). Further, Cass (1979) and other models of sexual identity development (e.g., Chapman & Brannock, 1987; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996), often present the adopting of lesbian and gay identities as the final stage of identity development and a sign of a successful and healthy identity. These models frame plurisexual identities, specifically bisexuality, as immature and unstable, either explicitly within the model, or implicitly (Eliason, 1996; Rust, 2000a). Plurisexuality scholars also critiqued the unidimensional framing of homosexuality as 'opposite' to heterosexuality, and plurisexuality as a middle point between these two identities (Harper & Swanson, 2019; Rust, 2000a). It is preferred that instead of viewing plurisexuality as half homosexual and half heterosexual, it commands its own separate category of identity.

As most sexual identity models often do not account for plurisexuality, other models have arisen to consider how plurisexual identity development differs from other non-heterosexual identity models. The most notable is (Weinberg et al.'s 1994) model of bisexual identity development. Weinberg et al. (1994) categorised four stages of bisexual identity development that they considered relative (as bisexuality is a uniquely heterogeneous identity), and that not every bisexual person 'successfully' moved through each stage. They suggested the first three stages: Initial Confusion, Finding and Applying the Label, and Settling into the Identity corresponded to similar stages in models of homosexual identity development (Weinberg et al., 1994). However, stage four is considered unique to plurisexual people (Weinberg et al., 1994). According to Weinberg, the final stage, Continued Uncertainty, is categorised by individuals experiencing intermittent doubt and uncertainty about their bisexual identity despite applying the label to themselves and experiencing a degree of self-acceptance (Weinberg et al., 1994). Weinberg et al. (1994) argued that bisexual individuals will *continue* to experience this stage in their sexual identity development process because of the lack of social validation for bisexuality and persistent external pressure to conform to a monosexual identity. They also argued that other factors may contribute to uncertainty, such as not 'feeling sufficiently bisexual' through to not experiencing equal attraction to 'both sexes' and not engaging in sexual behaviours with both sexes to 'confirm' their bisexual feelings (Weinberg et al., 1994).

As well as being "very broad and somewhat simplified", (Weinberg et al., 1994, p. 37) this model was also critiqued for not having a stage where bisexuals are confident and satisfied with their identity (Knous, 2006). Knous (2006) argued that while bisexuality is often not socially recognised, bisexual people *can* experience self-acceptance without uncertainty, and use their acceptance of their identity to advocate for social acceptance of bisexuality.

Some researchers have critiqued sexual identity development models for their focus on sexual identity independent of other identities that may play a factor in identity development (Eliason, 1996). The gendered diversity of sexual identity experiences, for both plurisexual and other queer

people has long been acknowledged in literature but only recently has attention been paid to the intersection between ethnic/racial and sexual identity experiences (e.g., Bostwick, Berger, & Hequembourg, 2019a; Galupo, Taylor, & Cole, 2019). However, most models of sexual identity ignore the interconnected nature of developing a self-identity concept with multiple marginalised identities (Chun & Singh, 2010; Collins, 2004; Harper & Swanson, 2019). Kenneady and Oswalt (2014) argued that presenting sexual identity development models as universal does not consider the complexity and diversity of non-white and queer identities and the effect of each of these identities on their identity development. Comeau (2012) suggested that intersectionality theory can provide a more nuanced understanding of how multiple self-identity constructs, including ethnicity and gender can intersect in the development on one's sexual identity. The cost of disclosing a queer identity may be a bigger risk for people of colour due to potential loss of support systems due to higher stigmatisation of queer identities, and colonial-imported Christianity that condemns non-heterosexual identities (Chun & Singh, 2010; Comeau, 2012; Kerekere, 2017). As most sexual identity development models only take into account white sexual minorities, the different complexity of sexual identity for people of colour is not considered in the formation of sexual identity development models (Chun & Singh, 2010; Eliason, 1996).

Through criticising the rigidity of models of sexual identity development, research into sexual identity development has taken two primary paths: a differential model approach and a descriptive approach to theorising sexual identity development. As research into plurisexual people has developed, there has been an increase in complexity of models of plurisexual identity development to accommodate the multiplicity and fluidity of plurisexual identities. For example, Harper and Swanson (2019)'s recent plurisexual identity development theory sought to extend bisexual development models to examine other plurisexual identities including pansexual and polysexual identities, and bisexuality. Harper and Swanson (2019) sought to move away from a stage model to a non-sequential model of plurisexual identity development.

Other research into plurisexual people's identity development has moved away from a model approach to using a descriptive and qualitative theorising. For example, using two case studies of bisexual women of colour in the US, Comeau (2012) argued that social context is crucial in influencing individuals construction of their sexual identity. The author viewed cognitive components of sexuality, such as desire and attraction, as under emphasized in U.S. cultural understanding of sexual identity in favour of sexual behaviour, despite the two former components likely to also be crucial in informing sexual identity construction (Comeau, 2012). Comeau (2012) also argued that matrices of power (meaning, powerful social influences such as the immediate and broader social environment) and identity are inseparable from one another and inform an individual's identity construction. Therefore, it is important to consider how non-individual factors such as social communities, support networks, and socio-political landscapes shape self and sexual identities (Comeau, 2012).

While some researchers view sexual identity development processes as involving the same factors for monosexual and plurisexual sexual minorities (e.g., Rosario, Schrimshaw, Hunter, & Levy-Warren, 2009), others differentiate between the two, without the use of models. Diamond (2006b) posited that sexual identity development continues throughout a person's lifespan, and does not have a clear endpoint, which these models often disregard. Diamond (2006b) noted that some individuals change their preferred queer identity term, particularly when attracted to multiple genders, and this complicates the perceived linear trajectory popular with psychological constructions of sexual identity development (Diamond, 2006b). Diamond (2006b) also argued that not having a label to describe one's sexual identity may not necessarily be a requirement of developing a healthy queer identity. Thus 'traditional' models of sexual identity development do not often accommodate for sexually fluid and plurisexual individuals. According to Diamond (2006b) a move towards "investigating how specific person context interactions shape diverse manifestations of same-sex sexuality over the life course" (Diamond, 2006b, p. 87) is likely a necessary next step. This may reduce emphasis on prescribed categories and essentialist descriptors of sexual identity

development and instead acknowledges the multiplicity of sexual identity development which is embedded in an individual's personal, interpersonal, and cultural contexts and is not able to be defined universally (Diamond, 2006b).

Sexual identity disclosure

The disclosure of one's sexual identity is known socially and in academic literature as 'coming out', shorthand for the phrase 'coming out of the closet'. As Maliepaard (2018) explains:

"the closet is a metaphor for the experience of not disclosing your sexual identity, and in this metaphor "the closet is a dark, small, and inferior space that creates a sensation of being imprisoned. Coming out, then, implies opening the closet door and walking into a new, never-ending, bright space that provides freedom for all who take this important step" (p. 2)

'Coming out' is viewed socially and academically as a desirable and necessary step in the development of a queer person's sexual identity due to the social and personal consequences of 'remaining closeted'. 'Coming out' has been able to provide access to a community of people to provide support through similar experiences, as well as personal support from family, friend and social networks, and increase positive personal affect (Brownfield, Brown, Jeevanba, & VanMattson, 2018; Grov, Bimbi, Nanín, & Parsons, 2006). But sexual identity disclosure can be risky – it can lead to alienation from social communities, marginalisation, and violence (Grov et al., 2006; Wandrey, Mosack, & Moore, 2015), and can be a stressful and unpleasant experience (Brownfield et al., 2018).

Theories and discussions of disclosing non-heterosexual identities are typically discussed in psychological literature in combination with sexual identity development. Some theorists argue that disclosing your sexual identity to others is a fundamental part of sexual identity development (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1985). Others equivocate with the concepts of coming out and sexual identity development (e.g., Diamond, 1998; Floyd & Bakeman, 2006; Rosario et al., 2009). As with sexual identity development, most research on sexual identity disclosure amalgamate lesbian, gay, and plurisexual experiences, or apply lesbian and gay theories of coming out to plurisexual individuals (e.g., Coleman, 1982; Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). Plurisexuality theorists have challenged the validity

of amalgamating the experiences of identities, arguing that a plurisexual person's experience of coming out differs significantly from lesbians and gays, and therefore examinations of 'coming out' need to separate monosexual and plurisexual people (Maliepaard, 2018; Wandrey et al., 2015).

Sexual identity development models have been criticised for framing the choice of not 'coming out' negatively and as an indication of self-hatred and shame (Groves et al., 2006; McLean, 2007). McLean (2007) argued that there is a disclosure imperative embedded in sexual identity development models that is incongruent with the complexity of coming out as plurisexual. By framing disclosure as fundamental to identity development, individuals within highly marginalised and misunderstood identities who choose not to disclose their sexual identity to others, could feel anxious and invisible by remaining 'in the closet' (McLean, 2007). Researchers have noted that people who identify as plurisexual tend to encounter increased intolerance around their identity in comparison to gay and lesbian people, particularly surrounding identity disclosure (Brewster & Moradi, 2010). Plurisexual people encounter stereotyped criticism of bisexuality – such as being seen as being perceived as confused, immature or of dismissing their identity when disclosed to others (McLean, 2007), and anti-bisexual prejudice from members of the lesbian and gay community (Brewster & Moradi, 2010). Consequently, plurisexual people are less likely to be 'out' in comparison to members of the lesbian and gay community, or more highly selective to whom they disclose their sexual identity (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Weinberg et al., 1994).

Scholars have also argued that 'coming out of the closet' presents disclosure as a false dichotomy, as disclosure does not occur once but is often a task queer people must continually undertake across their lifespan (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). Therefore, some researchers suggest framing sexual identity disclosure in terms of an 'outness level' (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). This continuum of sexual identity disclosure includes using nonverbal or context clues to indicate one's sexual identity, to verbal declarations of their sexual identity, as well as the degree of interpersonal 'outness' in different contexts such as with friends, family, social networks, and professional environments (Balsam &

Mohr, 2007; Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). For members of the plurisexual community, 'outness level' is complicated by some plurisexual individuals disclosing their non-heterosexuality without specifically noting that they identify as bisexual, or with another plurisexual identity term (Maliepaard, 2018). Thus while some plurisexual people are 'out' as a sexual minority, they are not 'out' as plurisexual – often to avoid stigma associated with bisexuality within the rainbow community²²(Balsam & Mohr, 2007). Other research has noted that bisexual people use alternative terms to describe their sexual identity to others, such as pansexual and queer, to avoid being associated with the negative connotations of bisexuality when disclosing their identity²³ (Wandrey et al., 2015).

Researchers posit that the stigma and invisibility of plurisexual identities contributes to the differences in disclosure rates between plurisexual and monosexual queer people (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). If a plurisexual person is in a relationship or marriage that is seen as heterosexual, they are unlikely to disclose their sexual identity because of fears of being misunderstood or not being believed that they are queer (McLean, 2007). Balsam and Mohr (2007) suggested that not being in a same-sex relationship can be a factor in many plurisexual people's decision not to disclose their sexual identity because they do not display their non-heterosexuality through having a partner with the same gender as them. Aside from external reasons for not disclosing their sexual identity, self-doubt is also a contributing factor in plurisexual individuals' not 'coming out'. Returning to Weinberg et al. (1994)'s stage model of identity development, members of the bisexual community may continue to experience uncertainty about their identity even after becoming self-accepting of their sexual identity. This doubt may be exacerbated by not being 'visibly' plurisexual by being in a monogamous long-term relationship or marriage or having sexual or romantic experiences with multiple genders. This, in turn can lead to plurisexual individual's feeling not 'queer enough' to disclose their sexual identity to others (McLean, 2007; Weinberg et al., 1994).

²² see Chapter four for a discussion of the stigmatisation of bisexuality within rainbow communities.

²³ see Chapter four for a discussion of bisexual stereotypes

Research has recently emphasised plurisexual people's preference for coming out 'casually', that is, attempting to disclose their sexual identity in subtle and contextualised ways (Maliepaard, 2018; McLean, 2007). While coming out is predominantly framed as an important event, many plurisexual people avoid this expectation. In examining sexual identity disclosure among bisexual women, Wandrey et al. (2015) noted that their participants disclosed their sexual identity in conversational contexts, or by correcting people's assumption about their sexual identity. This spontaneous disclosure technique has contributed to a reduction in the pressure and anxiety around sexual identity disclosure. The aforementioned pressure and anxiety can be interpreted as intimidating, and could increase hostility from those with negative connotations of bisexuality (Wandrey et al., 2015). This disclosure technique potentially has another benefit, which is to avoid the disclosure imperative non-heterosexual people face. By downplaying their 'coming out' and the significance of their sexuality within their self-identity, plurisexual people can subvert expectations surrounding what is viewed as an essential part of sexual identity development (Maliepaard, 2018; Wandrey et al., 2015).

Measuring plurisexuality

As previously noted, there is heterogeneity in bisexual and other plurisexual identities. People in this community interpret and define their plurisexuality differently, with some defining their identity through the potential to be attracted to multiple genders, through equal attraction to men and women, or through not positioning gender at the centre of their sexual identity. When bisexuality started being acknowledged as a sexual orientation and identity, researchers sought to define and measure it (e.g., Weinrich & Klein, 2002; Zinik, 1985). Other sexuality researchers argued against this practice, suggesting that self-identification is preferable to measurement of a socially constructed category (Galupo et al., 2015). As there has been an increase in identification with non-bisexual plurisexual identities, measurement as a tool for understanding plurisexuality has depreciated in sexuality research. In this section, varying measures of bisexuality will be outlined and critiqued, and current scholarly theories on plurisexual identities will be discussed.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Alfred Kinsey and colleagues used data from interviews with white American women and men to create a continuum model of sexual orientation (Kinsey et al., 1953; Kinsey et al., 1948). This model differed from an essentialist dichotomous model which positioned heterosexuals and homosexuals as discrete populations. The Kinsey Scale was a tool developed by Kinsey evaluated sexual orientation on a continuum from exclusively heterosexual at one end of the scale to exclusively homosexual at the other. However, while Kinsey considered sexual orientation to consist of sexual desire *and* behaviour, his scale only measured sexual behaviour (Allen et al., 2017).

In his work, Kinsey did not define bisexuality overtly, instead discussing both same-sex and cross-sex behaviour and desire as a mix of homosexuality and heterosexuality (Yoshino, 2000). As a result, scholarly discussions of Kinsey's scale and research have created their own limits of what section of the scale denotes bisexuality. Yoshino (2000) suggested that Kinsey's scale rating of between two and four (that is, between 'more than incidental homosexual contacts; but more frequent heterosexual contacts' and 'more than incidental heterosexual contacts; but more frequent homosexual contacts') indicated bisexuality, but acknowledges this may be overly inclusive. While prescribing numbers on the scale to bisexuality acknowledges that bisexuality includes a range of behaviour and desires, the use of the scale in overly prescriptivist ways for defining plurisexuality may limit individual autonomy to identify with their preferred sexual identity. In addition, the categorising of a person or person's sexual orientations as numbers (e.g., 'Kinsey sixes') obscures the complexity of sexuality by attempting to quantify a subjective and fluid concept (Weinberg et al., 1994). Weinberg et al. (1994) also noted that while Kinsey was against using categories such as heterosexual and homosexual (and presumably bisexual) as unqualified terms for individuals, people find these terms substantially more meaningful to them than being assigned a number on a spectrum. While heavily critiqued, Kinsey's scale found mainstream popularity, particularly in the 20th century, as this study acknowledged the variability in people's experience with sexuality that discrete categorisation of behaviour as homosexual or heterosexual failed to capture.

Sexologist Fritz Klein advanced Kinsey's scale to develop a more nuanced measure of bisexuality beyond examining sexual behaviour exclusively. Klein et al. (1985) acknowledged that a person may identify as bisexual without exhibiting any sexual behaviour that could be considered bisexual. Klein, therefore, suggested a limited relationship between sexual identity and behaviour. Klein and colleagues also noted that researchers had struggled to conceptualise bisexuality, with many studies grouping bisexuals and homosexuals together, even when using the Kinsey scale to classify their participants sexual orientations (Klein et al., 1985). Klein's criticisms of the Kinsey scale are aligned with many social constructionist critiques of essentialist understandings of sexuality. In essence, sexologists did not place enough importance on context when examining sexuality by not including the personal context and preferences. In fact, according to Klein et al. (1985) these contexts lead both sexual behaviours, and terms used to describe their sexual identity, to fluctuate (Klein et al., 1985). Klein and colleagues developed the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) to measure a person's sexual orientation as a "dynamic multivariable process" (Klein et al., 1985); The grid considered variables such as attraction, fantasies, social, emotional and lifestyle preferences, behaviour, and a person's self-identification (Klein et al., 1985). The KSOG also measured these variables in the context of a participants' past, present, and ideal self because, Klein argued, these variables can shift over time (Klein et al., 1985). Later, Weinrich and Klein (2002) broadened their theory of bisexual identity through the KSOG to postulate that there are three 'types' of bisexuals: Bi-Heterosexuals, Bi-Bisexuals, and Bi-Gay/Lesbians that vary in sexual orientation features, such as gender preference in different scenarios, and sexual fantasies.

Klein's self-described intention with the KSOG was to create a measure of sexual orientation that acknowledged the complexity and multiple factors that may create one's sexual orientation while considering how categories of sexuality can appear simplistic and fail to consider the fluctuations of sexuality (Klein et al., 1985). The KSOG has since been critiqued by other researchers for not accurately capturing the experiences of sexual identities (Galupo, Lomash, & Mitchell, 2017). For example, the KSOG, like the Kinsey scale, uses terms that reinforce heterosexuality and

homosexuality as the dominant sexualities, and bisexuality (and other plurisexual identities) as a 'blend' of homosexuality and heterosexuality (Galupo et al., 2017). Both Kinsey and Klein's measures force scale-users to measure their attraction to men and women on one scale, rather than as independent concepts, thus creating an either/or dichotomy of attraction to men and women (Galupo et al., 2017; Klesse, 2011). Recent critiques also view these models as inadequate for not accounting for, or misrepresenting, plurisexual experiences of sexual identity and desire for individuals outside of a binary model of gender (Galupo et al., 2017).

Since the Kinsey scale and the KSOG, there has been an expanse of work seeking to measure bisexuality. Bisexuality in psychological research was based on behaviour: individuals that had sex with both men and women at least once were described as bisexual regardless of how they identified. Zinik (1985), critiquing this practice, making the distinction between those individuals who were behaviourally bisexual and those who identified as bisexual. It was proposed there are three factors that define being bisexual, all of which have to be present: "(1) eroticizing or being sexually aroused by both females and males; (2) engaging in (or desiring) sexual activity with both; and (3) adopting "bisexual" as a sexual identity" (Zinik, 1985, p. 8). This was the first mention of a self-identity component to bisexuality, as Zinik defined a sexual identity as a reflection of one's self-concept and also involved membership in a bisexual social group or movement (Zinik, 1985). While this model broadened the scope of bisexuality beyond sexual behaviour, behaviour is still included in this model as a necessary factor in bisexuality; thus reflecting the idea that being attracted to people of different genders is not enough, instead, to be 'fully' bisexual you must physically 'practice' your bisexuality.

Comparatively, Weinberg et al. (1994) measured their participants' bisexuality on three Kinsey scales – that is, measuring participants sexual feelings, sexual behaviour, and romantic feelings respectively – while noting that all their participants also self-identified as bisexual. They used their respective scoring systems to measure an individual's bisexuality, that is, whether their behaviours and

experiences were 'truly' or 'purely' bisexual or leaned more toward heterosexual or homosexual. Through the use of three models, they concluded that there is a range of bisexualities in which gender plays a role – meaning men and women's separate socialisation as masculine and feminine creates diversity in the 'types' of bisexuality they take on (Weinberg et al., 1994). Other types of bisexuality have been distinguished in the literature, including historical, temporary, experimental, and situational (McLean, 2007). These descriptions that measure types of bisexuality uphold the belief that bisexuality is either made up of heterosexuality and homosexuality or falls -between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Rather than embracing bisexuality's disruption to monosexual categories of sexuality, Heldke (1997) suggested that constructing bisexuality around heterosexuality and homosexuality suggests that "bisexuals consist of two "halves" forcibly glued together to make an ungainly and necessarily unstable whole" (p. 175).

Yoshino (2000) asserted that there are three axes on which sexual orientation is commonly defined: desire, (sexual) conduct/behaviour, and self-identification. When a combination of these axes are used, rates of who can be considered bisexual vary greatly between studies (Yoshino, 2000). Further, measures of sexual orientation often do not consider that many plurisexual people use more than one sexual identity to describe themselves. Additionally, by assigning people a sexual orientation, this may diminish their agency to choose their own sexual identity. More recently, researchers have acknowledged that self-identification is the best measure of bisexuality when recruiting plurisexual participants (e.g., Anderson, Scoats, & McCormack, 2015; Hartman-Linck, 2014; Heaphy, Yip, & Thompson, 2004). Self-identification measures can reduce the high variability of who may be distinguished as bisexual and accommodate the other critiques of quantitative measures of bisexuality. Self-identification measures of sexual identity have moved away from viewing sexuality based on essentialist constructed categories of sexual orientation. Instead, sexual identity is more recently viewed as socially organised, and historically, socially, and contextually dependent (Seidman, 2015). Self-identification provides room for examining plurisexual identities beyond bisexuality that have been not considered in research, or amalgamated with bisexuality (Mitchell et

al., 2015). Self-identification allows for inclusivity and diversity in identification as a plurisexual individual, while moving away from binary notions of bisexual attraction, ergo, 50% attraction to women and 50% attraction to men. Further, self-identity makes the notion of a compulsory behavioural component to plurisexuality redundant as it takes away a criteria model of sexuality. As research has found that plurisexual people often feel pressured to 'prove' their plurisexuality through listing their relationship history with people of multiple genders (Boyer & Galupo, 2015) plurisexual women or performing sexual acts with other women (Fahs, 2009), this reduces fear that people may not be 'plurisexual enough' to identify with a plurisexual identity.

Rainbow identities

Plurisexual and queer identities

Until recently, scholarly work on plurisexual identities has focused solely on bisexuality. The first mention of other plurisexual identities in academic literature was in Rust (2000b)'s research examining various bisexual identities. She found that most of her respondents identified with more than one identity term (Rodríguez Rust, 2000). While queer, dyke, gay, and lesbian were the most popular terms bisexual participants identified with, some participants also used pansexual, pansensual, polysexual, and/or ambisexual to describe their sexual identity (Rust, 2000b). Despite the use of terms such as pansexual and polysexual within queer social networks around the 1980s (see Chapter two), it is only in the last few years that work examining different plurisexual identities has emerged. The increased examination of non-bisexual plurisexual identities could be attributed to the rise in the use of terms other than bisexual to describe plurisexuality, and celebrities publicly identifying with terms such as pansexual to raise the ubiquity of these identities (Morandini et al., 2017). Further, academic work may have presumed that other plurisexual terms were synonymous with bisexuality and did not warrant their own examination. As a result, most academic texts on plurisexuality, or discussing queer identities, make little to no mention of plurisexual identities other than bisexuality (e.g., Angelides, 2001; Clarke et al., 2010; Monro, 2015; Ruth & Santacruz, 2017).

There has been a rise in work in the past half decade examining different plurisexual identities and evaluating differences between those who identify as bisexual and those who use other plurisexual terms such as pansexual and queer. This research positions bisexuality, pansexuality, queerness, and other plurisexual identities as separate and distinct identities. In recent examinations of pansexuality, it has been framed as a more inclusive identity than bisexual (Greaves, Sibley, Fraser, & Barlow, 2019). It is believed that due to this perceived inclusivity, pansexuality as a term is preferred to bisexuality by younger, gender diverse, and transgender people (Greaves et al., 2019; Morandini et al., 2017). However, other work did not support the finding that pansexual people tend to be younger than those identifying as bisexual (Flanders, LeBreton, Robinson, Bian, & Caravaca-Morera, 2017a). Additionally, women are also more likely to identify as pansexual or queer than men (Morandini et al., 2017). Researchers also note that factors such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and education, do not indicate statistically significant differences between those who identify as pansexual and bisexual-identified people (Greaves et al., 2019; Morandini et al., 2017). It is important to note that sample size differences may skew these results, as both Greaves et al. (2019) and Morandini et al. (2017) sample had significantly more bisexual participants than other plurisexual participants. Other researchers have noted the difficulty in finding an equal number of bisexual and pansexual participants, and having a large enough sample size of individuals who identify with other plurisexual identities to be included in analyses (Flanders et al., 2017a).

A small subsection of research has examined the different experiences of prejudice between bisexual and other plurisexual identities. This work allows a more detailed understanding of how bisexuality is positioned in society, and particularly in queer contexts, as it is compared to other non-monosexual identities. This means that while the stigma of bisexuality and its effect on bisexual people is increasingly well documented (Alarie & Gaudet, 2013; Armstrong & Reissing, 2014; Feinstein & Dyar, 2017), we should examine how mononormativity and associations between these different plurisexual identities operate in society. Mereish et al. (2016) found that queer-identified people were more likely to experience identity affirmation – positive thoughts and affect towards

their sexual identity – than bisexual people. They suggested that queer-identified people may experience greater community support and affirmation than bisexual people (Mereish et al., 2016). Further to this, they discovered that their bisexual participants experienced more stigma towards their identity. These findings could suggest that unequal levels of stigma may contribute to the disparity in identity affirmation between their bisexual and queer-identified participants (Mereish et al., 2016). Mitchell et al. (2015) examined the differences in experienced prejudice between those who primarily identified as bisexual, and those who primarily identified as pansexual, queer, and/or fluid. They discovered that their bisexual participants experienced more sexual prejudice from lesbian and gay people than pansexual/queer/fluid identified participants. There was, however, no difference in prejudice from heterosexuals (Mitchell et al., 2015). This suggests that while monosexism is at play in broader societal perceptions of plurisexuality, within rainbow communities there is a specific stigma against bisexual-identified people. This inter-group conflict between gay/lesbians and bisexuals is likely related to negative associations with bisexuality rather than with plurisexuality more broadly (Mitchell et al., 2015). In further support of this finding, Katz-Wise and Hyde (2015) found that sexually fluid people were more likely to have positive attitudes towards bisexuality than non-sexually fluid people. They suggested that this result is due to bisexuality being perceived as an in-group to sexually fluid people, which increased their tolerance of bisexual identities (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2015).

The research discussed in the previous two paragraphs separated plurisexual identities into discrete groups to examine the differences between them. However, other research has posited that plurisexual people are unlikely to identify with only one plurisexual identity term, and instead prefer using multiple labels (Galupo et al., 2016; Rust, 2000b). Likely due to the complexity of plurisexuality and the lack of accommodation, understanding, and acceptance of plurisexuality in society, plurisexual people often prefer multiple labels to use in different contexts or to more fully describe their sexuality (Galupo et al., 2016). Terms such as queer and pansexual are commonly used in rainbow contexts, but are less familiar in broader social contexts (Oakley, 2016). Most research that

attempts to differentiate between plurisexual identities does not take into account the fluidity and context-dependency of labels for plurisexual people. Further, academic work discussing plurisexual identities frequently make distinctions between bisexuality as a binary and transphobic identity, and pansexual as a non-binary and more diverse gender-inclusive identity. This distinction is thought to be due to the 'bi' prefix which is believed to reinforce the binary genders (e.g., Elizabeth, 2013; Greaves et al., 2019; Morandini et al., 2017). However, research has noted that plurisexual people primarily do not define bisexuality and pansexuality as an exclusive versus inclusive dichotomy of gender diversity (Flanders et al., 2017a; Galupo et al., 2016). And further, a substantial portion of people who identify as bisexual are gender diverse or transgender (Flanders et al., 2017a). The high proportion of transgender and gender diverse bisexual people supports bisexual activists' argument that bisexuality describes an attraction or possibility of attraction to multiple genders including their own and other genders, and does not exclude gender non-conforming and transgender people (Witten, 2016).

Queer

In comparison to other non-bisexual plurisexual identities, the concept of 'queerness' has been examined and discussed significantly since the rise of research on sexual minorities. However, only recently has the identifier 'queer' started to be examined as its own sexual identity, distinct from other non-heterosexual identities. This posits 'queer' as more than just from a political and theoretical position, or a subset of the rainbow movement. Queer may be a preferred identity term for an increasing number of non-heterosexuals as terms such as gay, lesbian, and bisexual are associated with sexual essentialism and categorical rigidity (Mereish et al., 2016). Queer is commonly constructed as a 'non-label label', meaning its definition is vague and thus may be favoured by people who view their sexuality as fluid (Morandini et al., 2017). Some researchers caution against categorising queer as a plurisexual identity as some take up a queer identity to denote their social and political stance against rigid sexuality categorisation, rather than using it as a descriptor of attraction to multiple genders (Galupo et al., 2015; Galupo et al., 2016). Supporting

research found that that queer-identified participants were more likely to measure their sexuality (through sexual and romantic attraction and behaviour) in the 'homosexual range' than 'bisexual range'. Further, queer-identified participants were substantially more likely to be attracted to one gender compared to bisexual-identified people, who were more likely to report similar or equal attraction to multiple genders (Mereish et al., 2016; Morandini et al., 2017). Although findings contrary to this have been presented, Mereish et al. (2016) found that queer-identified people were more likely to have had sex with non-cisgender and gender diverse people than bisexuals. This could be attributed to plurisexual people believing that bisexuality is a binary sexuality and those who have sex with diverse groups take on queer as an identity that more adequately represents their experiences (Mereish et al., 2016). Galupo et al. (2016) found that both queer and bisexual people were significantly more likely than pansexual people to state a preferred gender. This is presumably because the identifier 'pansexual' is predominantly understood as attraction to people regardless of their gender. Those individuals who do not value gender as an indicator of their attraction are more likely to take up a pansexual identity. Queer, as a more social and politically associated identity than other non-heterosexual labels may not be as easily understood within conventional understandings of sexual identity as related to attraction, behaviour and desire. Therefore, like the other fluid and complex spaces queer takes up, in this thesis, queer can be considered both a plurisexual and monosexual sexual identity.

Gay and plurisexual identity variances

Prior to, and concurrent with, work distinguishing between plurisexual identities, research has examined the similarities and differences between bisexual and gay identities. As lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities all fall under the rainbow banner, research has often amalgamated bisexual and gay participants. This has led to a conflation of their experiences and identities (Barker et al., 2012). Other work has sought to study and highlight the specific similarities and differences between plurisexual and monosexual non-heterosexual identities. These include quantitative and measured

differences such as experiences of community, disclosing one's sexual identity, experiencing discrimination and their relationship to their sexual identity.

As the majority of psychological research into bisexuality is deficit and pathology focused – examining mental health, violence, and stigma (Lee & Crawford, 2007) – research examining the similarities and differences between gay and plurisexual identities also followed similar themes. Consistently, research found that gay and lesbian people experience higher rates of overt discrimination than plurisexual people including physical and verbal aggression, and discrimination in schooling, healthcare, and other public settings (Bostwick, Boyd, Hughes, West, & McCabe, 2014; Colledge, Hickson, Reid, & Weatherburn, 2015; Herek, 2009). Gay and lesbian people are often more publicly visible than plurisexual people, are more likely to have a same-gender partner than plurisexual people, and are more likely to have disclosed their identity to others (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Herek, 2009). This visibility can create more vulnerability to overt sexual identity discrimination for gay and lesbian people. However, Nadal et al. (2011) argued that while gay people are more vulnerable to overt discrimination, all queer people experience systemic and institutional microaggressions and social rejection which contribute to poor mental health. Despite experiencing less overt discrimination, plurisexual people were found to have poorer mental health outcomes, including higher rates of anxiety, depression, and attempts at suicide compared to gay, lesbian, and heterosexual people (Bostwick et al., 2014; Bostwick, Hughes, Steffen, Veldhuis, & Wilsnack, 2019b; Colledge et al., 2015; Kerr, Ding, & Thompson, 2013a; Ross et al., 2017). One possible reason for this finding is that the form of discrimination plurisexual people face – through identity erasure – may create more negative mental health outcomes than experiencing overt discrimination (examined in greater detail in Chapter four) (Bostwick et al., 2014).

Research exploring ethnicity as a mediating factor of mental health outcomes and discrimination concluded that white bisexual and lesbian women are more likely to have depression than black lesbian and bisexual women (Bostwick et al., 2019a; Bostwick et al., 2014). This may be due to

constructions of black women as strong and selfless caretakers (Bostwick et al., 2019b). Additionally, protective environmental factors such as a strong community environment may also lead to this finding (Bostwick et al., 2019a). Other research suggests that people that experience both sexual identity and either gender or ethnicity related discrimination were more likely to experience a mental health disorder, increasing the likelihood for queer women, and particularly queer women of colour (Bostwick et al., 2014).

Research has uncovered that Individuals who identify as plurisexual experience heterosexist discrimination and 'felt stigma' (that is, the belief that people would discriminate against them due to their marginalised sexual identity) in similar ways to lesbian and gay people (Herek, 2009). Plurisexual women and lesbians also experience similar forms of 'exoticisation' sexual harassment, where their sexual identity contributes to their sexualisation and objectification by heterosexual men (Nadal et al., 2011; Nadal, Whitman, Davis, Erazo, & Davidoff, 2016). However, other forms of discrimination, including microaggressions (defined and discussed further in Chapter four), have been found to be more likely to be experienced by bisexual people. This discrimination includes rejection from friends, assumption of being straight, and erasure of their sexual identity (Sarno & Wright, 2013). There are also forms of discrimination that bisexual people are less likely to experience than gay and lesbian people. As well as verbal and physical aggression, plurisexual people are less likely to be stereotyped into certain roles. This includes skill and job related stereotypes such as assuming gay men are skilled at interior design and lesbians are able to fix cars (Sarno & Wright, 2013). Sarno and Wright (2013) hypothesised that as there is a large deficit of knowledge about bisexuality in society, bisexual people are less able to be categorised and stereotyped as a social group. This knowledge deficit can also result in bisexual people being less associated with visual cues to denote their sexual identity. For lesbian women, having an identifiable visible identity was an important part of overall lesbian identity construction (Hayfield, Clarke, Halliwell, & Malson, 2013). In comparison, bisexual women were not found to have a distinct visible identity that signalled their bisexuality overtly to others through visual cues (Hayfield et al., 2013). This lack of a distinct identity

may signal bisexuality's invisibility in the LGBTQ+ community, and suggests that there is little to no meaningful and recognisable bisexual identity (Hayfield et al., 2013)

Regarding identity formation, lesbian women were found to experience attraction to women earlier and were more likely to adopt a gay identity earlier than plurisexual women (Rust, 1993a). Rust (1993a) also noted that most plurisexual women in the sample had questioned if they were lesbian or identified as a lesbian before taking up a bisexual identity, whereas significantly less lesbian women had identified as bisexual or questioned if they had been bisexual. While it may seem apparent, most bisexual and lesbian's sexual behaviour has been found to match their chosen sexual identity. This could mean that bisexual women were more likely to be attracted to men and more likely than lesbian women to have had both men and women as sexual partners (Diamond, 2000). Plurisexual women were found to have more internal struggles and difficulties with their sexual identity than lesbian women. This included internalised homo/bi-negativity and identity confusion, that is, being unsure and conflicted about one's sexual identity (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Belmonte & Holmes, 2016; Sarno & Wright, 2013). Researchers attributed plurisexual peoples higher rates of identity confusion firstly to their higher variability in attraction to different genders than monosexual, and secondly to structural monosexism (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). Monosexism has been found to create internal conflicts in plurisexual people when they are attracted to multiple genders (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). The increased external negativity of plurisexuality, as well as the lack of visibility of plurisexual identities likely contributes to plurisexual people experiencing more tension over their identity (Sarno & Wright, 2013).

Chapter Summary

This chapter formed the first of two chapters that provided a review of the literature on plurisexuality. In this chapter, research in this area was contextualised within a backdrop of the two main epistemologies that underpin sexuality research. The origins and key concepts of essentialist and social constructionist approaches to sexual identity were foregrounded. Following this, the key

concepts of sexual identity construction literature, including sexual identity development, disclosure, and measurement was introduced alongside the key controversies and critiques. This chapter concluded with an examination of the literature of different queer identities, including empirical differences in experiences among plurisexual, queer, and gay people. The next chapter will provide a detailed analysis of literature of plurisexuality in the context of their position in society.

CHAPTER FOUR

Experiencing a Plurisexual Identity: A Literature Review

This chapter will examine and contextualise research on plurisexuality with a focus on how having a plurisexual identity shapes women's lives and experiences. In the first part of the chapter, an analysis of current and past literature on the marginalisation of plurisexual people will be discussed. This will include an analysis of literature on the stereotypes and forms of stigma plurisexual people encounter, the intersectionality of such stigma, and the social and health consequences of marginalisation. Following this, the literature on the romantic and sexual lives of plurisexual people will be examined. The chapter will conclude with a justification for this research project. The gap in the research, and the specific research questions that underpin this thesis will be presented.

Marginalisation and erasure

The dominant discourse regarding sexuality in our society is that there are two opposing sexual identities – homosexuality and heterosexuality – that stem from innate orientations (Seidman, 2015). This discourse has been found to create systemic delegitimisation of sexualities that fall out of the bounds of these two monosexual identities (Klesse, 2005; Rust, 2000a). Yoshino (2000) theorised that monosexual people have mutual investment in the erasure or invisibility of plurisexuality. This 'mutual investment' has manifested in a social norm that naturalises dichotomous sexualities (Yoshino, 2000). It is important to note that Yoshino (2000) posits that the relevant constituents are not *individual* oppressors consciously agreeing to marginalise bisexuals; the oppression operates through social processes that utilise epistemological knowledge that presents bisexuality as unknowable. Evidence for this theory is provided in the form of the strategies used to erasure bisexuality. This erasure, Yoshino (2000) argues, is politically motivated; monosexuals, whether identifying as straight, gay, or lesbian, benefit from bisexual erasure as it reinforces their positions as dominant and diametrically opposite identities. This epistemological contract "bifurcated the continuum we would otherwise see" through delegitimising bisexuality as a

sexual identity, making it visible only as a transitional identity, and contesting individual people’s bisexual identity (Yoshino, 2000, p. 391).

Other scholars have supported this theory, arguing that bisexual erasure occurs through systemic social delegitimisation of plurisexuality by people who identify with the two dominant sexual identities (Angelides, 2001; MacDowall, 2009; Plessis, 1996). As a result of delegitimisation of plurisexuality, and dominance of monosexual identities, plurisexual identities are marginalised through ‘bi erasure’, the stigmatisation of plurisexual identities, and monosexism (Dodge et al., 2016; Klesse, 2011; Yoshino, 2000). The consequences of this epistemological contract for plurisexual people include stereotyping, discrimination, hostility, minority stress, and violence (Feinstein, Franco, Henderson, Collins, & Davari, 2019; Plumm, Potter, & Terrance, 2015). This is supported by research that found that while people who view gay identities negatively are likely to view bisexuality negatively as well, stereotypes about bisexuality differentiate it from homosexuality and inform a unique plurisexual prejudice (Eliason, 1997). See Figure 1 for a diagrammatic representation of Yoshino’s (2000) theory of the epistemological contract and its consequences for plurisexual people.

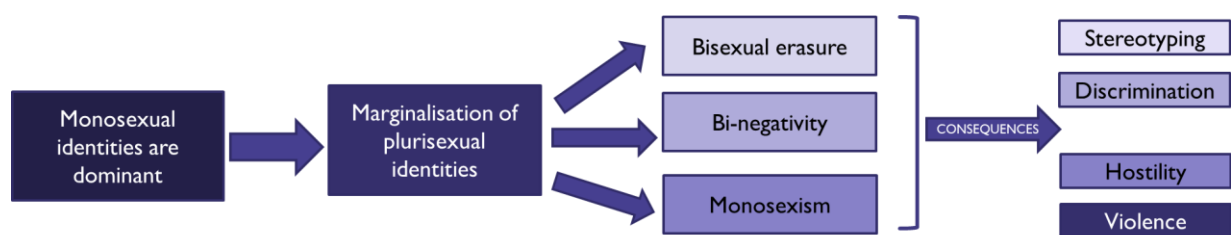


Figure 1. The theorised structures of marginalisation and their outcomes for plurisexual people (adapted from Yoshino, 2000).

Erasure and invisibility

The erasure and invisibility of plurisexual identities is a systemic issue that also operates at the individual level. While plurisexuality is found to be disparaged by many monosexual people, scholars have emphasized that the predominant method of marginalisation of plurisexual identities is by representing plurisexuality as a delegitimate or transient identity, which contributes to the

invisibility of plurisexual identities (Alarie & Gaudet, 2013; Barker & Langdrige, 2008; Souto Pereira, Becker, & Gardiner, 2016). Alarie and Gaudet (2013) suggested there are four mechanisms whereby plurisexuality is invisibilised: by ignoring plurisexuality by positioning heterosexuality and homosexuality as opposites, depicting bisexuality as a temporary or transient phase, by gatekeeping who can identify with a plurisexual identity, and devaluing plurisexual identities by portraying them as deviant.

Individual instances of identity erasure through invalidation by monosexual populations have been examined in several studies. Feinstein et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative examination of bisexual invalidation and found that their participants experienced forms of invalidation by friends and family. Their participants speculated that this was due to their community's lack of understanding or acceptance of bisexuality, or because they were in a monogamous mixed-gender relationship, and thus were perceived as heterosexual (Feinstein et al., 2019). Similarly, Popova (2018) found that their participants struggled with being visibly bisexual at work. The study found that strategies queer people often engage in to signal their sexual identity – the pronouns they use when discussing their partner, or having a picture of their partner visible at work – do not always signal plurisexuality (Popova, 2018). In addition, instances of disclosing their sexuality in the workplace resulted in participants experiencing invisibility and invalidation of their bisexuality (Popova, 2018).

Feinstein et al. (2019) suggested that plurisexual identity invalidation and invisibility was rooted in monosexism. This framing of plurisexual marginalisation as monosexism extends the notion of 'biphobia' which is categorised by antibisexual prejudice and discrimination from individuals or institutions (Roberts et al., 2015). Some scholars have moved away from categorising plurisexual marginalisation as 'biphobia' as this places the origin of systemic prejudice on 'biphobic' individuals rather than examining the discourses that operate to invalidate plurisexuality. Shifting discussions of plurisexual marginalisation to discussing monosexism allows scholars to explore the frameworks that create plurisexual stigma and discrimination and on both a broad and individual level. Monosexism

is believed to operate at the societal level *and* within rainbow communities, leading to the possibility of plurisexuality being rendered invisible and illegitimate (Roberts et al., 2015).

Dominant attitudes towards plurisexuality

The majority of work examining plurisexual prejudice and marginalisation measures the attitudes of monosexual people towards imagined plurisexual people. The research findings in this area support beliefs that marginalisation of plurisexuality is related to negative attitudes towards plurisexual identities and belief in plurisexual stereotypes by monosexual people (Armstrong & Reissing, 2014; Burke et al., 2017; de Bruin & Arndt, 2010; Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Feinstein et al., 2016; Herek, 2002; Israel & Mohr, 2004; Katz-Wise, Stamoulis, Allison, & Hyde, 2019). Mohr and Rochlen (1999) identified two empirically supported dimensions of anti-plurisexual prejudice: Stability and Tolerance. Stability relates to the viewing of plurisexual identities as stable and legitimate, and viewing plurisexual people as committed romantic partners (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). The second dimension, Tolerance, relates to attitudes towards viewing plurisexual identities as morally acceptable or threatening (Mohr & Rochlen, 1999). Supporting this, Yost and Thomas (2012) found that their participants (heterosexual men and women) dismissed bisexuality as a legitimate sexual orientation. Instead, their participants believed bisexuals were lying about their sexuality – that bisexual women were actually heterosexual, and bisexual men were homosexual (Yost & Thomas, 2012).

Gendered prejudice towards plurisexual people was also indicated by research. For example, people are more likely to hold negative attitudes to bisexual men than bisexual women (Eliason, 1997; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999; Yost & Thomas, 2012). Researchers hypothesise that the sexualisation of plurisexual women by heterosexual men creates more favourable attitudes towards them (Eliason, 1997). Beliefs that plurisexual women are ‘really’ heterosexual is also supported by this theory; the eroticization of plurisexual women creates the belief that plurisexual women are motivated to identify as bisexual because of a desire for attention from men (Yost & Thomas, 2012).

Discussions on reducing plurisexual prejudice have centred around Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis. The contact hypothesis holds that positive interactions between members of different groups can reduce intergroup prejudice (e.g., de Bruin & Arndt, 2010; Feinstein et al., 2016) de Bruin and Arndt (2010)'s research suggested that people who know bisexual individuals have less negative attitudes towards bisexuality. The researchers suggested that these attitudes were the result of the stereotypes that participants held about bisexuality and bisexuals were contradicted by the bisexuals they had met (de Bruin & Arndt, 2010). Similarly, Burke et al. (2017) suggested that people's cognitive need to make clear distinctions between social categories necessitates that bisexuality's disruption of binary sexuality categories creates negative evaluations of bisexuality and bisexual people, particularly among people unfamiliar with it. This positioning of monosexism as an individual issue moves away from Yoshino (2000)'s argument that the marginalisation of plurisexual identities is systemic, and informs (and is informed by) social discourses, and instead places the ownership of poor attitudes towards plurisexuality on individual variation. This individualisation does not, however, address the invisibility of plurisexual identities and promotion of monosexuality that is dominant in Anglo-Western cultural discourse. Suggestions of contact-based interventions to reduce prejudice may not be sufficient for addressing the culturally imbedded dominance of dichotomous models of sexual identity categorisation and deconstructing the systems of discrimination and marginalisation that support prejudice against plurisexual people (McKeown & Dixon, 2017).

Stereotypes

Belief in negative stereotypes of plurisexuality has been found to predict negative attitudes towards plurisexual people (Armstrong & Reissing, 2014; Herek, 2002; Katz-Wise et al., 2019). These stereotypes are the consequence of the marginalisation of plurisexuality, but also *reinforce* discrimination of plurisexual people. Research has identified several main stereotypes of plurisexual people: they are hypersexual, 'on the fence', a risky partner, and dishonest (Brewster & Moradi,

2010; Klesse, 2005; McLean, 2008b). The main stereotypes and their relationships to each other will be explored below.

As discussed above, monosexist discourses create a dominant understanding of sexuality whereby sexuality is presented as a dichotomy, leaving plurisexuality in a 'borderlands' space between heterosexuality and homosexuality (Callis, 2014). While this renders plurisexuality invisible, it also creates a stereotype that plurisexual people are 'on the fence' between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Imbedded in this stereotype is the assumption that plurisexual people are 'bi-curious' or experimenting with their sexuality, and will eventually return to their true monosexual orientation (McLean, 2008b). As a result, when a plurisexual person finds a partner, the gender of their partner incidentally reinforces stereotypes of plurisexual people 'choosing a side' (McLean, 2008b). This 'on the fence' stereotype invalidates the identity of people who are plurisexual by portraying their sexual identity as a phase. Relatedly, plurisexual identities – specifically bisexuality are also often referred to as a 'stepping stone' identity: an identity one holds before disclosing (and admitting to) their true homosexual identity (McLean, 2008b). As some gay men and lesbians identify as bisexual prior to identifying as gay, this can perpetuate the myth that *all* people who identify with a plurisexual identity will also 'transition' to a gay identity (McLean, 2008a).

Despite increasingly permissive societal attitudes towards sex (Farvid & Braun, 2013), a dominant stereotype of plurisexual people is that they are hypersexual (Spalding & Peplau, 1997). Described by Klesse (2005) as a promiscuity discourse, labelling people – or a group – as promiscuous positions this sexual behaviour as socially unacceptable. This promiscuity discourse can deploy social punishment for enacting these behaviours, or being assumed to enact them (Klesse, 2005).

Plurisexual people are perceived to be as hypersexual due to their perceived need for sex with people from multiple genders (Israel & Mohr, 2004). Such stereotypes also promote the belief that plurisexual people are incapable of monogamy and can lead to plurisexual people being perceived as 'risky' partners. (Klesse, 2011).

The perceived risk of having a plurisexual partner can be seen as both a romantic risk *and* a sexual health risk. A prevailing belief is that plurisexual people exhibit a heightened occurrence of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and are therefore a health hazard to their sexual and romantic partners (Dodge et al., 2016). This stereotype stems from beliefs disseminated through media that bisexuals were a 'bridging population' between gay and straight people during the HIV/AIDS crisis (Dodge et al., 2016). Plurisexual people are also seen as romantically risky partners due to anxieties that plurisexual people in monogamous relationships are less likely to remain committed than monosexual people as they have 'too many' options of partners leading them to stray due to their 'erotic impulses' (Klesse, 2011). Research such as Dodge et al. (2016) have sought to discredit these pervasive myths by presenting research that contradicts claims that plurisexual people are more likely to cheat on their partner than monosexual people.

Pervasive myths of plurisexual people as dishonest partners has been found to extend to depictions of plurisexual people's character as untrustworthy *people* (Israel & Mohr, 2004). Morally deficient traits such as narcissism and superficiality are sometimes associated with plurisexuality which can further the stigma of their identity (Klesse, 2011). Research therefore indicates that plurisexual people are often framed as sexually, romantically, *and* politically untrustworthy (Klesse, 2011).

Stigma and discrimination

Little research has extended the examination of stereotypes to discuss the impact of stigma on how plurisexual people see and experience their sexual identity. Stigma involves individual *and* structural experiences of prejudice and discrimination (Callis, 2013; Plumm et al., 2015). Individual management of a stigmatised plurisexual identity has only been examined in a small number of studies. Research has suggested by developing a positive identity as a member of a marginalised group, there is a decrease in individual negative experiences and poor outcomes related to having a stigmatised identity (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). Through a questionnaire examining adaption to sexual orientation stigma, Balsam and Mohr (2007) found that plurisexual people experience less

connection to rainbow communities and have a lower likelihood of being openly 'out' as plurisexual, in comparison to gay and lesbian people. Supporting this finding, bisexual people's degree of 'outness' has been found to be positively correlated with experiencing prejudice from gay populations (Brewster & Moradi, 2010). This may indicate that connection to rainbow communities is not as robust a buffer from stigma for plurisexual people as it affords gay and lesbian people (Balsam & Mohr, 2007).

Other research emphasised the resilience and self-reliance found in plurisexual people because of having a stigmatised identity (Bradford, 2004). Bradford (2004) interviewed twenty bisexual men and women to examine how bisexual people experienced social attitudes towards their sexual identity and how this informed their self-concept. Bradford (2004)'s participants experienced discrimination and a lack of queer support networks but found personal strength and heightened compassion which the author linked to their bisexuality. Other work suggests that the Internet and social media can help manage plurisexual stigma (Meyer, 2019). Meyer (2019) conducted a survey with plurisexual people to examine the role of social media in their connection with monosexual groups. Meyer (2019) concluded that plurisexual people benefited from social media by connecting them with a likeminded community and increasing their understanding and acceptance of their plurisexuality. While social media was found to assist plurisexual people in managing their stigmatised sexual identity, rejecting or avoiding identifying as bisexual was also identified as a technique used to manage stigma (Callis, 2013). Callis (2013) interviewed 37 plurisexual adults in the United States to examine how plurisexual individuals described their "non-binary sexualities" in the context of dominant sexuality discourses. The author found that many of her participants rejected describing themselves as bisexual because of the stereotypes attached to that label (Callis, 2013). Therefore, the increase in usage of terms other than bisexual to describe plurisexuality (including pansexual, queer, and monosexual terms such as gay, lesbian, straight, and heteroflexible) may be in part linked to the stigma attached to bisexuality (Callis, 2013; Galupo et al., 2014).

Microaggressions

A further subsection of research into marginalisation of – and prejudice toward – plurisexual people is the examination of microaggressions. Microaggressions are defined as regularly experienced micro-level injustices that are often unintentional (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2014; Nadal et al., 2016). Unlike overt forms of prejudice, microaggressions are distinct as they are not explicit but still communicate indignities (Nadal et al., 2011). These individual indignities are underpinned by epistemic marginalisation, such as heterosexism and monosexism (Flanders, LeBreton, & Robinson, 2018). Scholars have identified that some of the mechanisms by which plurisexual people experience discrimination and prejudice, operate through microaggressions (Flanders et al., 2018). These microaggressions include a questioning of the validity of one’s bisexuality or dismissal of their sexual identity, having other people view their bisexuality as unintelligible, or exclusionary experiences from the rainbow community (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2014; Flanders et al., 2018; McClelland, Rubin, & Bauermeister, 2016; Sarno & Wright, 2013). For plurisexual women, microaggressions are also experienced through inappropriate sexual comments that are made to them by heterosexual men when they disclose their plurisexual identity to friends and acquaintances (Flanders et al., 2018; McClelland et al., 2016).

The systemic marginalisation and the discrimination that is manifested through microaggressions have been found to lead to poor health outcomes (Bostwick & Hequembourg, 2014). For example, hearing pejorative phrases such as “that’s gay” has been identified as a microaggression that can impact queer people’s health and wellbeing through creating physical health symptoms and feeling of social alienation (Woodford, Howell, Silverschanz, & Yu, 2012). Further, experiences of microaggressions was linked to symptoms of anxiety and stress in plurisexual adults (Flanders, 2015; Salim, Robinson, & Flanders, 2019). For plurisexual adults, both plurisexual-specific microaggressions *and* homophobic microaggressions have been found to impact their wellbeing (Flanders et al., 2018; Nadal et al., 2011; Sarno & Wright, 2013).

Community un/building

Scholarly work on queer identities has emphasised the importance of community for marginalised groups (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). However, plurisexual people are often alienated from rainbow communities. While structural heteronormativity and monosexism stigmatises plurisexuality within mainstream society, it also marginalises plurisexuality within queer contexts (Dodge et al., 2016). The invisibility of plurisexuality has been suggested to prevent large community organising of a separate plurisexual community (although there is historical precedence of this occurring as mentioned in the previous chapter) (McLean, 2008a). This lack acceptance among rainbow communities has been found to impact plurisexual people, with plurisexual research participants discussing experiences of loneliness, stress and isolation (Bradford, 2004). Alternatively, research has also found that friendship and community links with other plurisexual people increases feelings of validation and support (Hartman, 2006). Therefore scholars stress the importance of finding and forming a plurisexual community for improvement in plurisexual individual wellbeing (Bradford, 2004; Hartman, 2006). While research often frames plurisexual people as without a community, other work suggests that there *is* a plurisexual community (often described as the bisexual community). While smaller and more hidden than gay and lesbian networks (and largely online), this community provides connection and acceptance for plurisexual people (Maliepaard, 2017a; Scales Rostosky, Riggle, Pascale-Hague, & McCants, 2010).

Scholarly examination of plurisexual individuals' relationship with rainbow communities has centred around hostility experienced from some gay men and lesbians. This hostility is often framed as a tension caused by political epistemologies. For example, particularly in the late 20th century, lesbian feminists seeking to deconstruct heterosexism viewed bisexual women as traitorous to the cause for engaging in relationships with men (Seidman, 2015). Recent work has noted that lesbian and gay people continue to exhibit negative attitudes towards plurisexuality, albeit at a lower level than heterosexuals (Burke et al., 2017). Monosexist beliefs have been found to proliferate gay communities including viewing plurisexual people as lacking courage to identify as gay, and receiving

'heterosexual privilege' by being able to 'pass' as straight (Israel & Mohr, 2004; McLean, 2008a; Welzer-Lang, 2008).

Research examining rainbow community prejudice towards plurisexual people has primarily focused on studying and measuring the attitudes of gay and lesbian individuals toward plurisexual individuals. Little work explores plurisexual people's experiences of social marginalisation. Studies examining experiences of prejudice in queer spaces conclude that plurisexual people felt that untrue constructions of plurisexuality, particularly bisexuality, by gay communities perpetuate negative stereotypes of bisexual people (Hayfield et al., 2014). Invisibility of plurisexual identities was also viewed as an issue in queer spaces, despite the increase in inclusive terms (such as LGBT) in the names of queer spaces and groups to include bisexual and other marginalised groups within the rainbow community (Hartman, 2006). As a result, plurisexual people can feel like 'tourists' rather than members of the rainbow community, conditional on being viewed as non-heterosexual through being involved in queer relationships, not disclosing their plurisexuality, or using terms other than bisexual to describe their sexuality (Callis, 2014; Hayfield et al., 2014). In spite of awareness of hostility structurally within queer spaces and from gay and lesbian people, plurisexual people continue to participate in the queer spaces as it provides support and a community of similarly marginalised people (McLean, 2008a). Plurisexual people often negotiate their identity in gay and queer spaces by not disclosing their plurisexuality in order to gain greater acceptance (Hayfield et al., 2014).

Intersectional considerations

As described in Chapter one, one theoretical lens applied in this thesis is intersectionality theory. Intersectionality theory postulates that various axes of identity, such as age, sexual identity, ethnicity, disability, and gender intersect to create unique structures of inequality (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013). Psychological literature that applies this theory allows for a more complex examination of individuals' lived experiences, particularly if they have multiple marginalised

identities (Fotopoulou, 2012). This complexity has been applied in some studies to experiences of plurisexuality to demonstrate how different axes of identity inform lived experiences of sexuality and marginalisation in various ways. Predominantly, gender has been highlighted as informing how plurisexuality is experienced, with research demonstrating that plurisexual men, women, and non-binary people experience marginalisation and prejudice differently (Mereish et al., 2016). Recently, other intersections of identity, including ethnicity and age, have been examined and acknowledged as informing plurisexual people's sexual identity experiences. In this section, research that has examined these intersecting identities will be discussed.

Gender

According to recent studies, significantly more women identify with a plurisexual identity than men (Copen et al., 2016; Gates, 2011). Research has suggested that this statistical gap is informed by stark differences in masculine and feminine sexuality norms (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008). For instance, masculine sexuality has been framed in society as traditionally rigid and static in ways that are associated with monosexual identities (Armstrong & Reissing, 2014; Dyar & Feinstein, 2018). Sexuality discourses allow more fluidity for women meaning that plurisexual identities are more socially acceptable for them (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2015; Macey, Morris, Hamlin, & Cravens, 2017; Thompson, 2006). Whether this difference in staticity and fluidity is socially or biologically informed has been debated in psychological literature (Baumeister, 2000). The position taken within this research rejects that men and women's sexuality differences are inherent, and view this difference as a product of discourses and historical and socially constructed gender norms (Tiefer, 2004).

Researchers argue that the heterosexist 'male gaze' informs how women's same-sex behaviour is perceived (Boyer & Galupo, 2015; Fahs, 2009). Socially, the lens through which plurisexual women are viewed is primarily sexual, with women expected to perform or list their same-sex or mixed gender sexual experiences to others to justify their queer identity (Boyer & Galupo, 2015). This sexualisation and objectification of plurisexual women is thought to be a moderator in attitudes

towards them by diminishing the hostility they experience (Herek, 2002; Yost & Thomas, 2012). Therefore, lesbian women and plurisexual men's heightened prejudice and negative attitudes from heterosexual men may be because their sexuality is not depicted as for men's consumption comparative to plurisexual women (Herek, 2002; Yost & Thomas, 2012). While experiencing less negative attitudes than other sexually marginalised groups, scholars acknowledge the danger in the heightened eroticisation that plurisexual women experience (Boyer & Galupo, 2015). Bisexual participants from research examining same-sex performativity have discussed being pressured into engaging in same-sex sexual behaviours by heterosexual men in social environments, such as parties, in order to 'prove' their bisexuality and to please an audience of men (Boyer & Galupo, 2015; Fahs, 2009). These findings suggest that queer women are often presumed heterosexual until publicly providing evidence of their authenticity of their sexuality (Boyer & Galupo, 2015; Fahs, 2009). Studies have also found that even when engaging in sexual acts that could be described as bisexual or gay (such as two women kissing in a social situation like at a bar or a party), these women are still often perceived to be heterosexual (Alarie & Gaudet, 2013). Plurisexuality in women is therefore predominantly framed in relation to men, rather than through their own autonomy and desire.

Gender diversity

Approximately 32% of transgender people in the U.S. identify as pansexual or bisexual, with a further 21% identifying as queer (James et al., 2016). In other countries, the demographics of sexual identities for transgender and gender diverse people is unknown due to the difficulty in accurately estimating demographic sizes and the lack of research on this population. However, scholars believe that there are higher rates of plurisexuality in transgender and gender diverse populations comparative to cisgender populations (Kuper, Nussbaum, & Mustanski, 2012). This is likely because gay and straight labels may not fully capture transgender individuals' experiences of their sexual identities (Kuper et al., 2012). Further, plurisexual identities do not assume the gender of the person with that sexual identity (Kuper et al., 2012). This language may be important for transgender

individuals whose own gender identity is in flux or is unable to be captured using dominant gender categories. Despite the potential relationship between identifying as transgender or gender diverse and plurisexuality, a very limited amount of studies has included non-cisgender participants in studies examining plurisexuality. Research examining transgender and non-binary people and plurisexuality has predominantly focused on theorising the similarities between transphobia and biphobia, and the similarity between non-binary genders and non-binary sexualities (e.g., Diamond & Butterworth, 2008; Garelick et al., 2017; Mathers et al., 2018). Despite the importance of highlighting these different sites of social marginalisation, due to the lack of research in this area little is known about the unique intersectional experiences of transgender and gender diverse plurisexual people.

Ethnicity

Most research examining plurisexuality uses a predominantly white sample while universalising this experience to all plurisexual people (Barker et al., 2012). As a result, the intersection of ethnicity and plurisexuality has been underwritten in scholarly literature. Given that sexual identity categories such as heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual are a western concept based on scientific discourses, generalisations between white plurisexual people and people of colour (PoC) ignores the cultural context that informs the experiences of plurisexuality. Recently, as the whiteness of plurisexuality research (and all sexuality research) has been frequently critiqued, there has been a rise in work examining plurisexuality in PoC. These works found that intersections of ethnicity and sexuality highlighted plurisexual PoC's connection and separation from their communities and identities (Chun & Singh, 2010; Dworkin, 2002; Flanders, Shuler, Desnoyers, & VanKim, 2019b; Galupo et al., 2019). For plurisexual PoC, ethnicity and sexuality were found to be tied together in shaping their experiences of their identity (Brooks, Inman, Klinger, Malouf, & Kaduvetoor, 2010). Bostwick et al. (2019a) examined bisexual identity centrality in bisexual women of colour (WoC) through interviews with WoC in the United States. They found that their participants saw their bisexuality as linked to other aspects of their self-identity including their racial and cultural identity

(Bostwick et al., 2019a). Other work also found that plurisexual mixed-race PoC valued the uniqueness of the identity including how atypical their intersecting identities were, and how it defied 'traditional' identities (Galupo et al., 2019).

Flanders et al. (2019b) described 'positive intersectionality' as the benefits of being able to draw affirmation and strength from intersectional identities and spaces. Their research suggested that positive intersectionality decreased negative identity outcomes that have been attributed to plurisexual people such as internalised bi-negativity and feelings of illegitimacy (Flanders et al., 2019b). Other work highlighted that some plurisexual mixed-race PoC felt that invisibility of being 'in between' dichotomised identity categories (i.e., gay and straight, white and black) which enhanced feelings of not belonging (Ghabrial, 2019). Further, research found that in comparison to monosexual PoC, plurisexual PoC experience higher symptoms of depression and anxiety (Galupo et al., 2019). Work examining plurisexual PoC have urged scholarly research to avoid taking a 'colour-blind' approach to examining both plurisexuality, and sexuality more broadly. Colour-blind work ignores the role ethnicity and culture may play in influencing data, and the salience of multiple intersecting identities for PoC with marginalised sexual identities (Brooks et al., 2010; Muñoz-Laboy, 2019). Further, colour-blind work also fails to address the historical and structural causes of social and health inequalities that affect plurisexual PoC differently from white plurisexual individuals (Muñoz-Laboy, 2019).

Within Aotearoa, work examining non-Pākehā queer people is sparse. While sexuality research is already scarce in Aotearoa, research examining queer identities also often does not note the participants ethnicity, or oversample Pākehā people (e.g., Spittlehouse, Boden, & Horwood, 2019). Consideration of the interplay of ethnicity and sexuality for plurisexual people in Aotearoa/New Zealand is crucial, particularly for acknowledging the influence of western and non-western constructions of sexuality on Pākehā, Māori, and PoC in Aotearoa. It is important to consider that in Aotearoa/New Zealand in particular, a country that colonised Māori people, applying westernised

sexuality categories and constructs onto non-European groups may be inappropriate. Therefore, work examining queer identities in Aotearoa/New Zealand needs to be cognizant of assigning western identities onto non-Pākehā people, while also acknowledging the overlapping of queer and Māori identities. A recent examination of takatāpui identities stressed that “takatāpui identity is predicated on Māori identity with a spiritual connection to takatāpui tūpuna (ancestors) that is crucial in addressing the discrimination they may face within their whānau and culture” (Kerekere, 2017, p. 5). Other research also concluded that for Māori people, culture plays a more significant role in sexual identity than for tauwiwi²⁴ people (Henrickson, 2006). This finding indicates that consideration of how multiple identities intersect is particularly valuable when considering the plurisexual identities of Māori people (Henrickson, 2006).

Age

Literature examining the intersection of age and plurisexuality has also been particularly scarce and reflects a broader neglect of research into sexual identity among older adults (Grossman, 2008; Jen, 2019); most work on plurisexual people has used university samples, or emerging adults (18-25 year olds). Work looking at queer older adults has been primarily health focused and amalgamates plurisexual older adults with gay and lesbian populations. For example, in D'Augelli and Grossman (2001)'s examination of LGB older adults, data of participants who were uncertain of their sexual identity or identified as 'bisexual but mostly heterosexual' were dropped from analysis. While a health focus is important, there is potential for other aspects of queer older adults' lives, such as their relationships, to be overlooked. In saying that, research has found that sexual identities become less important as people age due to more pressing concerns such as health issues (Jen, 2019). Further, some plurisexual older adults have been found to express ambivalence towards sexual identity terms (Jen, 2019). Jen (2019) interviewed twelve bisexual women aged sixty and above and found that their ambivalence towards the label bisexual was linked to a disinterest in

²⁴ Tauwiwi is a term in Te Reo Māori to describe non-Māori people.

contemporary sexuality discourses and historically socially imposed pressure to label their sexual identity. Grossman (2008) speculates that concerns of older plurisexual adults may differ from lesbian and gay men, particularly if their queerness is rendered invisible through being assumed to be heterosexual. Johnston (2016) highlighted the importance of examining and acknowledging the unique needs of plurisexual older adults. For example, plurisexuality is typically framed as a youthful trend, rather than a lifelong identity (Johnston, 2016). The consequences of this myth, researchers suggest, could detrimentally affect older plurisexual people's wellbeing (Johnston, 2016).

Consequences of marginalisation

Psychological research has linked sexual marginalisation and prejudice with psychological distress and poorer psychological outcomes (Brewster & Moradi, 2010). The majority of the literature on plurisexual women is focused on mental and physical health outcomes of discrimination. Often these works amalgamate plurisexual and gay populations. While some research separates out plurisexual and gay participants' data in their analysis, the discussions and conclusions continue to conflate these populations, even if health outcomes were significantly worse in plurisexual people. For example, Lucassen et al. (2011), examining the relationship between sexual attraction and depression, self-harm, and suicidality in teenagers in Aotearoa, found that both-sex attracted participants rated higher than any other population across all variables. In their discussion however, they stated: "we showed that students who were attracted to both sexes, the same sex and were not sure of their sexual attractions were at increased risk of self-harm, depression and suicide when compared to their straight or opposite-sex attracted peers" without highlighting the additional risk both-sex attraction had comparative to other groups (Lucassen et al., 2011, p. 381). This reflects psychological literature's tendency to overlook systemic monosexism that differentiates monosexual and plurisexual people's experiences.

This general omission aside – there is still a relatively large amount of research on the health disparities and poor health outcomes plurisexual people experience. Most of the work that

examines individual consequences of marginalisation used a minority stress framework to research and understand these health outcomes. Minority stress theory was created by Meyer (2003) to provide a framework to understand how social stress creates risk for mental distress in people with marginalised identities. Minority stress theory describes the “excess stress to which individuals from stigmatized social categories are exposed as a result of their social, often a minority, position.” (Meyer, 2003, p. 675). Meyer’s (2003) minority stress framework is predicated on a post-modern and social constructionist lens which views broad, but hidden, social structures as negatively impacting individuals through their membership to marginalised groups. Within this theory, the isolation marginalised groups face from inclusion into mainstream social environments are believed to be the result of dominant structures and norms that do not meet their social and wellbeing needs (Meyer, 2003). Minority stress theory argues that the structural marginalisation groups experience compounds with the stigma of their identity, and the prejudice they experience which can result in chronic social stress (Meyer, 2003). This stress is seen to be compounded by the general stressors people experience (such as work-related and family stress) (Meyer, 2003). Minority stress theory is predicated on three assumptions: that marginalised groups face health disparities, marginalised groups experience higher rates of prejudice, and this prejudice is related to health disparities for marginalised groups (Meyer, 2003). This theory provides a framework to understand the adverse health outcomes queer people experience as the result of structural marginalisation of non-heterosexuality, and the social structures that privilege heterosexuality.

While useful and widely cited, minority stress theory faces its criticisms and carries limitations. The empirical evidence behind minority stress theory is only correlational (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). This limits minority stress theory’s ability to conclusively understand the health and social consequences that marginalisation groups face. For understanding the poor health outcomes of plurisexual people, the minority stress framework is useful as it can elucidate the social erasure of plurisexuality that often further hides the social stressors they experience. However, this is also the downside of minority stress theory; as pointed out by Bostwick et al. (2014), overt discrimination is a

main component of Meyer's (2003) minority stress framework as this theory argues that groups that face *more* overt discrimination are under more stress. However, as plurisexual people are much more likely to face discrimination through their identity being erased, rather than overtly discriminated for it, this does not apply to this population (Bostwick et al., 2014).

Bearing in mind the criticisms, for an examination of plurisexual people's consequences of prejudice, minority stress provides the best framework to understand their poor psychological and health outcomes. The social constructionist epistemology of minority stress theory allows researchers to understand the poor psychological and health outcomes queer people experience while avoiding leaning on pathological-based discussions (which research into queer individuals was predicated on). However, research that uses a minority stress framework to understand plurisexual people's poor health outcomes often does not draw attention to the unique social structures that marginalise plurisexuality, including heterosexism and monosexism. Despite this, minority stress framework allows the social and health consequences of the marginalisation of plurisexual identities to be more empirically understood.

Mental health

A substantial section of psychological literature is concerned with the mental health outcomes of non-heterosexual identified people. Research that moves away from amalgamating plurisexual and gay populations has identified discrepancies in psychological outcomes between different non-heterosexual identities. Specifically, plurisexual people experience poorer mental health outcomes compared to heterosexual, gay, and lesbian people including higher rates of anxiety and depression symptoms (Bostwick et al., 2014; Colledge et al., 2015; Feinstein & Dyar, 2017; Kerr, Santurri, & Peters, 2013b; Prell & Traeen, 2018; Ross et al., 2017). In an examination of mental health, Taylor, Power, and Smith (2020) differentiated between pansexual/bisexual *identified* people, people who report sexual attraction to multiple genders, and people who report sexual behaviour with multiple genders. They concluded that people that reported all three dimensions of bisexual/pansexual

identity, attraction and behaviour had poorer mental health and higher psychological distress than people who reported bisexual attraction and/or behaviour without holding a bisexual/pansexual identity (Taylor et al., 2020). This finding problematises the claim that there is an innate link between a plurisexual 'orientation' and poor mental health outcomes. Instead, this finding indicates that the stigma of *identifying* with a plurisexual identity leads to poorer mental health outcomes due to the stigmatisation individuals with plurisexual identities can experience.

Plurisexual people have also been found to be statistically more likely to have experienced suicidal thoughts, enacted self-harming behaviours, and attempted suicide compared to lesbian and gay people (Colledge et al., 2015; Pompili et al., 2014; Salway et al., 2019). In a review of the literature on suicidality in bisexuals, it was found they were significantly more likely to report suicidal behaviour (including previously attempting suicide and suicide ideation) than heterosexuals (Pompili et al., 2014). However, there were less clear differences found in suicidal behaviour between bisexuals and gay and lesbian people, with some studies finding no difference in behaviour between the two groups, and other studies reporting that bisexuals report more suicidal behaviour (Pompili et al., 2014).

Research found that plurisexual women experience greater suicide risk than plurisexual men (Salway et al., 2019). Gender differences between plurisexual men and women has not been well examined or discussed in psychological literature so there has been little interpretation of the disparity in suicidal risk. Salway et al. (2019) suggests that there is a gender divide in how gay and lesbian groups perceive plurisexuality, which may lead to this division. The researchers suggested that lesbians isolate plurisexual women at a greater magnitude than gay men isolate plurisexual men which may create a disparity in social support (Salway et al., 2019). The objectification and exoticisation of plurisexual women may also contribute to different health outcomes, a concept I will return to in the sexual violence section. Further work is certainly needed examining gender differences and

corresponding health and wellbeing disparities between plurisexual men and women. However, as this research project only examines plurisexual women, this is outside of the scope of this thesis.

The disparities in health outcomes between plurisexual individuals and people with monosexual identities is now widely accepted as a substantiated finding based on the large amount of evidence supporting this. To further look into this disparity, some research has examined the moderating factors that may contribute to plurisexual people's poor health and wellbeing outcomes. Brewster, Moradi, DeBlaere, and Velez (2013) found that greater psychological distress and lower psychological wellbeing was associated with high levels of perceived antibisexual prejudice, expectations of stigma, and internalised biphobia in their sample, supporting the minority stress theory's argument that experiences of prejudice can diminish people's wellbeing. Mereish, Katz-Wise, and Woulfe (2017) found that internalised heterosexism, anti-bisexual prejudice, and identity concealment were linked to feelings of loneliness which were in turn related to psychological distress and suicidality. By focusing on bisexual-specific stressors, these research projects demonstrated that plurisexual people experience stressors that are distinct from other forms of sexual minority stress while also experiencing stressors that are associated with gay and lesbians (Mereish et al., 2017).

With the recent popularity of positive psychology, some studies have begun to pay attention to factors that lessen poor psychological outcomes for queer people. Access to community groups has been found to buffer groups from the effects of marginalisation by creating social support networks (Bostwick et al., 2014). The marginalisation of plurisexuality from the rainbow community means less access to avenues of protection or support as gay and lesbian people do which may contribute to wellbeing and health disparities between plurisexual and gay people (Bradford, 2004). Alongside social buffers, cognitive factors may also mediate effects of minority stress. Brewster et al. (2013) found that high cognitive flexibility – the ability and willingness to adapt to situations – was associated with lower distress and greater wellbeing. They suggested that this trait may buffer

plurisexual people against poor psychological outcomes because people with cognitive flexibility are less likely to expect stigma in contexts of low prejudice (Brewster et al., 2013).

Physical health and risk behaviours

Plurisexual people, and in particular women, exhibit other indicators of poor wellbeing alongside relatively high rates of mental health conditions. These indicators include chronic physical health conditions, drug and alcohol consumption, and poorer sexual health behaviours (Cochran & Mays, 2007; Flanders et al., 2019a; Kelley, Ehlke, Braitman, & Stamates, 2019). Assessing the percentage of the plurisexual population that experiences poor health outcomes is near impossible due to: plurisexuals being a hidden population, lack of funding, and difficulty with defining who counts as plurisexual. Therefore, research on this topic predominantly highlights the plurisexual health concerns at a group level through comparative analyses with other sexual identity groups. Methods of defining a plurisexual population differ significantly within this area of research. Some research using a self-identification technique, while others assess their participants sexual behaviour, sexual attraction, a mixture of both, and use a unique measure for identifying participants' plurisexuality. This variance in method can create disparities in results that may lessen the generalisability of individual research findings to plurisexual populations. Yet, as many different scholars have had similar findings relating to plurisexual people's health, this is not a large concern.

Through comparing different sexual identities' health data, research has determined that lesbian and plurisexual women are at higher risk of chronic health conditions including gastrointestinal conditions, asthma and general poorer health (Cochran & Mays, 2007; Dilley, Simmons, Boysun, Pizacani, & Stark, 2010). In comparison to heterosexual women, plurisexual women and women with both same and other-sex partners had the highest risk of hepatic disease, arthritis, obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, and had a greater number of health complaints (Cochran & Mays, 2007; Dilley et al., 2010). As well as poorer health outcomes, plurisexual people are more likely to exhibit more health risk factors including usage of drugs and alcohol. Compared to other sexuality populations,

plurisexual people are more likely to use marijuana, tobacco, and other drugs and stimulants including methamphetamine, opioids, benzodiazepines and cocaine (Colledge et al., 2015; Loi, Lea, & Howard, 2017; McQuoid, Thrul, Ozer, Ramo, & Ling, 2019; Yockey, King, & Vidourek, 2019).

Plurisexual women are also more likely to drink more alcohol and more frequently engage in binge drinking in comparison to lesbians (Kerr et al., 2013b). While many studies offer these statistics, few offer theories for these disparities. Recently, however, researchers suggested that drinking disparities between lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual women may be due to differing drinking contexts and reasons for drinking (Ehlke, Stamates, Kelley, & Braiman, 2018). Lesbian and bisexual women report more drinking in private locations than heterosexuals and may engage in drinking to create social support networks (Ehlke et al., 2018). The stigmatisation of plurisexuality and lack of access to supportive communities has been found to leave plurisexual people with less group-level coping mechanisms and protective factors community support provides (Dyar et al., 2019).

Therefore, as plurisexual individuals often have difficulty finding accepting communities, (Salway et al., 2019) forming communities around drinking may be seen as a way to negate this (Ehlke et al., 2018).

Plurisexual women also display riskier sexual health behaviours and relatively poorer sexual health comparative to other sexual identity populations. In comparison to heterosexual women, plurisexual women are less likely to have had a cervical smear, more likely to have had an STI, and women who have sex with women (WSW) have a higher prevalence of bacterial vaginosis (Bailey, Farquhar, & Owen, 2004; Charlton et al., 2011). The lack of social support for queer women to get sexual health screenings has been found to create poorer sexual health outcomes (Baldwin et al., 2019; Tornello, Riskind, & Patterson, 2014). The disparities in sexual health behaviours has been attributed in large part to the heterosexism and heteronormativity of medical institutions (Logie, 2015). Often, this manifests through language in sexual health discussions that targets heterosexual people (Formby, 2011; Logie, 2015). The erasure of queer women from public sexual health discussions can leave

WSW with a limited understanding of good sexual health behaviours. Most public health discussions of STIs and other sexual health problems focuses on heterosexuals and men who have sex with men, leaving queer women not aware they might be at risk (Formby, 2011). For example, Bailey, Farquhar, Owen, and Whittaker (2003) found that most lesbian and bisexual women had never used a dental dam²⁵, and practised poor cleanliness when sharing sex toys. Further, plurisexual people have been found to exhibit concern about health professionals stereotyping them because their sexual identity is often associated with promiscuity (Dobinson, Macdonnell, Hampson, Clipsham, & Chow, 2005; Taggart et al., 2019). Research has concluded that this fear of stereotyping leads to plurisexual individuals feeling distrustful of medical professionals and not seeking out medical help for sexual health problems (Taggart et al., 2019). The heterosexism and stigma of plurisexuality furthers the poor health outcomes and health disparities between plurisexual people and monosexual people (Dobinson et al., 2005; Taggart et al., 2019).

Interventions

Interventions to minimise poor health outcomes for rainbow populations have not specifically targeted plurisexual people and their unique stressors and needs (Dobinson et al., 2005). Current healthcare interventions for queer people often focus on HIV/AIDS among gay and plurisexual men. While important, such a focus overlooks the other health concerns queer and plurisexual people face (such as physical and sexual health concerns). Further, social and health interventions for queer people often amalgamate these populations, and do not examine the unique stressors plurisexual people face (Feinstein & Dyar, 2017). However, some scholars, such as Ebin (2012) provide tangible points for how to begin to improve 'bisexual health':

“Bisexual health could be improved by increased cultural competency in the provision of health services, including bisexually welcoming and knowledgeable physical and mental health providers, and improving the social climate, including bisexually-safe, welcoming social and spiritual spaces” (p. 171).

²⁵ A dental dam is a prophylactic barrier, often made of latex that is intended to be placed over a person's mouth during oral sex to protect against some STIs.

Lack of understandings from health professionals about the unique stressors plurisexual people face, and the resulting elevated risk for health concerns, can further alienate plurisexual people from seeking help. Therefore interventions that provide healthcare professionals with resources that specifically address the needs of plurisexual people is necessary (Ebin, 2012; Friedman et al., 2014).

Sexual assault

Sexual assault victimisation is pervasive among plurisexual women. Research has found substantially higher rates of sexual violence including sexual coercion, sexual assault, and rape occur among plurisexual women comparative to other sexual identity populations (Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013). In this thesis I am defining sexual violence as sexual acts that people are forced to engage in against their wishes (including sexual coercion, unwanted sexual contact, and other unwanted sexual experiences). The U.S. National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence survey found that plurisexual women had significantly higher lifetime prevalence of experiencing rape and sexual violence by any perpetrator than women with other sexual identities (Walters et al., 2013).

Plurisexual women also had a higher lifetime prevalence of experiencing rape, physical violence, and stalking by an intimate partner compared to lesbian and heterosexual women (Walters et al., 2013).

Walters et al. (2013) put forward that lifetime prevalence rates of rape were at 46%, and 75% for other forms of sexual violence for plurisexual women. The majority of rape and sexual violence perpetrators were found to be men (between 87% and 98%). These rates have been found by other literature (Canan, Jozkowski, Wiersma-Mosley, Bradley, & Blunt-Vinti, 2019; Hequembourg, Blayney, Livingston, Bostwick, & Auerbach, 2019; Seabrook, McMahon, Duquaine, Johnson, & DeSilva, 2018).

While there is little research on intimate partner violence (IPV) among queer people, a meta-review of the literature revealed that plurisexual women experienced IPV at higher rates than lesbian and heterosexual women (Bermea, van Eeden-Moorefield, & Khaw, 2018). Some plurisexual women that experience IPV experience “queer-specific victimisation” (Bermea et al., 2018), including threats of being “outed” and tactics to discredit and control queer mothers (Head & Milton, 2014). Further,

plurisexual women experience higher rates of childhood sexual assault than heterosexual and lesbian women, and also are at greater risk for revictimisation in adulthood (Hequembourg et al., 2019; McConnell & Messman-Moore, 2018)

Risk factors that make plurisexual women more susceptible to sexual violence and IPV operate at both the social and individual level. Recent literature has indicated that there is a relationship between alcohol use and sexual violence that is exacerbated for plurisexual women (Kelley et al., 2019). Specifically, higher alcohol use may increase the risk of sexual coercion as many plurisexual women who experienced sexual violence were assaulted when under the influence of substances such as alcohol (Hequembourg et al., 2019; Kelley et al., 2019; McConnell & Messman-Moore, 2018). As plurisexual women binge drink more regularly than heterosexual and lesbian women, this may be a factor in plurisexual women's sexual violence rates (Kelley et al., 2019; McConnell & Messman-Moore, 2018). However, as plurisexual women also experience high rates of childhood sexual assault and IPV, this is only one factor that may contribute to sexual violence disparities.

Structural violence and plurisexual-specific stigma are also associated with experiencing sexual violence for plurisexual women (Flanders et al., 2019a). Plurisexuality is associated with sex-related stereotypes such as hypersexuality and these associations – along with objectification and exoticification of plurisexual women – likely perpetuate sexual violence (Flanders et al., 2019a; Flanders, Ross, Dobinson, & Logie, 2017b). The objectification and sexualisation of plurisexuality can affect plurisexual women's ability to navigate consent, an area of women's lives that is already complex without the extra factor such as expectations of being hypersexual and promiscuous (see Gavey, 2018). Flanders et al. (2017b) identified stigma and associations between plurisexuality and hypersexuality as affecting plurisexual women's ability to navigate sexual situations; for their participants, sexual consent was inextricably linked to others' perceptions of their plurisexuality and limited their ability to say no to sex.

While minority stress and stigma may be a large factor in the health disparities between plurisexual and monosexual people, there may be another moderating factor. Scheer, McConocha, Behari, and Pachankis (2019) found a relationship between alcohol use, suicidality, and sexual risk in plurisexual women, and experiencing sexual violence, suggesting that experiencing sexual violence may lead to higher health-risk behaviours. As the majority of plurisexual women experience at least one form of sexual violence in their lifetime, this may – at least partially – explain the poorer health outcomes across this population. Supporting this, Sigurvinsdottir and Ullman (2016) found that plurisexual women experience less social support after disclosing sexual assault, and received more negative reactions after doing so. Lack of social support after sexual violence is related to poorer psychological health outcomes (Seabrook et al., 2018; Sigurvinsdottir & Ullman, 2016). These studies indicate that plurisexual stigma affects plurisexual women both prior to, during and after sexual assault, and is a large contributing factor towards plurisexual women’s ongoing negative health and marginalisation.

Plurisexual women’s intimate lives

Intimacy can be defined as some form of emotional, and physical closeness with another person, and is understood to be a fundamental human need (Frost, 2011). Intimate relationships can come in many forms, one can be physically intimate with another person without any romantic intimacy. Moreover, relationships do not necessarily require sexual intimacy. Friendships could be considered intimate relationships by some definitions, while some see sexual intimacy as a requirement for an intimate relationship. In this thesis, intimacy is restricted to a sexual and/or romantic relationship or encounter with another person. Thus, (platonic) friendships are excluded, and casual sex – whether a one-off encounter or a regular sexual relationship – is included within this thesis as a form of intimacy. While the defining part of plurisexuality is arguably the attraction, romantic and sexual behaviour with people of multiple genders, research often overlooks the sexual and romantic area of women’s lives. While research has indicated that plurisexual people are seen as less desirable and

'risky' partners for heterosexual people and lesbians, plurisexual people do, indeed, engage in long term relationships. This section will discuss how plurisexual people's relationships have been described in literature, common characteristics and experiences of plurisexual people's relationships, and the relationship between non-monogamy and plurisexuality. This section will then examine research into the sexual behaviours of plurisexual people and address the gaps in the research.

Romantic relationships

Mixed orientation relationships

Early research into bisexual people's intimate relationships began with studies of 'mixed orientation' marriages during the 1980s HIV/AIDS epidemic. Such work focused on bisexual individuals in 'heterosexual' marriages in order to examine the effect of their identity on their marriage. These studies largely examined bisexual men due to the association of male bisexuality with the risk of 'infecting' heterosexual women with HIV (Breno & Galupo, 2008). Nevertheless, studies examining bisexual women in mixed-orientation and mixed-gender marriages did occur (e.g., Coleman, 1985; Dixon, 1984). Studies in this category commonly focus on spouses disclosing their sexual identity to their partners, why bisexual – or gay – people marry someone of another gender, or on the dissolution of 'mixed-orientation marriages' (e.g., Buxton, 2000; Edser & Shea, 2002; Hernandez, Schwenke, & Wilson, 2011). It is important to note that 'mixed-orientation marriages' as described in literature, are limited to relationships where one partner is bisexual – or gay – and the other is heterosexual, and does not include same gender relationships where partners hold different sexual identities.

Plurisexuality researchers have critiqued this area of study, arguing that it presents a skewed and heteronormative image of plurisexual relationships through largely focusing on people who were assumed to have, or held, a heterosexual identity prior to marriage (Hayfield, Campbell, & Reed, 2018; Klesse, 2011). Researchers argue that it is unclear whether the people studied within 'mixed-

orientation marriages' were bisexual or gay. Hoang, Holloway, and Mendoza (2011) theorised that the women and men sexualities may have been misattributed as bisexual because behaviour and attraction were conflated. Thus, whether men were having sex with men while married to a woman, or were a woman married to a man and having sex with other women outside their marriage, this bisexual behaviour was equated with a bisexual identity. This is shown particularly in Coleman's (1985) paper titled 'Bisexual Women in Marriages'. Within this article, the language of 'bisexual' and 'homosexual' were used interchangeably to discuss the participants, prior literature and the findings. From Coleman's paper and other similar papers, we cannot draw any inferences about plurisexual women in relationships, as it is not conclusive whether people who identified as plurisexual were indeed studied.

Polyamory and ethical non-monogamy

Recently, studies on non-monogamy and polyamory have emerged out of sexuality research at a greater rate than before, with many studies linking this behaviour to bisexuality. Polyamory, a subset of non-monogamy, is a relationship structure where a person chooses to be romantically and/or sexually intimate with more than one person at a time, and all partners consent to this arrangement (Noël, 2006). Some researchers have found that polyamory and non-monogamy is no more prevalent among plurisexuals than people of other identities (Li, Dobinson, Scheim, & Ross, 2013). However, a greater body of research disagrees with this, finding that plurisexual people are less likely to be involved in monogamous relationships than people who have monosexual identities, and hold higher rates of non-monogamy (Klesse, 2005, 2011; Rust, 2000a). Researchers theorise that plurisexual people may be more inclined to question mononormativity more than people of other sexual identities and so consciously reject socially embedded ideas of monogamy and instead try other forms of 'sexual and romantic relating' (Li et al., 2013). The preference of non-monogamy is therefore not inherent in plurisexuals (as it is commonly understood to be the result of plurisexuals perceived hypersexuality), but an active decision made by many plurisexuals (Klesse, 2011).

As plurisexuals already reject monosexual norms when taking on a plurisexual identity, it is likely that they will spend more time reflecting on sexuality and social norms (Klesse, 2011; Li et al., 2013). It then follows that some plurisexuals may take this a step further to reject other sexual norms, such as one's surrounding 'compulsory coupledness' and monogamy (Farvid, 2015). Research has also identified that polyamorous and non-monogamous relationships also create a way for plurisexual people to make their plurisexuality more visible when monogamous relationships often render plurisexual identities invisible (Hayfield et al., 2018; Moss, 2012). Plurisexual women described having multiple partners of different genders as helping them feel 'complete' as it was a way to actively enact their plurisexuality, which was associated with more personal authenticity (Moss, 2012). However, the disobeying of strongly regulated social norms of heterosexuality and monogamy by being polyamorous and plurisexual likely further alienates plurisexual people from social support and perpetuates their marginalisation at both the group and individual level.

Plurisexual relationship characteristics and experiences

A small body of research has sought to describe and characterise plurisexual people's relationships. Across this field, beyond those described above, two main themes are salient: the invisibility of plurisexuality in relationships, and plurisexual people's experiences of tension with heteronormative norms. Statistically, more plurisexual women end up in long-term relationships and marriages with men than with people of other genders. This finding has been consistent across time. Weinberg et al. (1994) found through interviews with 150 bisexual people in 1983, that three quarters of bisexual people were in relationships with someone from the other gender and more recent research has similar findings (Hoang et al., 2011; Klesse, 2011; McLean, 2004). It has been hypothesised that these high rates may be due to the pervasive impact of heteronormativity, where plurisexual people feel more pressured to 'settle down' with heterosexual people (Lynch & Maree, 2013). Other possible explanations include the higher statistical likelihood of finding a heterosexual person to date in comparison to people who are attracted to people of the same gender, especially when you take into consideration hostility from lesbians and gay people towards bisexuals (Pond & Farvid,

2017). However, researchers have not yet examined plurisexual women's perspective of why they chose to date men over women, therefore there are no certain conclusions that can be made about this trend. There is a bias in the literature (possibly due to heteronormativity in academia) towards studying plurisexual people in 'heterosexual' relationships (Reinhardt, 2011). There has been a shift in the last decade to looking at plurisexual relationships in general, without specifying the gender of their partners prior to data collection. This recent work can allow a more accurate understanding of how plurisexual people experience relationships.

Research has identified and discussed the heightened invisibility of plurisexuality in monogamous relationships (Crofford, 2018; Hartman-Linck, 2014; Mark, Rosenkrantz, & Kerner, 2014). As a result of this invisibility, there are no existing discourses on "bisexual relationships", which contributes to a structural erasure of plurisexuality across plurisexual people's intimate lives (Hayfield et al., 2018; Lahti, 2015). Hayfield et al. (2018) described "the notion of a bisexual relationship [as] unintelligible as it was seemingly not something which could possibly be conceived of, or made sense of, as a possible relationship category" (p. 223). While plurisexual people want to be seen as plurisexual, dominant constructions of relationships that place emphasis on gender alongside dominant mononormative sexuality discourses operate to make plurisexuality invisible (Hayfield et al., 2018).

Alongside bi-erasure, heteronormativity operates in plurisexual people's relationships by shaping plurisexual people's subjectivity. Like all people, plurisexual women grapple with normative expectations for their relationships (Gustavson, 2009; Lahti, 2015; Lynch & Maree, 2013). These expectations include pressure to conform to traditional notions of marriage and children, and find their subject positions within these socially valuable discourses (Gustavson, 2009; Lahti, 2015; Lynch & Maree, 2013). For some plurisexual women, this pressure can mean taking up marriage and family discourses even when in a socially non-traditional relationship (such as with a trans-partner or a same-sex relationship) (Lahti, 2015). Plurisexuality may also be perceived as competing with traditional discourses because it is equated with non-monogamy and promiscuity (Lynch & Maree,

2013). For plurisexual women, heteronormative norms and expectations have been found to be more overt than for heterosexual people, even when in 'heterosexual' relationships (Lahti, 2015). The awareness of heteronormativity allows for a more conscious rejection of traditional discourses and gendered relationship roles (Lahti, 2015). Therefore, heteronormative discourses are both more and less constraining for plurisexual women. Plurisexual women are more aware of their freedom to play with traditional roles, but their relationships are typically seen as heterosexual and heteronormative. Such erasure of their sexuality has been described as frustrating and isolating from their queer identities (Hayfield et al., 2018; Lahti, 2015). Therefore, some plurisexual women engage in techniques to signal their plurisexuality when in monogamous relationships such as visual markers – including pins, flags and signs – to show their plurisexuality and attempt to lessen the invisibility of their sexual identity (Hartman, 2013).

Research into the relationships of plurisexual women focused on how both structural and cultural representations of relationships and plurisexuality shaped plurisexual women's relationships. Due to stereotyped expectations of plurisexuality – including hypersexuality – plurisexual women have been found to verbally distance themselves from these stereotypes (such as by reassuring their partners of their monogamy) (Hayfield et al., 2018). This distancing has been found to occur even if their partners had not mentioned these constructions of plurisexuals (Hayfield et al., 2018). This overt distancing in this group of participants indicates that plurisexual people are cognizant of the cultural misrepresentations of plurisexuality and how this may inform expectations around dating plurisexual people (Hayfield et al., 2018). Despite negative cultural stereotypes of plurisexuality, not many specific instances of overt prejudice or discrimination of plurisexual people from partners were reported in research. Some plurisexual women however do report being asked or expected to engage in sexual acts with their male partners and other people with their partner assuming they would be 'up for it' because they were plurisexual (Li et al., 2013). In order to avoid hostility and over-sexualisation, some plurisexual people avoided discussing their sexual identity with their partners altogether, which can be read as perpetuating bi-invisibility (Hayfield et al., 2018; Li et al.,

2013). In summary, dominant discourses, norms, and expectations shape how plurisexual women manage their relationships and negotiate their sexual identity.

Sexual relationships and behaviours

The conflation of plurisexual identities and bisexual behaviour means that the sexual behaviour of people who *identify* with a plurisexual identity is typically hard to pin down in literature. Most work that mentions plurisexual people's sexual behaviour focuses on sexual health concerns rather than identifying or characterising the sexual *experiences* of plurisexual people.

Several studies have qualitatively examined plurisexual women's engagement with casual sex. Casual sex has been defined in diverse ways in academic literature but often refers to one-off or non-romantic sexual encounters between near-strangers, acquaintances, or friends. Farvid and Braun (2013) described casual sex as "(ostensibly) occur[ing] outside the context of a committed, romantic, and longer-term sexual relationship and typically occur between 'single' people where there may or may not be any investment in the future of the relationship." (p. 360). As plurisexual people are typically framed as hypersexual, they are presumed to have more casual sex than people of other identities (Jankowiak & Escasa-Dorne, 2015).

Lahti (2017) found that plurisexual women described their casual sexual experiences ambivalently, as both an "excessive" rebellion against monogamous norms, and as pleasurable. This pleasure was both in the physical sense and attributed to the freedom to "put their [pluri]sexuality into practice" more so than when in a monogamous relationship (Lahti, 2017). Predominantly, however, plurisexual women's casual sexual encounters were framed both by plurisexual women and researchers as explorative and a way to strengthen or understand their sexual identities (Lahti, 2017; Morgan & Thompson, 2006). Although their casual sex behaviour presented a conflict for some women, who did not want to equate their sexual behaviour with hypersexual bisexual stereotypes (Lahti, 2017). Little is known about plurisexual women's sexual behaviour and how their sexual identity shapes their sexual experiences beyond what is described above. Research extending this

work may be beneficial for a sexual health perspective, as research has shown plurisexual people have higher rates of sexual health problems than other populations (Tornello et al., 2014), and to build scholarly understanding of how plurisexual women navigate their identities in interpersonal settings.

Plurisexual research in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Research on sexual identities in Aotearoa/New Zealand is limited and there have only been a few studies to date that has examined plurisexual people as a separate population to lesbian and gay people. One of those studies is McAllum (2014)'s PhD research into young women's bisexual identities at secondary school. This research detailed that stigmatisation of plurisexual women also takes place in secondary school, with McAllum (2014)'s participants describing being sexualised by male peers and bullied by lesbian peers. Bisexuality was also poorly depicted through sexuality education, with the school curriculum over-emphasising the dangers of sexuality, or neglecting to mention bisexuality (McAllum, 2014). McAllum (2014)'s research is the only published study in Aotearoa/New Zealand to date that examines plurisexuality without also studying other sexual identities. However, several studies have analysed data of plurisexual participants separately. This includes Greaves et al. (2019)'s comparison of bisexual and pansexual people on a variety of variables, and was described and critiqued above.

Finally, an Aotearoa/New Zealand rainbow research project on sexual violence, Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura – Outing Violence, identified high levels of sexual violence experiences by plurisexual people (Dickson, 2017). More than two thirds of plurisexual participants had experienced emotional, verbal, and/or psychological abuse from a partner across their lifespan. Half of the participants were specifically criticised about their sexuality or gender identity from at least one partner (Dickson, 2017). In addition, more than half of plurisexual participants had been physically abused by at least one partner, three quarters of plurisexual participants had experienced unwanted sexual contact, and over half had been raped (Dickson, 2017). These concerning statistics suggest that more

resources need to go into examining the consequences of marginalisation for plurisexual people in Aotearoa/New Zealand including sexual violence.

The general consensus among academics is that sexuality experience and politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand mimic those in the Anglo-Western world, which may underwrite the impact of Māori culture and the resulting differences in colonial norms that may impact our sexuality discourses.

Nevertheless, as a result of the dearth of work from Aotearoa, in this thesis I have relied on research from other countries. This unfortunately ignores how Māori concepts of sexuality and sexual fluidity differ from the Pākehā scientific narratives; an area of research that it is hoped will inform future research into sexuality in Aotearoa.

Project focus and addressing research gaps

Based on the literature review above, I conclude that plurisexual women are significantly overlooked as a research population, creating large gaps in psychological knowledge. Further, most research with plurisexual participants compares plurisexuals to other sexual identity populations, restricting what we can learn about plurisexual populations. It is important to move beyond deficit-focused understandings of plurisexuality. This will allow for a nuanced examination and understanding of plurisexual people at a group and individual level.

As described above, research has found that monosexism and heteronormativity operate to systemically erase plurisexuality. This results in plurisexual identities being marginalised and stigmatised. This marginalisation is gendered; meaning, depictions of women's sexuality as fluid and the exoticisation of queer women shape how plurisexual women experience their sexuality. Past research has often left out the perspectives of plurisexual women when discussing plurisexuality. Further, only recent research has begun to recognise the importance of including plurisexual women in research who do not identify as bisexual, or who use more than one term to describe their sexual identity.

The present thesis seeks to address the research gaps and build on current research in an Aotearoa/New Zealand context by acknowledging the intersections of identity and importance of social, cultural and historical context that impact women's experiences of their plurisexuality. This work will not only create a base for the theoretical and experiential understanding of plurisexual women's experiences relating to their sexual identities, but the findings can also be used to improve their wellbeing in the future by informing provision of psychological and health services to plurisexual women. The main goals of this research are to critically examine how social constructions of plurisexuality and sexuality discourses inform how plurisexual women experience their sexual identity, analyse how their sexual identity shapes their social and personal lives and their self-identity, and identify the demographics of plurisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the characteristics of their lives related to their identity. Therefore, there are three main research questions that guide this project:

Research questions

1. How is sexual identity talked about by women who identify with plurisexual identities?
2. What are the demographics and general characteristics of women who identify with plurisexual identities in Aotearoa/New Zealand?
3. How are the social processes of marginalisation experienced and negotiated by women who identify with plurisexual identities?

PART TWO

“Are there even that many bisexuals in New Zealand?” - a question asked by a colleague when I explained my goal number of 1,000 survey respondents

CHAPTER FIVE

Capturing Plurisexual Lives: Method

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the project's method, with consideration to the theoretical underpinnings presented in the introductory chapter. The mixed-methods approach to data collection will first be presented, followed by the ethical considerations of this thesis, and finally a discussion of the process of the data collection and analysis for both the qualitative and quantitative phases will be undertaken.

Mixed methodology

Projects from a critical perspective typically use qualitative methods (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In saying that, methods are not critical in and of themselves, but often specific methods more readily lend themselves to a critical perspective. In this research project, a mixed-method approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods is undertaken. As Tiefer (2004) explained,

“To understand sexuality, scholars need to use and respect multiple methods and researcher points of view and to see experimental, correlational, participatory and clinical methods and complementary not competing. Individual constructions of sexuality involve an interplay of individual and social processes that cannot be adequately explored with only one method” (p. 22)

The complexity and broadness of plurisexuality cannot be fully captured using one method, requiring a creative methodological approach. Further, as this project is largely exploratory, mixed methodology adds plurality to the research and a greater possibility for diverse findings.

This research comes from a predominantly social constructionist perspective of mixed-method research, meaning that the main goal of the research is not a search for ‘truth’ but to represent the lived experience of women and to “expose social injustice” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. 455). This method allows this project to draw out the discourses and societal constructs of gender and sexuality that influence and shape women’s experiences of their plurisexuality. Focusing on the experiences of participants, an inductive, data driven approach is taken throughout the research.

A mixed methods approach allows for a depth and breadth of data while maintaining an exploratory perspective. Each method within this approach has its own merits and each complements the other. Qualitative research allows for the articulation of the complexity of phenomena while data reflects the multiple realities within and across participants. Mojtaba, Hannele, and Terese (2013) described the goal of qualitative approaches as “[seeking] to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing it” (p. 398). Therefore, in this project, qualitative approaches allow us to bring plurisexual women into the narrative of their own sexual identity, a place they are not often found in scholarly work. Further, qualitative work provides a solid base for theorising on this subject, through analysing data that is inextricable from the discourses that make up plurisexual women’s lives. In contrast, quantitative approaches are useful for capturing trends across a large number of plurisexual women. This allows for a straightforward contrast with previous literature and clarity around areas of this subject that need further inspection.

With this in mind, a sequential exploratory mixed method design is used (Hesse-Biber, 2010). An exploratory sequential design is one in which qualitative data provides basis for collection of quantitative data (Cameron, 2009). In this project, qualitative data is collected through semi-structured interviews, and quantitative data is generated through an online survey. Specifically, the interview data collection and analysis in phase one will inform the questions asked during the survey conducted during phase two (see Figure 2) (Hesse-Biber, 2010). The mixed method approach taken here is weighted more towards qualitative, with the survey used to expand on what is found in the first phase. By using the interviews to guide the survey, themes and concepts that are important to plurisexual women can be identified and look at across a broader sample of plurisexual women. This method of linking the two phases can provide richer data than each phase could generate separately.

In addition to this, the qualitative interviews will also be analysed separately with a more critical lens. This secondary qualitative analysis will be done using a critical thematic analysis (Braun &

Clarke, 2006) that draws on the research and theories discussed in part one of this thesis to identify, discuss, and examine discourses in plurisexual women’s lives, and their subject positions within these discourses.

As there are two phases of data collection, there are also two results sections divided into part two and part three of this thesis. Part two presents the survey findings and discusses them in the context of previous literature. Following this, Part three provides the results of the critical thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews. The diagram below demonstrates the path of the data collection and analysis within this mixed method research design.

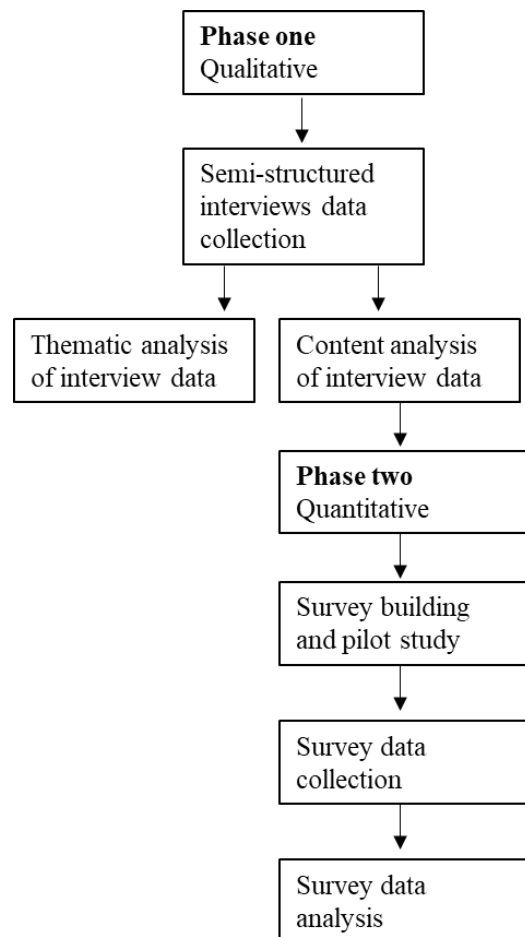


Figure 2. Sequential exploratory mixed method research design. Adapted from Cameron (2009) and Hesse-Biber (2010).

Ethical concerns

Phase one of the project was approved by the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTC) on the 12th March 2018 (Reference number 18/37) and the second phase was subsequently approved on the 11th September 2018. The general ethical principles and consideration that were abided by pertained to: informed and voluntary consent, respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality, minimisation of risk, truthfulness, social and cultural sensitivity, research adequacy, avoidance of conflict of interest, respect for vulnerability, and respect for property. In addition, the principals of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, namely partnership, participation, and protection, were a high priority throughout the research process. In a research context this means that my responsibilities as a Pākehā researcher are to recognise and respect the tikanga²⁶ of Māori culture (Hudson & Russell, 2009). This includes whakawhanaungatanga²⁷, particularly with interviewees, by ensuring mutually beneficial and equitable outcomes and prioritising their needs in our interviews (Hudson & Russell, 2009). Additionally, acknowledging and using indigenous gender and sexuality terms such as takatāpui and respecting the mana²⁸ of Māori sexuality researchers was paramount within the research.

To protect anonymity, interview participant's identities were not disclosed to anyone and their privacy was protected through using pseudonyms, changing all identifying details in the transcripts, and having their consent documents separated from the rest of the documents. As all surveys were done anonymously, there was no data that could lead to identifying the survey participants. Consent was obtained prior to all interviews and surveys commencing, and all information is kept confidential and protected.

The most relevant areas of ethical concerns in this project was the respect for vulnerability, and social and cultural sensitivity. As plurisexual people are a marginalised group in Aotearoa,

²⁶ Tikanga is defined as "the customary system of values and practices [in Māori culture] that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context" (Dictionary, 2020a).

²⁷ Whakawhanaungatanga is defined as fostering and maintaining relationships, building rapport and respect between individuals (Dictionary, 2020b).

²⁸ Mana can be described as a supernatural force in a person, place, or object that imbues it with prestige and influence.

consideration had to be made about the comfort of participants in regard to cultural competence. The in-group status of the researcher (myself) provided a buffer against poor cultural competence. Further I had ongoing discussions with a senior staff member of RainbowYOUTH (Aotearoa's largest Rainbow support organisation) to assure that the survey was inclusive of gender diversity. Potential participants were made aware through the participant information sheet (see Appendix B) that the interviewer (myself) identifies as a bisexual woman. By showing participants that the interviewer is a member of the queer community herself, it is hoped that this relieved potential anxiety and distrust towards the researcher being an outsider to the community (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Anecdotally, a few participants did mention that they were relieved to hear that I was bisexual and that it helped with their decision to be a part of the research. Being queer myself helps me to understand and empathise with the experiences of the interviewees to possibly to greater degree than monosexual researchers may be able to. Further, my expertise in this area both academically and socially meant that my awareness about sensitivities and language was heightened, and lead to a comfortable and safer space for participants. My personal subject positions and how they pertain to the research will be discussed further in the 'reflexivity' section of this chapter. Barker et al. (2012)'s guidelines for researching bisexuality were also thoughtfully considered.

A secondary consideration was of the potential for discomfort for interviewees and respondents when discussing topics such as sex, relationships, and sexual assault. For the survey, a warning was presented before the questions pertaining to sexual assault with a reminder that the questions could be skipped. After the survey, a list of Aotearoa-wide free social services was provided. This list was also provided to interviewees. Care was taken during the interviews to check for signs of potential discomfort from the interviewees and to 'check in' with them once the interview concluded about how they were feeling.

The safety and comfort for researchers is also important, particularly when interviewing people for long periods of time about sensitive and potentially difficult topics (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, &

Liamputtong, 2007). It is important to acknowledge the impact the interviews could have on both the researcher *and* the interviewee. Thus, to ascertain my own comfort after interviews that discussed difficult topics such as bi-negativity and sexual assault, time was allocated, when necessary, to debrief with my primary supervisor. Further, self-care practices are an important strategy in minimizing potential detriments to emotional well-being which I was conscious of and adhered to during the data collection and transcription process (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007).

Reflexivity

For feminist and critical research, reflexivity is a vital part of the research process and one that is ongoing throughout the project. Reflexivity involves recognising the subject positions, beliefs, opinions, and context of the researcher and considering how they shape the research process and outcomes (Barker et al., 2012). By acknowledging my role in the research process beyond being an objective ‘tool’ in the process I hope I can ameliorate some of the personal biases that may impact my research. Willig (2013) asserts that beyond acknowledging biases, reflexivity also assists us with furthering the insights and understandings we can gather from the data. While knowledge can be framed as ‘co-created’ between researcher and participants (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015), I, as the researcher, take a much more active role in constructing the narrative of the thesis. For instance, Barker and Langdrige (2008) warned that bisexual researchers studying bisexuality may be inclined to emphasise parts of the data that validate their own understandings of sexuality and are less critical of bisexuality. As an ‘insider’— meaning I belong to the population that participants also belong – I am in the best position, as an emic researcher, to “represent their voices” (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Perhaps because of this connection with the interviewees and the research data, it becomes more vital to reflect on my own subject positions and how that may shape the research.

With this in mind, I would like to describe who I am, and contextualise the assumptions and personal beliefs I bring to this project. As my participants sought to be open and honest with their own

experiences, it is only fair I do the same. I am a cis-gendered Pākehā²⁹ woman in my mid-twenties. I come from an upper-middle class divorced heterosexual family and have lived in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau – a diverse and liberal city – my whole life. I am privileged to have been in academia (in tertiary study) since I finished high school. I identify predominantly as bisexual but also use the word queer to describe myself (I find both words fitting in different ways as a descriptor of my sexuality) and have identified as such since my late teens. However, I did not discuss this with my family until I had a woman as a long-term partner. My family are accepting and supportive of my sexual identity and I have had no backlash from anyone close to me in regard to my bisexuality. I have taken the role of educator about sexuality and gender within my family and my extended whānau, a role which I often (but not always) enjoy. I have only had one long-term partner, who I have been with for over five years and whom I am engaged to, and she identifies as a bisexual non-binary woman. I also think it is important to mention that unlike more than half of plurisexual women, I have never been sexually assaulted or abused. As my research deals with the topic of sexual assault and rape I feel like it is important to acknowledge that I come from a place of empathy and compassion but not of experience of sexual abuse.

It is important to also contextualise my political beliefs as they have been greatly influential in my decision to undertake this research. In addition, my personal theoretical stances impact my research methodology. I identify as an intersectional feminist, meaning that I acknowledge the different axes of discrimination and privilege that intersect to disadvantage or privilege different women. With my feminist and queer activism, I use my voice and research to educate others and strive to improve lives for and with people that are systemically marginalised and oppressed. This shapes my goal to create tangible outcomes for this research project and disseminate the findings in the rainbow community, outside of scholarly spheres.

²⁹ Non-Māori New Zealander of European descent.

Phase one: qualitative interviews

Phase one consisted of qualitative semi-structured interviews of plurisexual women in three cities in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau, Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Christchurch/Ōtautahi). Data collected during this phase was analysed using two different methods: a content analysis and critical thematic analysis. The second two research questions: ‘How do plurisexual women describe their sexual identity?’ and ‘How is plurisexuality constructed in women’s accounts?’ guided this phase of the research.

Recruitment

Recruiting rainbow people, and particularly plurisexual people, can be a difficult task due to their marginalised status in society. Hartman (2011) viewed people who identify as bisexual as an “invisible haystack” and stressed the difficulties in sampling this “hidden minority” (p. 66). McCormack (2014) suggested that the difficulty in recruiting rainbow participants may be due to the discrimination they face when disclosing their sexual identity. He also suggested that this fear of discrimination is increased for bisexual people due to the ‘double discrimination’ from both straight and gay communities, exacerbating the issue of rainbow populations being hard to reach (McCormack, 2014). Due to the recruitment difficulties, researchers have shared various techniques for researching this marginalised group. Heaphy, Weeks, and Donovan (1998) suggested that in order to find ‘hard to reach’ parts of the community, recruitment strategies must go beyond snowball sampling. They found that contacting rainbow organisations was a more effective strategy as it led to more diversity in experiences of participants and a more varied sample of people (Heaphy et al., 1998). Further, potential participants may see the research as verifiable and safer as it had been ‘vetted’ by an organisation. Hartman (2011) found that using internet groups and newspaper advertisements was not effective in finding potential participants and suggested that finding rainbow organisations and advertising through their groups and using their networks was a much more fruitful strategy. With these considerations in mind, this project used primarily internet-based recruitment methods including advertising on relevant Facebook groups and through contacting

rainbow and women's organisations in Aotearoa/New Zealand to ask for their assistance with advertising on their website and at their physical locations.

There was a concern that relying on social media for advertising may skew the people interested in my research to those who are younger as the highest users of social media are young and emerging adults (aged 18 to 29) (Greenwood, Perrin, & Duggan, 2016). However, there are a large number of adults over this age on social media: 84% of 30-49 year old internet users, and 72% of 50-64 year old internet users use Facebook (Greenwood et al., 2016) and this was taken into account when deciding where to advertise the research.

When recruiting, the critique that research into bisexual people often over-represents well educated white people as their sample was considered (Barker et al., 2012). As Aotearoa/New Zealand is a country with a very diverse range of ethnicities I sought to capture this diversity by contacting rainbow groups and organisations that work particularly with rainbow people of colour and Māori/takatāpui in hope that this would lead to less of an oversampling of Pākehā people.

Primary methods of recruitment were through contacting rainbow, lesbian, bisexual, feminist, and women's organisations and Facebook groups that were based in Aotearoa/New Zealand and asking them to share my recruitment poster. I also shared the project poster on my own Facebook page and encouraged people in my networks to share the poster with their own networks. In the recruitment, advertisements, and discussions with potential participants sexual identity labels (such as bisexual and pansexual) were excluded. Instead, the less specific phrase 'women who identify as being attracted to multiple genders' was used. While this is much wordier, the ambiguity of the statement allows potential participants to include their meaning of their own identity labels, whether that be bisexual or another term they choose to identify with, or none at all (Farvid, 2010). Imposing labels onto their sexuality may restrict people who were attracted to multiple genders but did not necessarily use the label bisexual or pansexual from participating. Avoiding this would create

another aspect to the interviews – discussing their decisions around label use – and be more inclusive of the diverse ways people experience their plurisexuality.

The maximum number of participants was reached in less than a day of putting the poster up on social media. Due to size parameters of the project, I intended to interview between 15 and 20 people. I was contacted by over 80 people who were inquiring about participating in my research within a week of the recruitment launch. Interviews were organised on a first-come, first-served basis, with interviews organised with the first 20 participants who returned the participant information sheet.

The large amount of interest in this project could be attributed to two main factors: firstly, the lack of previous research in this area led to people being interested in research that would benefit them and their community; and secondly, the community-based recruitment method I undertook through snowballing and word of mouth methods was highly effective. In regard to the first factor, emails from people interested in this study indicated that plurisexual women were excited that research about them was being conducted by a member of their community, as this is not a common occurrence in Aotearoa. Many potential participants also mentioned that they were excited to discuss their sexuality as they do not often get the opportunity to do so due to marginalisation. This eagerness from potential participants is contrary to suggestions that bisexual people may not want to discuss the topic of their sexuality which they are often silenced for (McCormack, 2014)

Participants

Twenty women were interviewed for this research. They all fit the requirements that they must identify as a woman, be attracted to multiple genders (the interpretation of this, and how they identified was up to them), speak English fluently, be aged 20 or above, and live in Aotearoa. All demographic information was recorded on a brief questionnaire completed by interviewees at the end of the interview (Appendix E). Eight participants lived in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau, six in Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara, one in Palmerston North/Papa-i-Oea, and five in

Christchurch/Ōtautahi. While the research was open to all women, all the women interviewed were cis-gendered women³⁰. The interviewees ranged in age from 20 to 68 (Mean = 36, Median = 34). The sample of interviewees was relatively ethnically diverse: while the majority of participants were Pākehā (9), other interviewees were mixed-ethnicity (three NZ Māori/Pākehā, one Japanese/Pākehā, and one Thai/Pākehā), non-New Zealand European (4), Māori (1), or Chinese (1). Interviewee's sexual identity was recorded using an open-ended question ('What is your sexual/romantic identity?'). As a result, while the majority of interviewees used only one or two labels for their sexuality, such as bisexual (7), pansexual (3), or queer (3), some interviewees demonstrated the difficulties they experience in choosing one sexual identity label through their language. This can be exemplified through interviewees such as Nadia who put 'bisexual for want of a better word' or Emily who put 'Bi/Queer/Pan/Everything'. Additionally, two interviewees described their sexual identity as bisexual/gay, one as bisexual/pansexual, one described their sexual identity as queer/pansexual/bisexual, and one interviewee described their sexual identity as wahine takatāpui³¹. While some interviewees only put one word down to describe their sexual identity, the nuances of their sexual identity use and multiplicity and transient use of their labels was discussed in the interviews. This reflects that while some participants may have a label that they use for forms or for a quick descriptor that does not entirely reflect how they understand their sexuality in their day-to-day lives. In addition to basic demographic information, basic information about the interviewees' romantic and sexual lives was also recorded and is presented in Table 2.

³⁰ Cis-gendered describes people whose gender identity matches their assigned sex at birth.

³¹ Wahine Takatāpui is a Māori term for women who are attracted to women.

Pseudonym	Current Relationship Status	Genders of past romantic partners	Number of romantic partners ³²	Number of sexual partners ³³	Has children?
Manon	Single/Engaged to a woman ³⁴	Men	1-2	6-8	No
Steph	Single	None	0	0	No
Tessa	Single	Men, women, and genderqueer	3-4	6-8	No
Kiri	In relationship with man	Men and women	5-7	26+	Yes
Zoey	In relationship with man	Women	3-4	3-5	Yes
Ava	Single	Men and women	5-7	26+	No
Casey	Single	Women	5-7	3-5	No
Leigh	In relationship with 2 men and 1 woman	Men and women	10+	26+	Yes
Nadia	Single	Men and women	8-10	9-15	No
Katie	In relationship with a transwoman and a cis-man	Women	3-4	3-5	No
Gaby	Single	Men and women	5-7	16-25	Yes
Bea	Married to a man	Men	5-7	6-8	Yes
Demy	In relationship with woman	Men and women	3-4	3-5	No
Hana	In relationship with a man	Men and women	5-7	9-15	No
Luna	Engaged to a non-binary person	Men	3-4	9-15	Yes
Emily	Single	Men and cis and transwomen	10+	26+	Yes
Fay	In relationship with a woman	Men	1-2	1-2	No
Tui	Married to a man	Men and women	3-4	26+	Yes
Iris	Single	Men and women	1-2	6-8	No
Jess	In relationship to a woman	Women and transmen	8-10	16-25	No

Table 1. Basic relevant information about interview participants.

³² Categories were used to avoid people being uncomfortable with stating their numbers of partners.

³³ Categories were used to avoid people being uncomfortable with stating their numbers of partners.

³⁴ While Manon was romantically single, she was engaged to her friend whom she had a platonic relationship with.

Data collection

Once a potential participant contacted me via email about an interview, they were sent the participant information sheet (Appendix B) and invited to ask any questions they had about the project. If I had not heard from them within a week, they were sent one follow up email and if they did not reply to this prompt, contact was ceased. Once potential interviewees replied confirming they had read the participant information sheet, had no further questions, and were happy to be interviewed, a date and time for the interview was scheduled. Once the maximum number of participants was reached, all other enquires were met with an apology.

The interviews were done in the three main cities in New Zealand: Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau, Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara, and Christchurch/Ōtautahi. These cities were chosen for their large population as the largest cities in New Zealand. Demy was the only one to not live in these cities, but she was able to be in Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara for the interview. Interviews were conducted in three different cities because experience and behaviour related to sexual identity has been found to be dependent on location (Riggle, Rostosky, & Horne, 2010). For example, living in more inclusive cities and towns likely inform how comfortable people feel with their sexual identity (Riggle et al., 2010). Therefore, it was important to talk to women from a variety of locations, rather than only people in the city in which I am based, as their location likely informed or impacted their experiences relating to their sexual identity.

Interviews were conducted during March and April 2018 and all but one was face to face. Zoey's interview was done using Skype (a video conferencing tool) as she was not able to travel to the interview location due to child-care restraints. All other interviews were conducted at a university campus. The interviews in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau were taken place at AUT's North Shore and City campuses (depending on the preference of the interviewee) in an office or a private study room. One interview at the Victoria University of Wellington was conducted in an office, and the rest were in a private study room. The interviews that were conducted in Christchurch/Ōtautahi took place in

an office in the psychology department at the University of Canterbury. The interviews ranged in time between 28 and 126 minutes (Mean = 70.25 minutes). It is important to note that face-to-face interviews did lead to problems with accessibility, as some potential participants who were not able to acquire transport to the venue or were unable to find or afford childcare were unable to participate. While many interviews were done after normal work hours and in weekends in order to accommodate the needs of participants, only women who had enough money to afford transport, or flexibility to meet me for an interview were able to participate.

Before the interviews began, informed consent was obtained through presenting interviewees with the research aims and interview topics and asking them to sign a consent form. Interviewees were told that the interview could cease at any time and they could skip any questions asked.

Subsequently, several participants declined to elaborate on their answers to several questions (specifically questions relating to sexual assault, harassment, or coercion) and one participant chose to have some parts of their interview redacted as she felt like the stories involving other people were too personal or specific. Only after checking that the participants were ready to start would the interviews begin. The participants were provided refreshments throughout the interview. Once the interview concluded, participants were given information sheets that contained details for free social services in their area that may be relevant to them if what we had discussed caused them discomfort or brought up issues they wished to discuss, which did not seem to be the case. They were also given a \$20 koha³⁵ to a local shop after the interview as thanks for their time. The koha was not mentioned to the participants previously so monetary gifts would not persuade people into participating.

The interviews were semi-structured; there were topics and questions that I intended to cover but the wording and order of the questions was flexible. The flexibility of this method of interviews allows room for participants to bring new ideas and comments to the interview that I had not asked

³⁵ Koha is a word in Te Reo Māori used to describe a gift or donation to maintain social relationships and with connotations of reciprocity.

or thought to bring up. This also created space for participants to elaborate on ideas or experiences that they felt were important or relevant. Within the semi-structured format, interviewers can ask non-scripted questions to follow up with interviewees statements and clarify their meanings (Willig, 2008). This style of interview is pertinent for feminist research as it creates a space for the interviewees' individual voices to be heard on a subject that they are experts in: their own experiences (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1983). The conversational back-and-forth between interviewer and interviewee that this method allows creates a depth of understanding of participants' experiences which helps facilitate the creation of rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It also contextualises the questions in the participants experiences which acknowledges their individuality and gives them the autonomy to bring up points that are valuable to them (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Prior to the interviews beginning, I explained the semi-structured style the interviews would take and encouraged the interviewees to elaborate on any points they wanted to. The possible downside to this method was that some topics brought up by interviewees expanded the interview schedule for later interviewees, potentially causing earlier interviews to be less rich than later ones.

The interviews involved questions about sexual identity, disclosing sexuality, relationships, dating, casual sex, and biphobia (see Appendix D). While originally the interview questions were to be centred on the questions around relationships and intimate experiences, participants spent a lot of time focusing on questions about identity discovery and contextualising their sexual identity and therefore this area of discussion expanded throughout the interview process.

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by myself and two contracted transcribers. The transcribers were trained in my method of transcribing and signed confidentiality agreements. The interviewees' names were changed for confidentiality, as were names of other people mentioned by them during the interviews. All identifying information such as locations and specific personal information about interviewees was removed. Within the transcribed interviews,

laughter, pauses, and emphasised speech were included. No punctuation was used aside from question marks to denote questions asked by me or by the participant³⁶. When the interviewees were reporting what they had said at a previous occasion, or what someone else had said during a conversation, inverted comments were used to denote this. Dashes were used to denote unfinished words and repetition of words was included. These transcripts, which totalled 533 pages, provided the data used for analysis.

Data analysis

Two separate analyses of the interview data were conducted. First, a content analysis of the transcripts was carried out to clarify the themes and topics that should be asked in the surveys and allowed the discussion to be organised into categorical topics. Secondly, a critical thematic analysis of the interview data was conducted to provide a critical reading of the discussions. These two analyses are detailed below.

Content analysis

Content analysis is a flexible method for analysing textual data which can be shaped to the needs of the researcher, project, and theoretical interests of the research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). However, it would not usually be seen as congruent with social constructionism as content analysis uses language as a communication device to contextualise the meaning of the text while (as discussed in Chapter one) social constructionism posits language not as a vessel for communicating meaning and knowledge but as a key part of shaping meanings (Burr, 2015; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Therefore, to be consistent with the research epistemology, the content analysis results will not be presented in full in this thesis. However, content analysis was used as it is a systematic method of categorising phenomena from the data (Satu & Helvi, 2008). Within this project, content analysis was a tool for identifying the key ideas from the interview data and using these categories to develop questions

³⁶ Data extracts used in the thematic analysis chapters was cleaned up for readability including inserting punctuation when relevant.

and/or items for the survey. As discussed previously, using qualitative interviews to inform the development of the survey is a key part of the sequential exploratory mixed-method design that was used in this research project. Content analysis was chosen for this task as it is a flexible and adaptable method, creates simple and condensed descriptions of the data, and can be done systematically (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Satu & Helvi, 2008). There are various forms of content analysis and in this project the content analysis was adapted from Satu and Helvi (2008)'s model. Going into the analysis, I was looking for the recurring topics in data, using an inductive approach by deriving the categories from the data (Satu & Helvi, 2008).

For this project, a content analysis was done in the following stages:

1. *Familiarity with data* - while transcribing the data, and going over the transcriptions of the other transcribers, initial notes were made of categories to use for the content analysis. The categories were based on the topics of discussion without critical interpretation of the data.

2. *Preliminary data organising* - the transcripts were input into NVivo 12, a software tool that manages and helps organise data. In NVivo, 'nodes' are the categories you create which you can attach extracts of your transcripts to to categorise sections of the transcripts and group these categories together. 'Nodes' are divided up into 'parent' and 'child' nodes, where 'parent nodes' denote the overarching categories, and 'child nodes' are subcategories created under the parent nodes. For example, the parent node of 'health' had the child nodes of 'counselling', 'mental health', and 'physical health'. Using the notes taken during transcribing, some preliminary nodes were created. Each node pertained to the specific topics discussed by each interviewee in each line of data.

3. *Thorough data organisation* - systematically going through each transcript, parent and child nodes were generated if there were not already any that fitted the data extract, and the data were categorised into the nodes. When creating a node, I wrote a description for each node to be clear about what content should go into each node. Some data were categorised into several nodes,

depending on the relevance of the data to each node. Each transcript was coded to an average of 49 nodes. In each node, you are then able to see the data extracts that were coded to that node, and whose transcript the extract came from.

4. *Data reorganising* - Once all the relevant data were categorised, some nodes were reshuffled; if there were only one or two extracts in a node, some nodes were condensed. Equally, some nodes were divided into two nodes. For example, the child node of 'casual sex' was divided into two nodes 'experiences of casual sex' and 'thoughts on casual sex' that I felt captured the data more adequately.

5. *Identifying key themes* - Once satisfied with the nodes, a list of which parent and child nodes had the most data extracts with in them (i.e., which content categories were the most discussed) was generated, and it was noted what sort of content was discussed in these nodes. The nodes with greater than 30 'references' (data extracts) in them were prioritised when creating the survey. The list of the top nodes (attached in Appendix F) and was used to guide the survey building. The creation of the survey is discussed further later in this chapter.

Critical thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a broad and method for analysing qualitative data that is not attached to any theoretical or epistemological position (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). Thematic analysis is used for identifying patterns across the data and sorting it into themes to offer insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach allows for the researcher to interpret aspects of the research and data, guided by the research question(s). As a theoretically-neutral method, thematic analysis fits in with many different paradigms which is advantageous when conducting mixed methods research (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Other methods, such as Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, are tied to very specific epistemological positions which limits the type of analysis able to be conducted (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Further, as a thematic analysis-based method does not rely on large amounts of technical and theoretical knowledge in a way that other qualitative methods do, it is more likely that the results

will be more accessible to the general public (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is important as the research has findings that are valuable to plurisexual people and are intended to benefit the community. Finally, while thematic analysis can be used to identify and organise semantic patterns, it is also able to do in-depth and critical analysis, which is how the method is used in this project.

While the content analysis organised the data into basic content-based themes, the intention of doing a secondary qualitative analysis of the interview data were to provide a more in-depth critical analysis of the interviews that went beyond semantic description of the data and the interviewees experiences. The intention of this critically-informed thematic analysis was to situate the research in the broader sociocultural contexts, avoiding a culturally de-contextualised analysis. As social views of sexuality and gender impact how plurisexual people are seen and restrict how they can understand their plurisexuality (Rust, 2000a), this method can provide a way of examining how social discourses how interviewees talk about and experience being plurisexual women³⁷ (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Within thematic analysis, identifying patterns can be driven by pre-existing theory or based in the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To align with the data-driven and exploratory methodology, I elected to use an inductive approach, meaning that the patterns are derived and linked to the data instead of a pre-existing framework. This provides a more exploratory look across at the data in order to identify the main features of it, even if they did not fit with preconceptions about what the results would be or fit with past findings. In order to look at the underlying ideas in the data and the discourses and ideologies that inform the data and the interviewees' experiences, the themes were identified at the latent level. As is the nature of a critical thematic analysis, there is an analytic

³⁷ While I initially intended to look at how being plurisexual women in our society impacted interviewees' experiences of intimate relationships, it was clear after conducting the interviewees that romantic and sexual relationships were not what plurisexual women wanted to talk about. Much more time in the interviews was spent discussing personal and social impacts of identifying as plurisexual and their journey to identifying with their current identity terms. This is because interviewees felt that this was the topics they did not ever or rarely get the opportunity to discuss and is the most stigmatised part of their identity. Thus my study pivoted from looking specifically at relationships to looking more broadly at plurisexual women's lives.

interest in patterns beyond the surface or semantic level of the data. As this form of analysis requires interpretative work, it is the researcher's interests, perspectives and judgement that shape the themes that are identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is here that the analysis fits into the epistemological and theoretical assumptions that inform the research.

In conducting the thematic analysis, the six phases that were outlined and described by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed. While presented as discrete phases below, the thematic analysis process is not linear but a recursive process, it often requires oscillation between stages (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1. Familiarisation with the data – This phase involves immersion in the data. Through immersion, initial patterns and themes can be identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The act of transcribing data which involves repetitive (re)reading of the text, and the content analysis that had been already conducted on this data set, allowed for an ease of familiarity. Insights into each interview were noted down and initial thematic threads were salient.

2. Generating initial codes – Beginning in this phase, the data is systematically coded. These codes represent data organised into groups. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasised the necessity of giving each data item full and equal attention. As with the content analysis, an organisational software (NVivo 12) was used to assist with coding due to the large amount of data. To keep the coding relevant to the goals of the thesis, questions were asked of the data (such as 'what are the discourses interviewees draw on?'). At the end of this phase there were 151 initial codes.

3. Searching for themes – This phase refocuses the analysis from codes to themes through collating the codes. During this stage, relationships between codes are considered – that is, how they might fit together to form a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once the longlist of codes was collated, possible themes and groupings of codes were identified which eased the process of creating themes. This stage and the creation of themes was primarily done by hand without software. Several iterations of sorting were conducted by separating out broad themes with large

amounts of codes into smaller, more specific themes. The relationships between the codes was considered, including how some could fit into sub-themes under the broad theme headings. In order to clarify these initial themes and subthemes, a 'thematic map' (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was created (see Figure 3).

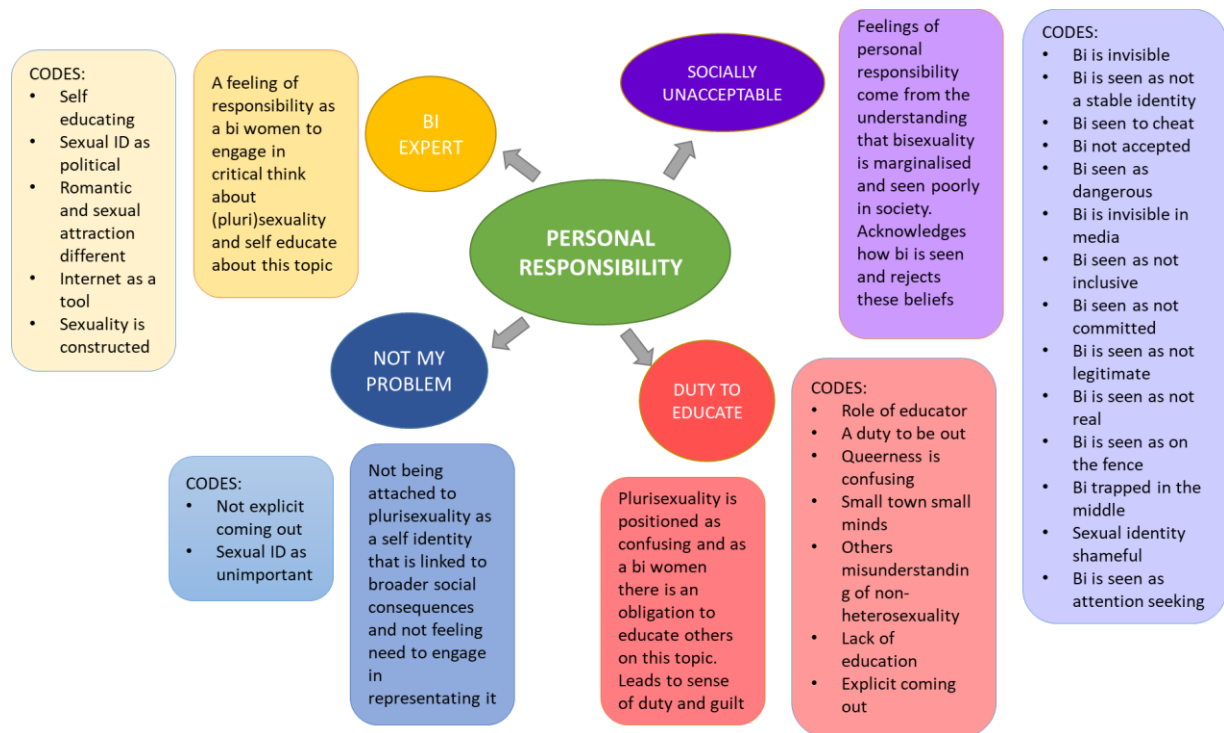


Figure 3. Original thematic map for one theme with initial titles and descriptions of each sub-theme.

4. *Reviewing themes* – This phase involves reviewing and refining candidate themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) clarify two levels of refinement for this stage. Level one involves collating the extracts for each theme and sub-theme to confirm that they follow a coherent pattern. Level two constitutes consideration of the validity of the themes in reflecting the overall data set's meanings. Within each level, returning to the data extracts and recoding and reworking the themes may be necessary to create valid and viable themes. During this phase, extracts for each subtheme were collated in a document which assisted with assessing for external heterogeneity and internal homogeneity. That is, clarifying if the data were too diverse or not well linked to the themes, and

whether there were clear distinctions *between* themes. The thematic map was updated to represent the clarified themes (see Figure 4).

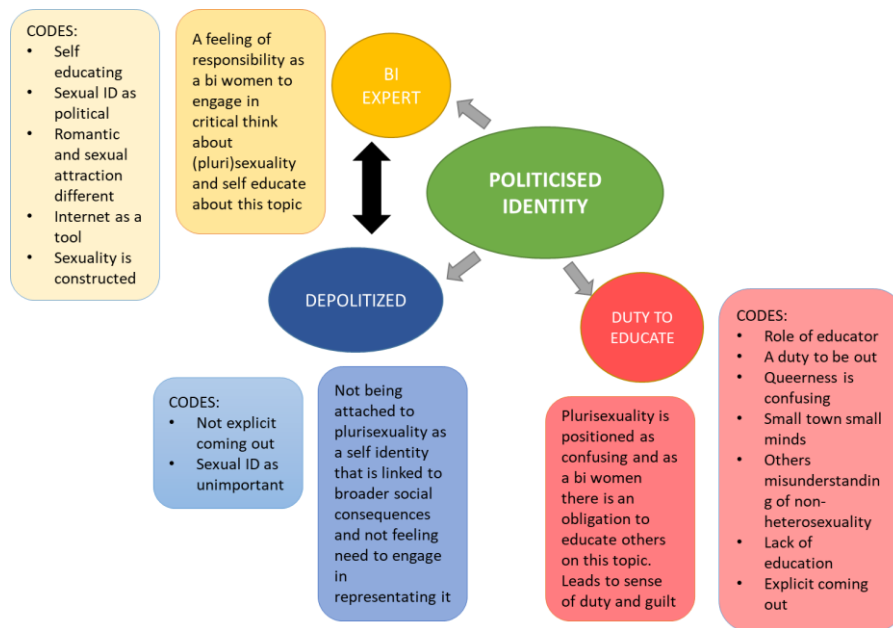


Figure 4. Further refinement of theme from Figure 3. represented by a thematic map with updated titles and descriptions.

5. *Defining and naming themes* – This phase involved ‘defining and refining’ themes including being clear of what each theme captures of the data. Data extracts that represent the themes and sub-themes are chosen and an analysis of the extracts are undertaken. Structural considerations including the ‘story’ of the theme, the order of the sub-themes and extracts are clarified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By the end of this phase, the importance and relevance of each theme was evident and able to be articulated. An initial analysis of each extract and the forming of the sub-themes began.

6. *Producing the report* – This final phase involves the final analysis and write up of the report to tell the story of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that extracts must present a compelling illustration of the analytic narrative which in turn must cohere to the research

question(s). During the writing up stage, returning to previous stages to further finesse and clarify each theme, sub-theme and its purpose in the overall narrative was necessary. Beyond the description for this stage laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase also involved examining relevant literature and considering how previous research and theories corresponded to (or contradicted) the analytic narrative presented within the themes.

This critical thematic analysis resulted in three themes (and one governing theme described in the preface to part three) which are described and analysed in Chapters eight, nine, and ten.

Phase two: Quantitative survey

This phase involves collecting responses of plurisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand through an online quantitative survey. The content analysis described in phase one and the third research question ('What are the demographics of bisexual and plurisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the characteristics of their lives related to their sexual identity?') guided this phase of the research.

Design

The data from the qualitative interviews were used as a basis for the survey questions. Previous scales that looked at plurisexual experiences were not used as the intention with this survey was not to provide numerical justifications of phenomena such as internalised monosexism or positive identity. The intention of this survey was instead to provide descriptive statistics to support and clarify the experiences of plurisexual women's lives across a broader range of plurisexual women than interviews allowed. Using the content analysis from phase one as a guide, particularly the list of the most discussed topics (see Appendix F), questions were created and divided into five areas: Demographics, Sexuality, Sexuality and Society, Sexuality and Relationships, and Sex.

Statistical advice was sought from the biostatistics department before the survey was published online. A pilot study with four plurisexual women was also conducted prior to the distribution of the survey. This assisted with identification of errors and phrasing clarifications in the survey. The pilot

study also helped clarify that the questions asked related to the answers we were expecting. Once the pilot study was concluded, feedback was received from the participants about the survey which helped with minor adjustments. The survey was then published using Qualtrics online survey tool.

Measures

Demographics pertaining to age, gender, (birth and current) location, ethnicity, and education levels were collected and are presented below. Questions pertaining to mental health diagnoses were asked. Following this, the sexuality section of the survey included questions pertaining to sexual identification, sexuality disclosure, pride in identity, the relationship between plurisexual women's sexual identity and their political identities, opinions around different plurisexual identity labels, attraction to different genders, and community. The sexuality and society section of the survey collected data connected to the plurisexual women's experiences relating to sexuality including other people's reactions, homophobia, bi-negativity, and media representations of bisexuality. The relationship section collected relationship-based demographics including relationship status, past and current partners' genders, marital status, children, ethical non-monogamy, and the sexual identities of past and current partners. In addition to this, other questions discussed were about relationship preferences (relating to gender and sexual identity of partners), and experiences with dating both on and offline. The final section on sex included collecting demographic details such as whether they had ever engaged in (consensual) sex, at what age did they first have sex, the genders of past and current partners, and their number of sexual partners. This section also asked questions pertaining to sexual preferences (relating to gender of partners), sexual education, and safe-sex practices. Additionally, data about casual sex behaviours – including engagement with casual sex, the circumstances which this occurred, and genders and numbers of casual sex partners – was collected. The survey concluded with questions about sexual assault and coercion.

Recruitment

As recruitment methods that were used for phase one were successful, the same methods for recruitment were used in this phase. This included contacting rainbow and women's organisations for assistance with advertising and posting the advertisement on social media and encouraging people to share it. Interview participants who had also expressed interest in the survey were contacted with the link to the survey as well. As data collection coincided (fortuitously) with International Bisexual Awareness Week, two radio interviews³⁸ and one media article³⁹ about my survey were published which meant that a broader demographic of women accessed the survey. The original goal for respondents was 500 but due to popularity of the survey this goal was expanded to 1000 responses. Once this was reached – not including the partial answers – the survey was closed (this took about one month).

Participants

In total, 1200 people responded to the survey. However, responses that were incomplete, did not consent to participating or did not qualify for participating were removed⁴⁰, leaving 994 viable responses. All data were anonymised by Qualtrics. Only one survey was allowed to be submitted per IP address which meant that there was a lower likelihood of people submitting more than one survey. Respondents ranged in age from 20 to 88 (Mean = 29.3, Median = 26)⁴¹. While most participants identified as cis women (90.4%), 1.78% of respondents identified as transgender women (3.27% of respondents identified as genderfluid/genderqueer, 3.37% of respondents identified as non-binary, and 0.79% of participants identified as 'other' (e.g., bi-gender, unsure, grey-gender, or takatāpui). The data of people who identified as genderfluid, non-binary or other were included in

³⁸ As a note, the radio interviews were interesting as in both interviews I had to take the role of educator of the radio hosts and explain why bisexuals were not 'greedy' – a question both of them asked. Having to 'defend' bisexuality was somewhat discomfoting.

³⁹ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/110447733/lgbt-pride-and-dating-how-bisexual-women-face-stigma-and-hostility-in-relationships>

⁴⁰ Screening questions were used for this purpose.

⁴¹ As participants were self-selected, there is a possibility that participants younger than 20 participated in the survey and did not disclose their age. I attempted to mitigate this by having the participants check a box before consenting to the research declaring that they were aged 20 and older; those who said they were below that age were taken to the end of the survey. However, there is no way of knowing if the ages are accurate.

the analysis as participants had to *self-identify* as women to take part in this study, and it was up to them to decide whether they fulfilled this prerequisite.

The majority of respondents (80.8%) were born in Aotearoa⁴². Of the 19.4% of respondents who were born overseas, 34.5% were born in the United Kingdom, 13.7% were born in Australia, 16.8% in North America, 9.1% in Africa, 8.6% in Asia, 6.1% in Europe, 1.5% in South America, and 1.5% in a country in Oceania⁴³.

At the time of the survey, the majority of respondents lived in Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara (30.7%)⁴⁴, Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau (27.6%), or Canterbury/Ōtautahi (17%). 1.1% lived in Northland/Te Tai Tokerau, 5.4% in Waikato, 2.2% in the Bay of Plenty/Te Moana-a-Toi, 0.1% in Gisborne/Te Tai Rāwhiti, 0.8% in the Hawke’s Bay/Te Matau-a-Māui, 0.6% in Taranaki, 3% in Manawatū-Whanganui, 0.6% in Marlborough/Te Taihū-o-te-waka, 0.8% in Nelson-Tasman/Whakatū-Te Tai-o-Aorere, 0.3% on the West Coast/Te Tai Poutini, 8.4% in Otago/Ōtākou, and 0.7% in Southland/Murihiku.

Past research with bisexual populations has been critiqued for the overrepresentation of white respondents (Barker et al., 2012). Unfortunately, while effort was undertaken to reach out to non-Pākehā-centred rainbow groups, the same was true in this sample, which is a significant limitation. 93.8% of respondents identified as Pākehā or White European (including 77.8% of respondents whose sole ethnicity was Pākehā or White European). However, in my sample participants were able to select more than one ethnicity and so 16% identified Pākehā/White European as one of several ethnicities they identified with. 12.5% of participants identified as Māori; and 89.5% of Māori respondents identified with more than one ethnicity (this is similar to the Aotearoa/New Zealand

⁴² In this sample, there are a slightly higher number of people born in Aotearoa than the general population.

⁴³ The rates of respondents who were born in each country differs greatly from the corresponding rates in Aotearoa’s population (according to the 2018 census).

⁴⁴ The high number of respondents who live in Wellington (despite it having a third of the population of Auckland) is likely due to Wellington being known as the most Rainbow-friendly city in Aotearoa.

population, where Māori make up 16.5% of the sample). 3.7% of respondents identified as Asian⁴⁵, and 43.2% of Asian respondents identified with more than one ethnicity. 2.5% of respondents identified as Pasifika⁴⁶, and 84% of Pasifika respondents identified with more than one ethnicity. 2% of participants identified with other ethnicities including African, Middle Eastern, Latinx, Jewish, Eurasian, and Indigenous American. Respondents had the option of using in the write-in 'other' selection when selecting their ethnicity. Ethnicity is ambiguous and can often be confused with ancestry (Aspinall, 2002). As it was up to the respondent to self-identify with their ethnicity, 2.9% of participants declared their ethnicity with their (or their ancestors) country of origin (e.g., Kiwi, British) which does not provide detail as to their ethnic background and thus could not be categorised as an ethnicity. The ethnicity options that were used for this question were taken from Statistics New Zealand, however the option to write in their ethnicity was also given.

The majority of respondents had completed a tertiary degree, diploma or certificate with 19.1% having a tertiary (or equivalent) certificate or graduate diploma, 33% had a bachelor's degree, 27% had a postgraduate degree or diploma, and 2.2% had a doctoral degree. 2.9% of respondents' highest education completed was some of high school, and 15.8% considered high school their highest education level completed. Bowes-Catton and Hayfield (2015) have critiqued research into bisexuality as primarily using on tertiary educated samples and due to the nature of self-selection bias the same could be said for this sample; 62.2% of respondents had a bachelor's degree or higher qualification, compared to 20% in the general population (Statistics New Zealand, 2015).

Analysis

The data from Qualtrics was exported into SPSS and 'cleaned up' for analysis. During this process decisions had to be made about variables that had a 'check all' option for respondents. SPSS does not give the option for each entry to have multiple variables selected, which led to some questions

⁴⁵ This is much lower than the Aotearoa population. According to the 2018 Census, 15.1% of the Aotearoa population are categorised as having an Asian ethnic identity.

⁴⁶ This is lower than the Aotearoa population. According to the 2018 Census, 8.1% of the Aotearoa population are categorised as having an Pasifika ethnic identity.

not being able to be analysed in SPSS. Statistics for those questions (such as ethnicity statistics) were instead brought over to Excel. However, in order to run some analyses on these data, they were also organised using a method of 'prioritising' ethnicities; for example, if people selected both Māori and Pākehā as their ethnicities, the Māori ethnicity was prioritised for analysis. In this way people who selected Māori, Pasifika, Asian, and Middle-Eastern were prioritised over their Pākehā identity. This lack of nuance of the data is an unfortunate limitation of statistical analysis and can present a narrower view of respondents lives and experiences than wanted.

In organising the data, the 'write in' data (for when this option was given) was organised and categorised. For some data it was relevant to group it with existing categories – such as grouping 'biromantic' with 'bisexual' as sexual identities. Some respondents had written in an answer that was already presented as an option and these were grouped together. Unfortunately, 'written in' data presents a slightly skewed picture of the data as 'written in' data may have been chosen as options by other participants if it was presented as options in the survey.

All statistical tests were reviewed by a statistical consultant to assure that relevant tests were run. All test assumptions were checked prior to conducted to tests to assure that the data fulfilled the assumptions. For all tests, the significance level tested against is at 5%.

It is essential to note that the sample used is a self-selected convenience sample; I relied on using people that were connected to various social communities as respondents and to spread the word to other people (e.g., Aotearoa's rainbow community, feminist community, academic community) so people who are not actively in those communities may not have found out about this survey (although this may have been slightly mitigated by doing media interviews that catered to a wider audience). Results from this survey only reflect the views of the people who took this survey and cannot be extrapolated to represent the entire population of plurisexual women who live in Aotearoa.

Summary

This chapter presented the methodology used for this research, arguing for the necessity of using a sequential exploratory mixed method approach. The ethical concerns and the reflexivity of the researcher was discussed. Following this, the methods used for recruitment, data collection, and data analysis for the two phases of research were outlined. Phase one discussed the qualitative semi-structured interviews that were conducted with twenty plurisexual women throughout Aotearoa. The two forms of data analysis that were conducted on this interview data were detailed. This included a content analysis to identify important topics that were used to build the survey conducted in phase two. In addition to that, a critical thematic analysis was conducted with the results presented in later chapters. Phase two discussed the quantitative survey that was distributed online to plurisexual women in Aotearoa. This survey used a community-based sample and the results were organised into thematic sections and analysed using both descriptive and inductive statistics. The following chapter presents the results to the analysis of the survey data.

CHAPTER SIX

Survey Results: Characteristics of Plurisexual Women’s Lives and Experiences in Aotearoa

This chapter will present the data and results from the cross-sectional community-based survey that was completed by women who attracted to multiple genders (i.e., plurisexual women). The survey asked about their opinions and experiences of their sexual identity. The data presented is primarily in the form of descriptive statistics, but additional inferential statistical tests were also conducted to explore connections between some data points. As noted in the previous chapter, the survey used a community-based sample and thus findings cannot be extrapolated beyond the experiences of respondents to examine population-based trends. Further, as this was an exploratory study, research questions rather than hypotheses guided the analysis. Results are therefore *indicative* rather than conclusive. The primary research question that guided this survey was ‘What are the demographics and general characteristics of women who identify with plurisexual identities in Aotearoa?’. The questions were grouped into three thematic sections: *Sexual identity*, *Relationships*, and *Sex*. Two topics that were unable to be categorised by these sections – *Mental Health* and *Sexual Assault* – follow. A summary table of variables of interest for the survey is attached (Appendix H).

Sexual identity

Sexual identity terms

Previous studies have shown that many plurisexual people prefer to use more than one identity term to describe their sexual identity (Belous & Bauman, 2016), and use different terms in different social contexts (Galupo, 2018). This nuance was captured to an extent through three questions about sexual identity terms. Respondents were given the option to select more than one choice for the first question ‘*If you were to label your sexual identity, what term(s) would you use*’, thus multiple identities terms could be selected. For the second two questions, ‘*Which sexual identity term do you generally prefer to identify with?*’ and ‘*Which sexual identity term do you use the most*

to describe yourself?’ only one label was able to be chosen. For all questions there was the option to fill in any identity not given.

For terms people used to label their sexual identity, bisexual (which included ‘biromantic’) was the most popular with 82.4% of respondents selecting this response. This was followed by pansexual (including ‘panromantic’), with 47.3% of respondents identifying with that term, and queer, with 46.8% of respondents identifying with it. 15.2% of respondents identified as gay and 12.3% as lesbian⁴⁷. 8.1% of participants identified as being on the asexual spectrum (which also includes a-romantic, grey-sexual, and demi-sexual). 5.8% of respondents identified as polysexual, 4.4% as straight, and 4.1% as omnisexual. Five percent of respondents identified with other terms such as takatāpui, androsexual, sapiosexual, heteroflexible, or were currently questioning their sexual identity or did not want to identify with a label. These results are illustrated in Figure 5.

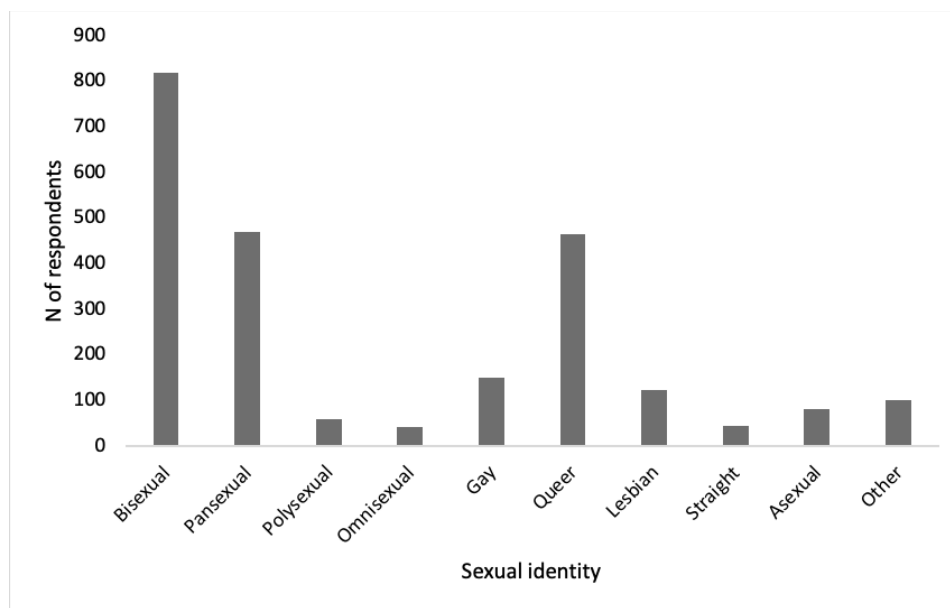


Figure 5. The number of survey respondents that identified with sexual identity terms when given the option of multiple choice.

When asked what terms participants *prefer* to identify with, and were forced to select one term, only 47.6% of respondents preferred bisexual. 19.4% preferred queer, 17% preferred pansexual, 4%

⁴⁷ Gay and lesbian were separated as options as some queer women may prefer to identify as gay, as it is often thought of as an umbrella term for non-heterosexuality, and has different connotations than ‘lesbian’.

preferred straight, 3.6% preferred lesbian, 2.6% preferred gay, 1.8% preferred no label, 1.3% preferred asexual and all other labels respondents preferred were below 1%. For identify terms that respondents identified with most often, 55.1% identified as bisexual the most, 12.8% identified as queer, 10.1% identified as pansexual, 7.7% identified as straight, 5.1% identified as lesbian, 4.0% identified as gay, 1.8% identified as no label, 1.3% identified as asexual, and the other labels were below 1%. The results for both questions are illustrated in Figure 6.

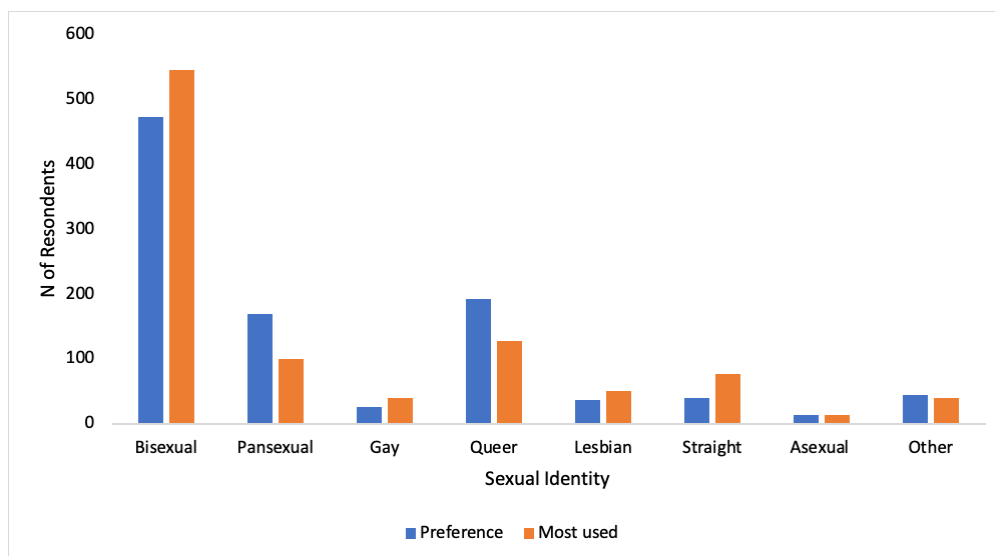


Figure 6. A comparison of survey respondents sexual identity terms they prefer to identify with and the sexual identity term they use the most often.

To examine whether there was a significant association between the sexual identity terms plurisexual women used the most and the terms they preferred to use, a Chi-Square Test for association was run⁴⁸. There was a significant association at the 5% level between the term’s respondents prefer to use and the terms they used the most, $\chi^2(16) = 1231.77, p = <0.001$. To provide a more detailed look at this relationship, a post-hoc test was conducted using a Bonferroni-adjusted alpha level of 0.002 (0.05/25). The cells highlighted in blue in the table below represent the statistically significant cells at the 0.2% level. From this test we can see that for all sexual identities

⁴⁸ As many categories had low sample sizes, in each variable some groupings were compressed in order to meet the assumptions of a chi-square test. The final groupings were ‘bisexual’, ‘pansexual’, ‘gay/lesbian’, ‘queer’ and ‘other’. ‘Other’ included the asexual spectrum, ‘polysexual’, ‘omnisexual’, ‘straight’, ‘takatāpui’, ‘no label’, and ‘unsure’.

there was a significant association between the terms they use the most and the terms they prefer to use. There was also a relationship between people who most often use the terms pansexual, gay/lesbian, and queer, and preferring to identify as bisexual. However, as the number of respondents who fit these categories are small, this finding does not hold much weight. The results of the post-hoc test is presented in Table 2.

Age

Respondents were asked when they first identified, to themselves, with their current sexual identity. The mean age was 17.4 years old; the median age was 16 years old, and the mode was 14 years old. They were also asked at what age they first disclosed their current sexual identity to other people. The mean age was 20.9 years old; the median age was 20 years old, and the mode was 18 years old. If people had not disclosed their sexual identity to others, their data were not included. This data is presented in Figure 7. A paired t-test was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference in plurisexual women's age of self-identifying with their current sexual identity term and age of disclosure their sexual identity to others. There was strong evidence against the null hypothesis. On average, the age of disclosing sexual identity to self ($M = 17.34$, $SD = 6.11$) differed from the age of disclosing to others ($M = 20.84$, $SD = 6.5$). This difference, 3.496, 95% CI [3.176, 3.815], was statistically significant, $t(947) = 21.48$, $p < 0.001$.

		Most Used Sexual Identity Term					Total	
		Bisexual	Pansexual	Gay/Lesbian	Queer	Other		
Preferred Sexual Identity Term	Bisexual	Count	378	10	13	15	55	471
		Expected Count	259.1	47.6	42.9	60.5	61.0	471.0
		% within Preference	80.3%	2.1%	2.8%	3.2%	11.7%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	15.2	-7.9	-6.6	-8.7	-1.1	
		Post-hoc analysis	0.000000	0.000000	0.000219	0.000000	1.000000	
	Pansexual	Count	71	77	5	8	6	167
		Expected Count	91.9	16.9	15.2	21.4	21.6	167.0
		% within Preference	42.5%	46.1%	3.0%	4.8%	3.6%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-3.6	16.9	-3.0	-3.4	-3.9	
		Post-hoc analysis	0.697075	0.000000	0.911071	0.768633	0.482036	
	Gay/Lesbian	Count	6	3	50	1	2	62
		Expected Count	34.1	6.3	5.6	8.0	8.0	62.0
		% within Preference	9.7%	4.8%	80.6%	1.6%	3.2%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-7.4	-1.4	20.2	-2.7	-2.4	
		Post-hoc analysis	0.000004	0.999989	0.000000	0.963555	0.992327	
	Queer	Count	63	4	18	100	7	192
		Expected Count	105.6	19.4	17.5	24.7	24.8	192.0
		% within Preference	32.8%	2.1%	9.4%	52.1%	3.6%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-6.9	-4.1	0.1	18.1	-4.3	
		Post-hoc analysis	0.000059	0.392487	1.000000	0.000000	0.308033	
Other	Count	26	6	4	3	58	97	
	Expected Count	53.4	9.8	8.8	12.5	12.6	97.0	
	% within Preference	26.8%	6.2%	4.1%	3.1%	59.8%	100.0%	
	Adjusted Residual	-5.9	-1.4	-1.8	-3.0	14.5		
	Post-hoc analysis	0.004564	0.999995	0.999729	0.907885	0.000000		
Total	Count	544	100	90	127	128	989	
	Expected Count	544.0	100.0	90.0	127.0	128.0	989.0	
	% within Preference	55.0%	10.1%	9.1%	12.8%	12.9%	100.0%	

Table 2. Chi square test of difference between the sexual identity terms respondents used the most and the sexual identity terms they prefer to use.

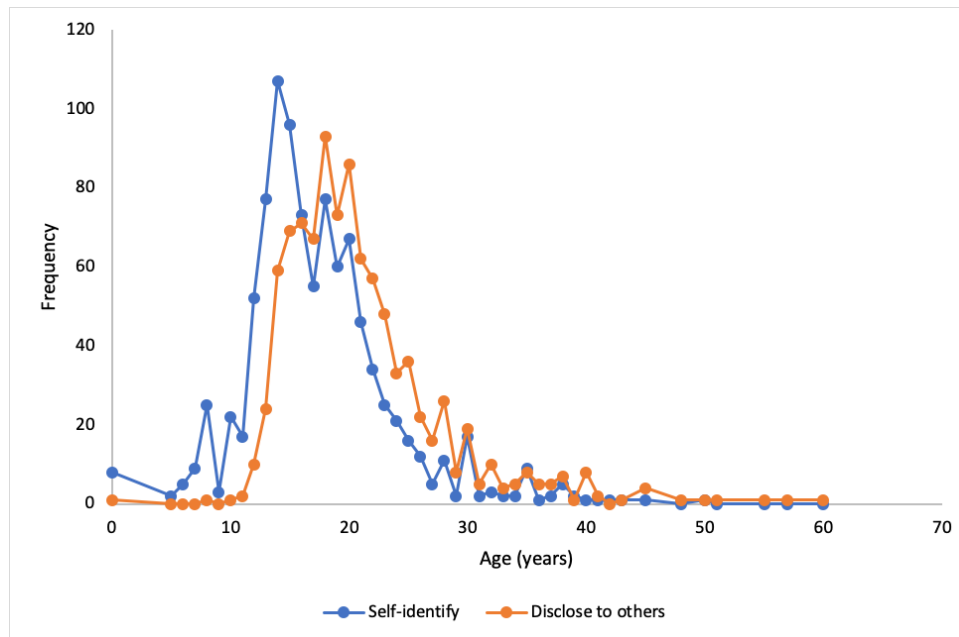


Figure 7. The age that respondents began identifying with their sexual identity compared to the age that respondents began disclosing their sexual identity to others.

In recent examinations of plurisexual identities, some researchers theorised that the age of plurisexual people impacted whether they identify as bisexual or used other plurisexual terms such as pansexual or queer. Some research concluded that that pansexual people skew younger than bisexual people, although the evidence for this is mixed (Callis, 2014; Flanders et al., 2017a). Other research has shown that people who identify as bisexual in broader rainbow populations skews lower (Pew Research Center, 2013). In order to examine these claims in this sample, a Chi-Square Test was conducted to determine whether there was an association between the age of plurisexual women and the sexual identity term they prefer to use⁴⁹ ($\chi^2(8) = 9.376, p = 0.312$). The p-value of 0.312 is above the significance level of 0.05, giving no evidence against the null hypothesis. I conclude that unlike previous literature drawing links between age and preference sexual identity terms, there is no evidence from this study that such an association exists.

⁴⁹ For this test to be viable, ages were grouped into three categories for best fit: ages 20 – 29, 30 – 39, 40+. The decision to use these specific groupings was decided by best fit and guided by the age groupings used in Pew Research Center (2013)'s report.

Sexual identity opinions

Respondents were asked about their opinions of, and feelings towards, their own sexual identity.

This was done by asking the respondents on a 5-point Likert scale (from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree') whether they viewed their sexuality as an important part of who they are, whether they are proud of their sexual identity, and whether they question their sexual identity⁵⁰. Most respondents (81% of respondents) agreed that their sexual identity was an important part of themselves, and 13.9% felt neutrally. Only 5.1% of respondents disagreed with the statement that their sexual identity was an important part of themselves. Looking at pride in sexual identity, 69.9% agreed with the statement that they felt pride in their sexual identity, 22.7% felt neutrally, and only 7.4% disagreed. Interestingly, there was higher variability with whether survey respondents questioned their sexual identity; 50.2% of survey respondents agreed that they question their sexual identity, 11.1% were neutral, and 38.7% disagreed with the statement '*i sometimes question my sexual identity*'.

Respondents opinions on their pride in their sexual identity and their questioning of their sexual identity were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test. It was hypothesised that plurisexual women who reported being prouder of their sexual identity were less likely to question their sexual identity. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test indicated for the difference between sexual identity questioning and pride was statistically significant, $T = 239158.5$, $z = 14.59$, $p < 0.001$. Respondents opinions on viewing their sexual identity as an important part of their self-identity and questioning their sexual identity was also hypothesised to be related. On average, survey respondents who viewed their sexual identity as an important part of their self-identity were less likely to question their sexual identity. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test indicated this difference was statically significant, $T = 254346.5$, $z = -17.47$, $p < 0.001$.

⁵⁰ For all Likert-scale questions, extremely and somewhat negatively, and extremely and somewhat positively were collapsed into one percentage (respectively) for legibility of results. The separate percentages are presented in the summary tables of variables.

Using a 5-point Likert scale (from 'extremely negative' to 'extremely positive'), respondents were asked how they felt about their sexual identity when they first identified with it, and how they felt about their sexual identity currently. 39.6% felt positive when they first identified with their sexual identity, 27.4% felt neither positive nor negative, 33% felt negatively. In comparison, 81.3% felt currently positive about their sexual identity, 15.1% felt neither positive nor negative, and only 3.6% of respondents felt negative about their sexual identity at the time of the survey. Respondents opinions about how they felt about with their sexual identity when they first identified it and how they currently felt about their sexual identity were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test. On average, plurisexual women felt more positive about their sexual identity over time. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test indicated improvement in opinion of their sexual identity was statically significant, $T = 248470$, $z = -20.67$, $p < 0.001$. It should be considered, however, that people who did not feel positive about their sexual identity may have been less likely to self-select to take part in this survey.

Social groupings and sexual identity

Respondents were asked whether they saw their ethnicity, cultural background and/or religion as impacting how they viewed their sexual identity. Of the respondents, 48% agreed with this sentiment, 18.6% felt neutral, 33.4% disagreed and that their ethnicity, cultural background, and/or religion affected how their viewed their sexual identity. A Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that plurisexual women of different ethnicities did not significantly differ in whether they view their ethnicity, cultural background or religion as affecting how they view their sexual identity, $\chi^2(4) = 2.13$, $p = 0.715$). As the majority of respondents were Pākehā (see Chapter four for a full description of the respondents' demographics), it is likely that this informed the results.

Respondents were also asked whether they saw their sexuality as impacting *and* impacted by their political ideologies and identities. 75.2% of respondents agreed with this sentiment, 9.8% were neutral, and 15% disagreed that their sexual identity impacts and is impacted by their political ideologies and political identities. The specific political identities of respondents were not examined

as it was outside of the scope of this survey. However, past research has showed that rainbow people are more likely to be politically left-leaning (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Opinions on sexual identity terms

Past research has shown that many people within rainbow communities dislike the term 'bisexual' because of perceptions that it is a binary and transphobic term due to the dichotomy seen as intrinsic in the 'bi' prefix (Elizabeth, 2013). Therefore, to assess respondents' opinions towards the term bisexual, respondents were asked to rate on separate 5-point Likert scales how inclusive, binary, and transphobic they view the term. They were also asked the same questions about the term pansexual for comparison.

Sixty percent of respondents agreed that 'bisexual' was an inclusive term, 15.8% were neutral, and 24.2% disagreed that it was inclusive. Comparatively, 86.9% agreed that 'pansexual' was an inclusive term, 9.3% were neutral, and 3.8% disagreed. These results are presented in Figure 8. For the second statement⁵¹ 'I think bisexual is a binary term', 47.1% agreed, 16.6% were neutral, and 36.3% disagreed⁵². While to the statement 'I think pansexual is a binary term' 5.7% of respondents agreed, 16.8% were neutral, and 77.4% of respondents disagreed⁵³. These results are presented in Figure 9. Finally, to the statement, 'I think bisexual is a transphobic term' only 14.4% agreed, 11.3% were neutral, and 74.3% disagreed⁵⁴. Whereas 2.6% agreed, 6.2% were neutral, and 91.2% of respondents disagreed that pansexual is a transphobic term⁵⁵. These results are presented in Figure 10.

Respondents' opinions of pansexuality and bisexuality were compared for each three statements using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. On average, plurisexual women view the term 'pansexual' as more inclusive, less binary, and less transphobic than the term 'bisexual'. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks

⁵¹ These statements were presented to each respondent in a random order to prevent bias.

⁵² It is important to note here that 8.9% of data were missing for this statement which can be attributed to using a matrix table to ask this set of questions. I would not recommend doing this as many respondents do not like this format, particularly when taking the survey on a mobile device.

⁵³ 12.2% of data were missing for this statement.

⁵⁴ 8.6% of data were missing for this statement.

⁵⁵ 10.8% of data were missing for this statement.

Tests indicated that this was statistically significant for each variable, $T = 138234$, $z = -14.64$, $p < 0.001$; $T = 149130$, $z = -18.49$, $p < 0.001$; $T = 57826.5$, $z = -11.66$, $p < 0.001$. However, for the last variable – whether ‘pansexual’ and ‘bisexual’ were transphobic terms – there were a higher number of ties than positive and negative ranks ($n = 485$).

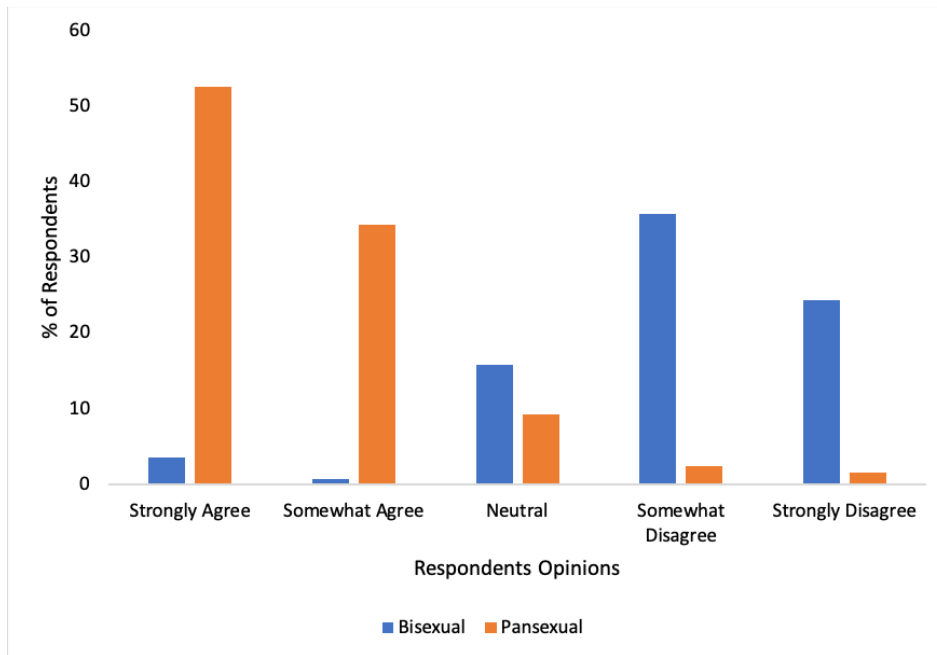


Figure 8. A comparison of survey respondents' opinions of whether bisexual and pansexual are inclusive terms.

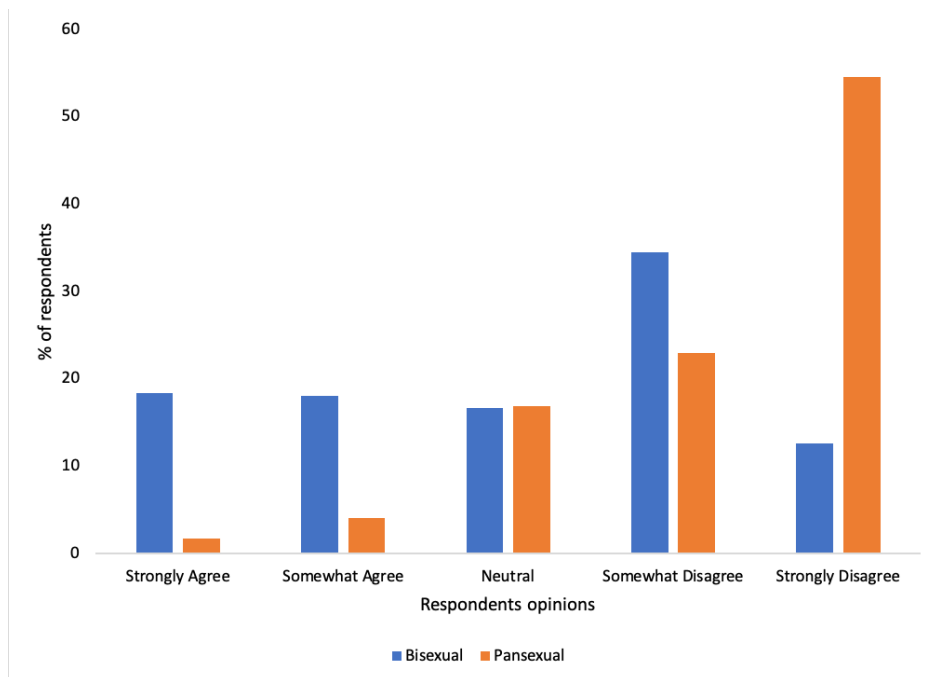


Figure 9. A comparison of survey respondents' opinions of whether bisexual and pansexual are binary terms.

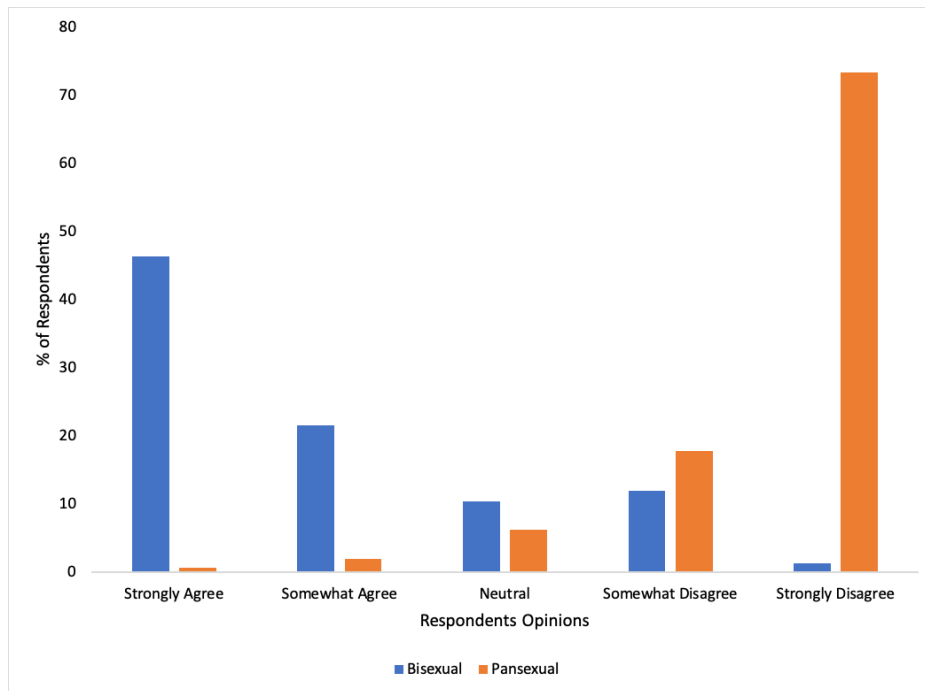


Figure 10. A comparison of survey respondents' opinions of whether bisexual and pansexual are transphobic terms.

Attraction

Research has shown that plurisexual people experience change in attraction depending on the gender of their attraction-object, and their attraction to different genders may change across time (Diamond, 2000). To examine whether respondents noticed a change in their attraction to people of different genders over time, respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale whether they feel like their sexual and romantic attraction to different genders was stable across time. Two separate questions were asked to distinguish whether there was difference between sexual and romantic attraction. 46.2% of respondents agreed that they felt that their *sexual* attraction to people of different genders was stable across time, 5.2% felt neutral, and 48.6% disagreed that their sexual attraction to different genders is stable across time. 48.6% of respondents agreed that they felt that their *romantic* attraction to people of different genders is stable across time, 6.2% were neutral, and 45.2% disagreed that their romantic attraction to people of different genders is stable across time. Respondents romantic and sexual attraction were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to see if people differentiated in their sexual and romantic attraction to different

genders. On average, plurisexual women viewed their romantic attraction as more stable than their sexual attraction to different genders. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 30475, z = -2.4, p = 0.017$). However, there were a higher number of ties than positive and negative ranks indicating that many people viewed no difference between their sexual and romantic attraction.

In regard to the direction of attraction to different genders, respondents ranked on a 5-point Likert scale whether they agreed with the statement that they were attracted to all genders equally. 28.5% of respondents agreed that they attracted to all genders equally, 6.1% were neutral, and 65.3% disagreed that they were attracted to all genders equally. Questions pertaining to the specific genders people were more attracted to was not asked as past research has shown that what genders respondents were more attracted to at the time of the survey could change over minutes, days, and years, therefore the results would have likely not been accurate across time (Klesse, 2011).

Sexual identity disclosure

Respondents were asked whether they viewed disclosing their sexual identity to people close to them as important. 59.2% of respondents agreed with the sentiment that disclosure was important, 17% were neutral, and 23.7% of respondents disagreed that disclosure of their sexual identity was important. Following this, respondents were then asked whether people had explicitly disclosed their sexual identity to their family. 20.9% had completely disclosed their identity to their family, 37.1% had disclosed to some of their family, 21.1% had not explicitly disclosed their sexual identity but their family knew that they are not heterosexual, and 20.9% had not disclosed their sexual identity at all to their family.

For those who had not disclosed their sexual identity to their family, the respondents were asked for the reasons why they had not explicitly 'come out'. Multiple options were able to be selected. 58% of respondents felt that it was easier not to mention their sexual identity, 39.3% felt that they could be viewed differently for disclosing their sexual identity, 32.7% felt that their sexual identity was no-

one else's business, 16.1% did not want others to know, and 13.3% felt too unsafe to disclose. Qualitatively written-in reasons for not coming out included wanting to avoid biphobia (9%), they were in a heterosexual presenting relationship and therefore felt like disclosing their sexual identity was irrelevant or unnecessary (6.2%), feeling like their family would not understand (5.7%), due to cultural or religious reasons (4.7%), they were still questioning their sexual identity and were not ready to 'come out' (3.3%), not feeling comfortable 'coming out' (3.3%), the topic never came up (2.8%), not being in contact with family (1.4%), or they did not like the concept of needing to 'come out' (1.4%). We can see from these statistics that there are often multiple factors that plurisexual women consider when deciding to disclose their sexual identity to their family.

A chi-square test was used to assess whether people who placed importance in disclosing their sexual identity to people important to them actually disclosed their sexual identity to their family. It is assumed in this instance that respondents included family members in people that were important to them. There was a statistically significant result between opinions on disclosing their sexual identity to people close to them and disclosing their sexual identity to family members, $\chi^2 (12) = 282.91, p = <0.001$. To provide a more detailed look at this significance, a post-hoc test was conducted using a Bonferroni-adjusted alpha level of 0.0025 (0.05/20). The cells highlighted in blue in the table below represent the statistically significant cells at the 0.25% level. From this test we can see a significant relationship between plurisexual women disagreeing that disclosing their sexual identity is important, and them not disclosing their sexual identity to their family. There is also a significant relationship between viewing disclosing their sexual identity as important and disclosing their sexual identity to their family. However, as the number of respondents for each variable was so small, these findings do not hold much weight. These results are presented below in Table 3.

		I have explicitly disclosed my sexual identity to my family					
			Yes completely	Some of my family	Not explicitly	No	Total
Disclosing sexual identity to people close to me is important (DI)	Strongly disagree	Count	3	6	7	26	42
		Expected	8.8	15.6	8.9	8.8	42.0
		Count					
		% within DI	7.1%	14.3%	16.7%	61.9%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.2	-3.1	-0.7	6.7	
			0.958	0.639	1.000	0.000	
	Somewhat disagree	Count	9	40	57	87	193
		Expected	40.2	71.5	40.8	40.4	193.0
		Count					
		% within DI	4.7%	20.7%	29.5%	45.1%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-6.2	-5.2	3.2	9.2	
			0.000	0.007	0.607	0.000	
	Neutral	Count	19	63	45	40	167
		Expected	34.8	61.9	35.3	35.0	167.0
		Count					
% within DI		11.4%	37.7%	26.9%	24.0%	100.0%	
Adjusted Residual		-3.3	0.2	2.0	1.0		
		0.535	1.000	0.983	1.000		
Somewhat agree	Count	76	175	74	48	373	
	Expected	77.8	138.2	78.9	78.1	373.0	
	Count						
	% within DI	20.4%	46.9%	19.8%	12.9%	100.0%	
	Adjusted Residual	-0.3	5.0	-0.8	-4.9		
		1.000	0.015	1.000	0.023		
Strongly agree	Count	99	82	26	6	213	
	Expected	44.4	78.9	45.1	44.6	213.0	
	Count						
	% within DI	46.5%	38.5%	12.2%	2.8%	100.0%	
	Adjusted Residual	10.4	0.5	-3.6	-7.3		
		0.000	1.000	0.367	0.000		
Total	Count	206	366	209	207	988	
	Expected	206.0	366.0	209.0	207.0	988.0	
	Count						
	% within DI	20.9%	37.0%	21.2%	21.0%	100.0%	

Table 3. Chi square test of difference between respondents answer to the question 'Have you explicitly disclosed your sexual identity to my family?' and their level of agreement with the statement 'Disclosing sexual identity to people close to me is important'.

Survey respondents were then asked about their decision not to disclose their sexual identity in other (non-family) situations. 92.2% of respondents had decided not to disclose their sexual identity

in some circumstances. 69.7% of respondents said this was because it was easier not to mention, 49.5% thought they would be viewed differently for disclosing their (non-heterosexual) sexual identity, 43.6% did not want to be sexualised by others, 43.6% did not think it was important, 33.9% felt too unsafe to disclose their sexual identity, and 23.2% did not want others to know about their sexual identity. Qualitative write-in reasons given for not disclosing their sexual identity included respondents were in a work setting (and therefore felt it was inappropriate) (2.6%), they didn't want to have to explain or justify their sexual identity (2%), to avoid homophobia or biphobia (1.9%), they felt like it was not relevant (1.7%), to avoid people's reactions (1.3%), because they were in a heterosexual (presenting) relationship (and therefore felt it was unnecessary or irrelevant) (1.2%), they did not want to or were not sure how to come out (1.1%), they felt that people would not understand (1.1%), due to religious or cultural reasons (1.1%) or they felt like it was awkward to mention (0.9%). Like coming out to family, the selection of more than one option for not disclosing their sexual identity that occurred for many respondents reflects the many factors that make up the decision of whether to disclose their sexual identity to others.

Community

Plurisexual people have been shown to have a fraught relationship with rainbow communities in that some of the discrimination that they face is from lesbian and gay people (Schimanski & Treharne, 2018). To examine respondent's own relationship with rainbow communities, respondents were asked on a 5-point Likert scale (From 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree') whether they agreed with the statement that they felt connected to rainbow communities. 45.7% agreed, 16% felt neutral, and 38.3% disagreed that they felt connected to rainbow communities. Conversely, 43.8% agreed with the statement that they felt isolated from rainbow communities because of their sexual identity, 16.9% were neutral, and 39.3% of respondents disagreed⁵⁶. Following on from that, 66.8% agreed with the statement that they feel like they have less of a

⁵⁶ As a matrix table was used for these set of statements, 8.6% of data is missing.

community than people of other sexual identities, 11.3% were neutral, and 21.8% of respondents disagreed. For the final statement *'I have felt unwelcome at an LGBTQ space/event because of my sexuality'*, 41.8% of respondents agreed, 14% were neutral, and 44.2% disagreed this statement. However, there had a high level of missing data for this statement (17.4%), possibly due to respondents not experiencing feeling unwelcome or they felt that this question was not relevant to them. To compare not feeling connected to rainbow communities and feeling isolated from rainbow communities, 'feeling connected' variable was reverse scored, and a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was conducted. The test indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between not feeling connected and feeling isolated from the rainbow community ($T = 83747.5$, $z = -1.32$, $p = 0.187$).

Experiences of binegativity

A prevailing opinion about plurisexual identified people from gay people is that they are privileged to be able to "pass" as heterosexual due to their attraction to multiple genders (Wandrey et al., 2015). To examine whether respondents agreed with this belief, respondents were asked to choose the degree to which they agreed with the statement *'I feel that I benefit from "straight passing privilege"'*. 15.9% of respondents disagreed that they benefited from 'straight passing privilege', 6.8% felt neutral, and 77.2% of respondents believed that they benefitted from this 'privilege'.

As sexual identity is often presented as a dichotomy, plurisexual identities can be invisibilised and erased (Yoshino, 2000). This can lead to people assuming plurisexual people are either straight or gay, particularly if they are in a monogamous relationship (Hartman, 2013). To examine respondents' thoughts and feelings about people assuming their sexual identity, respondents were asked for their opinions to the statement *'I don't like it when people assume I am straight/heterosexual'* on a 5-point Likert scale (from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'). 71% of respondents agreed that they disliked when people assumed they were heterosexual, 16.6% were neutral, and 12.3% disagreed that they did not like when people assume they were straight.

Comparatively, to the statement *'I don't like it when people assume I am lesbian/gay'*, 31.7% of respondents agreed with the statement, 25.7% were neutral, and 42.6% disagreed with the statement that they did not like it when people assumed they were gay. Respondents opinions about being assumed to be gay and assumed to be straight were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to see whether plurisexual women differed in whether they did not like being assumed to be gay or straight. On average, plurisexual women preferred to be assumed gay than assumed straight. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 180698.5, z = -17.43, p < 0.001$). This result also supports results from a statement that respondents were asked to give their opinion on *'I would rather people assume I am gay rather than assume I am straight'*; 41.6% of respondents agreed with this sentiment, 30.9% felt neutral, and 27.5% disagreed that they preferred people assumed they were gay rather than straight.

To capture how the respondents thought other people perceived their sexual identity, statements around this concept were divided into four groups: straight men, straight women, gay men, and lesbians. This was done to see whether there was a perceived gender and sexuality difference in how respondents believed plurisexual identities are seen. There was a high number of missing data for the gay men and lesbian variables (17.5% and 11.2% respectively) and therefore these results hold less weight. Respondents believed that straight men misunderstand their sexuality the most, with 87.9% of respondents agreeing with the statement *'I feel like my sexuality is misunderstood by most straight men'*. 7.9% were neutral, and only 4.1% of respondents disagreed with the statement that their sexuality is misunderstood by most straight men. In comparison, 70.5% of respondents agreed to the statement that their sexuality is misunderstood by most straight women. 16.6% felt neutral, and 12.9% disagreed that their sexuality is misunderstood by most straight women. 46.1% of respondents saw their sexual identity as misunderstood by gay men, 33.5% were neutral, and 20.4% disagreed. Finally, 54.4% of respondents agreed that their sexual identity was misunderstood by lesbians, 25.7% were neutral, and 20% disagreed. These figures are represented in Figure 11.

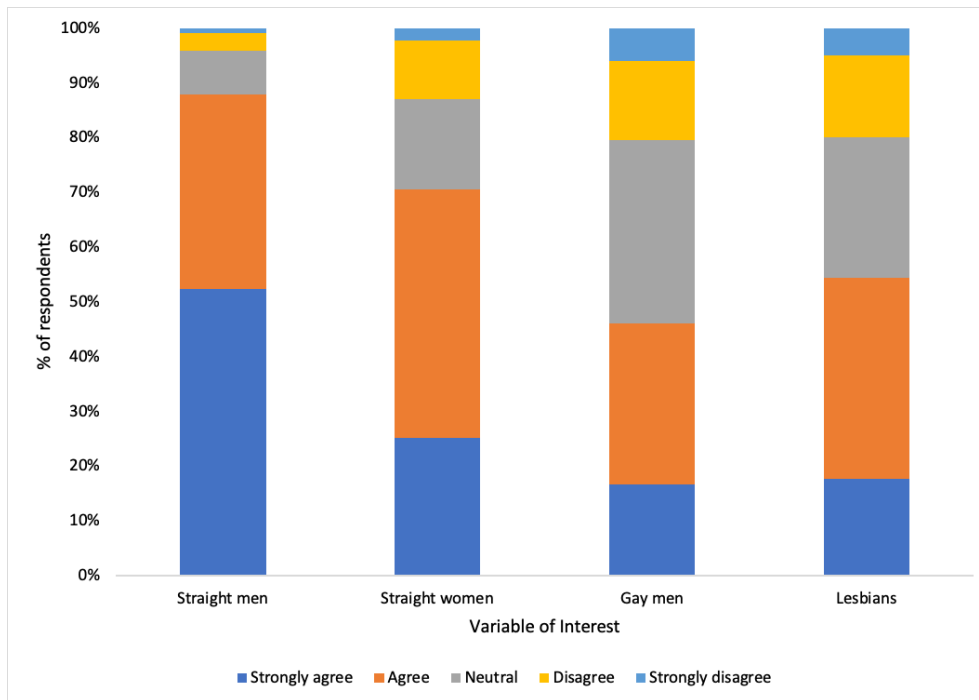


Figure 11. A comparison of survey respondents' opinions about whether they felt misunderstood by straight men, straight women, gay men, and lesbians.

Respondents' opinions about their sexual identity being misunderstood by straight women and straight men were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. On average, plurisexual women viewed straight men as misunderstanding their sexual identity more than straight women. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 102152$, $z = -15.06$, $p < 0.001$). However, there were a higher number of ties than negative and positive ranks ($n = 457$).

Respondents perception of whether straight men, straight women, gay men, and lesbians viewed their sexual identity negatively was also examined. Again, there was a high amount of missing data for the gay men and lesbian variables (18.2% and 10.9% respectively). 37.3% of respondents agreed with the statement that their sexuality is seen negatively by most straight men, 19.8% were neutral, and 42.9% of respondents disagreed with the belief that their sexual identity is seen negatively by most straight men. In comparison, 46.6% of respondents agreed with the statement that their sexual identity is seen negatively by most straight women, 24.5% felt neutral, and 29% of respondents disagreed that their sexual identity is seen negatively by most straight women. 28% of respondents

believed their sexual identity was seen negatively by gay men, 40.7% were neutral, and 31.2% of respondents disagreed with this statement. Finally, 53.9% of respondents believed their sexual identity was seen negatively by lesbians, 24.6% felt neutrally, and 21.4% of respondents disagreed with this statement. These figures are represented in Figure 12.

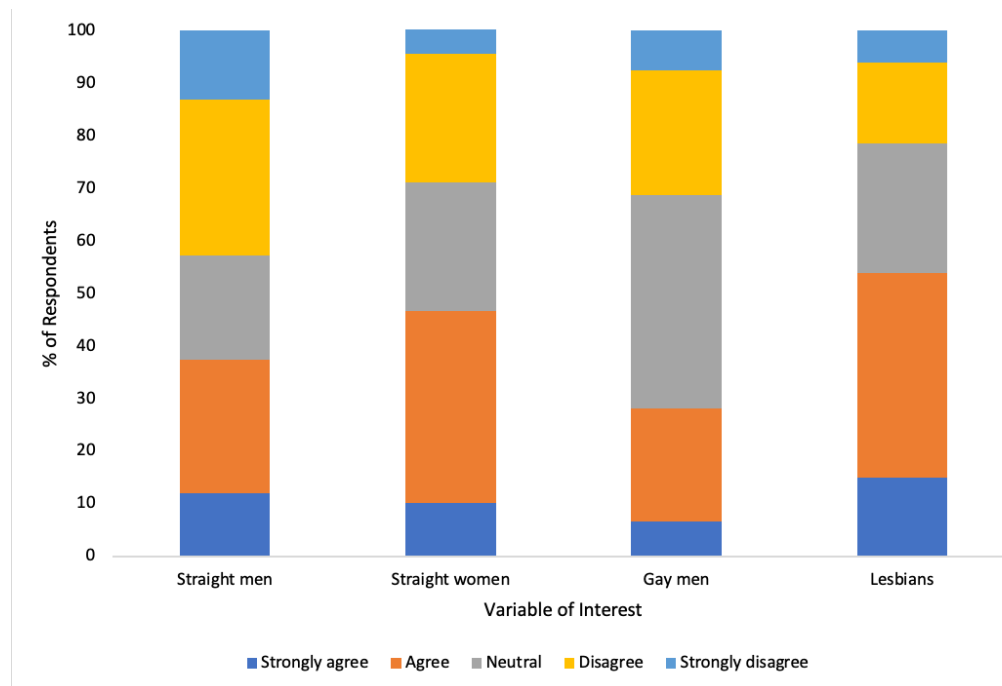


Figure 12. A comparison of survey respondents' opinions about whether they were seen negatively by straight men, straight women, gay men, and lesbians.

Respondents' opinions about their sexual identity being seen negatively by straight women and straight men were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to examine whether plurisexual women believed that their sexual identity was seen more negatively by straight women or straight men. On average, plurisexual women viewed straight women as more negative towards their sexual identity than straight men. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 86657.5$, $z = -6.2$, $p < 0.001$). However, there were a higher number of ties than negative and positive ranks ($n = 366$).

Respondents' opinions about how they believed their sexual identity was seen – whether more misunderstood or more negative – by straight women was examined using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks

Test. On average, plurisexual women believed straight women misunderstood their sexual identity more than they viewed it negatively. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 113272.5$, $z = -14.03$, $p < 0.001$). Respondents' opinions about how they believed their sexual identity was seen – whether more misunderstood or more negative – by straight men was also compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. On average, plurisexual women believed straight men misunderstood their sexual identity more than they viewed it negatively. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 222539$, $z = -21.67$, $p < 0.001$). This leads me to suggest that there is strong evidence that plurisexual women believed both straight men and women misunderstood their sexual identity more than they viewed it negatively.

Plurisexual identities such as bisexuality – particularly among women – are seen as highly sexualised and eroticised by the 'male gaze' (Fahs, 2009). To examine whether respondents perceived their sexual identity as sexualised by others, this was broken down into three separate statements: *'I feel like I am more sexualised by society because of my sexual identity'*, *'I feel like I am more sexualised by people I know because of my sexual identity'* and *'I feel like I am more sexualised by partners or potential partners because of my sexual identity'*. A 5-point Likert scale (from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree') was used to measure the responses. 80% of respondents agreed with the sentiment that they are more sexualised by society because of their sexuality, 11.7% were neutral, and 8.3% of respondents disagreed with this statement. In response to the belief that they are sexualised by people they know, 46.3% of respondents agreed with this statement, 22.4% were neutral, and 31.4% of respondents disagreed that they were more sexualised than people of other sexual identities by people they knew. Finally, 55.5% of respondents agreed with the sentiment that they are more sexualised by their partners or potential partners because of their sexual identity, and 25.1% of respondents disagreed with this statement. These statements are presented in Figure 13.

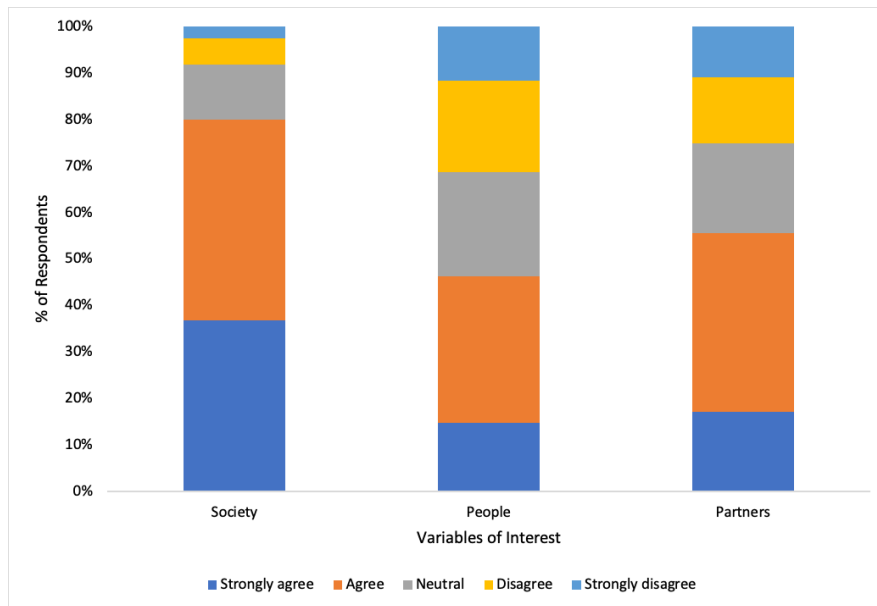


Figure 13. A comparison of whether survey respondents feel sexualised by society, people they know, and partners/potential partners.

Media

As the intention of this research was to look at *experiences* of plurisexuality, questions around the media and plurisexuality were largely out of the scope of this survey. But as media has a large influence on our society (Betts & Bly, 2012), and was discussed by interviewees regularly to illustrate their points about marginalisation, a few questions related to mainstream media were asked.

Mainstream media was defined as news websites, television, movies et cetera. However, it was up to respondents to decide what media outlets constituted ‘mainstream’ media. A 5-point Likert scale was used (from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’). Respondents were asked whether they believed that mainstream media portrays women who are attracted to multiple genders as more sexualised than women with other sexual identities. 91.3% of respondents agreed with this statement, 5.6% were neutral, and 3.1% of respondent disagreed that women attracted to multiple genders were more sexualised than women with other sexual identities in mainstream media.

When asked about their satisfaction about the amount of representation of people who are attracted to multiple genders in mainstream media, 5.6% of respondent agreed that they were happy with the amount of representation for people who are attracted to multiple genders, 11.1%

were neutral, and 83.2% of respondents were unhappy with the level of representation. Following on from this, only 5.6% of respondents agreed that they were happy with *how* people who are attracted to multiple genders are represented in mainstream media, 11.3% were neutral, and 83.1% of respondents were unhappy with how people attracted to multiple genders were represented in mainstream media. Finally, when presented with the statement 'I do not think there is enough discussion of people who are attracted to multiple genders in mainstream media', 88.8% agreed, 7.2% were neutral, and 4% disagreed that there is not enough discussion of people who are attracted to multiple genders in mainstream media.

Relationships

Past and current relationships overview

32.6% of respondents classified their relationship status as single, while 15.6% were in a non-monogamous relationship, and 51.6% were in a monogamous relationship. Of those that were in a relationship(s), 68.8% of respondents were in a relationship(s) with men (of which 1.9% of partners were transgender men), 23.2% were in a relationship(s) with women (of which 2.8% of partners were transgender women), and 8.2% of respondents had a gender diverse partner (i.e. identified as non-binary, gender-neutral, a-gender, genderfluid, genderqueer et cetera). However, these responses did not separate out people who were in a monogamous relationship or had more than one partner; therefore, they do not correspond to one partner for each respondent.

The mean amount of romantic relationships participants had been in was 5.4 (SD = 4.5), with a median of four and mode of three⁵⁷. Only 3.4% of respondents had never been in a romantic relationship. It is important to note that what would constitute a romantic relationship will differ between respondents. 74.4% of respondents had never been married, while 18.3% of respondents were currently married, 7% of respondents were divorced, and 0.3% of respondents were widowed.

⁵⁷ As respondents were all at different stages of their life which would impact how many partners they have had, this statistic does not hold much weight.

25.6% of respondents had children, but the majority of respondents did not have children (74.4%).

In regards to the gender of past partners, 89.8% of respondents had been in (at least one) romantic relationship with a cisgender man, 8.3% of respondents had been in (at least one) relationship with a transgender man, 65.6% had been in (at least one) relationship with a cisgender woman, 7.4% of respondents had been in (at least one) relationship with a transgender woman, 24.2% of respondents have had (at least one) gender diverse partner.

The sexual identities of the respondent's partners were grouped into two questions: previous women or non-binary partners, and previous partners who were men⁵⁸. As some respondents were presumed to have dated multiple people, they were able to select multiple options for these questions. 21.8% of respondents had dated women and/or non-binary people who identified as straight, 58.1% had dated women or non-binary people who identified as gay, 59.7% of respondents had dated women or non-binary people who identified as bisexual, 21.9% had dated women or non-binary people who identified as pansexual, 29.1% as queer, 6% identified as asexual, 1.2% as questioning, and less than 1% of respondents had dated people who identified as takatāpui, "not straight", had no label, or "fluid"⁵⁹. This differed from the sexual identities of men respondents had dated, with 95.9% of respondents having had dated men who identified as straight, 1.6% had dated men who identified as gay, 33.9% had dated men who identified as bisexual, 7.4% as pansexual, 7.9% as queer, 2.7% asexual, and 2.2% of respondents had dated men who identified as another sexual identity that they did not specify.

⁵⁸My justification for grouping women and gender diverse people together in this question was twofold; firstly, I was aware that there would be significantly less people who had experienced relationships with gender diverse people and therefore the sample size would be very small. Secondly, by grouping women and gender diverse people I was comparing being in a relationship that other people would already perceive as queer to a relationship that would be assumed to be heterosexual and heteronormative. However, as I did not present this justification to respondents, a couple of respondents mentioned (when given a text-box to answer a question) that they were unhappy with my combining of these two groups as it seemed like I did not view gender diverse people as different to women.

⁵⁹ These low percentages may also be because these were 'fill in' answers and may have been selected more if given the option, particularly 'takatāpui'.

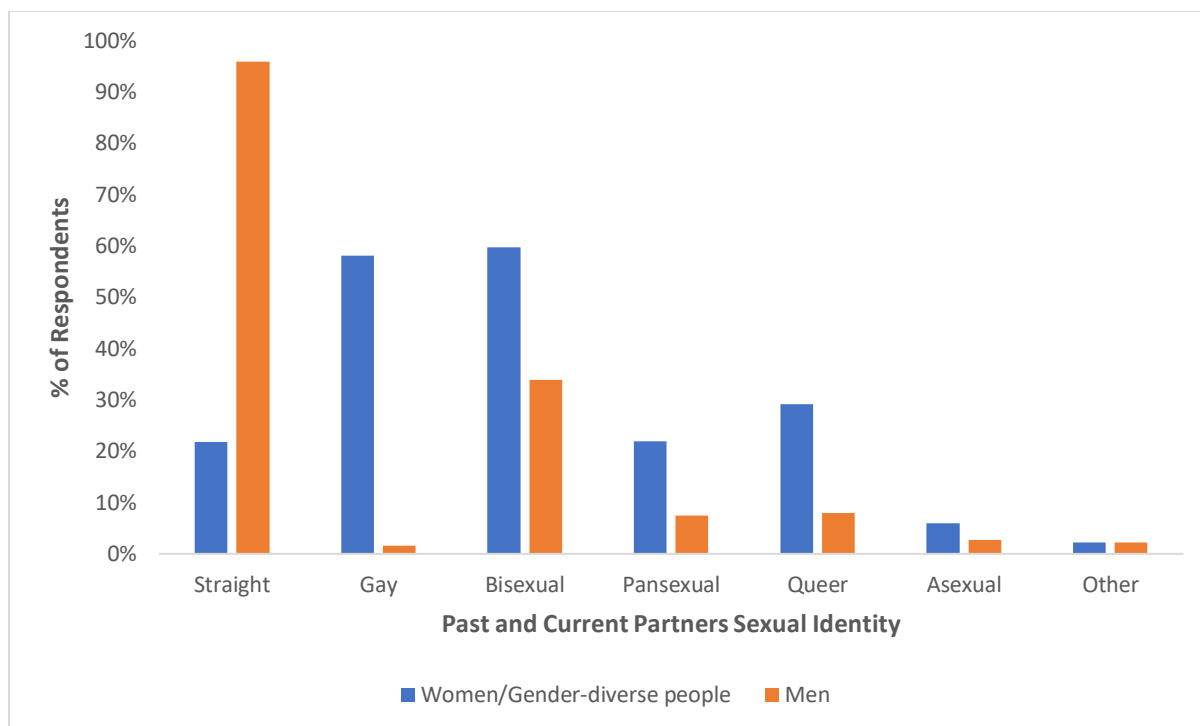


Figure 14. Comparison of the sexual identities of past and current partners of respondents by gender.

40.7% of respondents had been in, or were currently in, an open or non-monogamous relationship. Respondents who had been in an open or non-monogamous relationship were asked whether they prefer non-monogamous relationships to monogamous relationships using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree to strongly agree). 47.1% of respondents agreed that they preferred non-monogamous relationships, 24% were neutral, and 29% of respondents disagreed that they preferred non-monogamous relationships.

Relationship preferences

Many interviewees saw their gender as an irrelevant factor when deciding to date someone. To examine whether this was also true in a larger sample of plurisexual women, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement *'I feel like the gender of my partner is an important part of deciding to date/be in a relationship with someone'*. 25.2% of respondents agreed that the gender of their partner is an important part of deciding to date someone, 16.2% were neutral, and 58.6% of respondents disagreed that gender is an important factor for them. Respondents were also

asked whether they had a preference for relationships with one gender over another. 48.2% of respondents had no preference for the gender of their partners. For those that did have a preference in the gender of their partner, 51.3% preferred women, 42.4% preferred men, and 6.3% preferred gender diverse people.

Respondents were also asked if they prefer to date people the same sexual identity as themselves. 7.3% of respondents prefer to date someone with the same sexual identity as themselves, 24.3% prefer to date someone who is in the rainbow community (but not necessarily the same sexual identity to them), 1.6% prefer to date people who are not the same sexual identity as them, 1.4% prefer to date straight people, and 65.4% of respondents have no preference for the sexual identity of the people they date.

Relationships and sexual identity

Due to the societal assumption that people who are in a relationship with someone of a different gender than themselves is heterosexual, and same-gender partners are homosexual, plurisexual identified people can feel like their sexual identity is invisible when in relationships (Hayfield et al., 2018). Within this sample, 95.3% of respondents felt like their sexual identity was less visible when in a monogamous relationship with a man, 2.6% were neutral, and 2.2% did not feel like their sexual identity was invisible when in a relationship with a man. In comparison, 31.6% of respondents felt that their sexual identity less visible when in a monogamous relationship with a woman or gender diverse person (than when they were single), 15.3% were neutral, and 53.1% of respondents disagreed that their sexual identity felt invisible when in a relationship with a woman or gender diverse person. Only responses for respondents who had been in relationships with the relevant gender for each variable were included. 16.1% of respondents reported ending a relationship because of the way their partner viewed their sexual identity.

Feeling invisible in relationships with women or gender-neutral people variable was compared to feelings invisible in relationships with men variable using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (only

responses from people who had been in relationships with both a woman/gender diverse person *and* a man were included). On average, plurisexual women felt like their sexual identity was less visible when they were in a relationship with a man than when they were in a relationship with a woman or gender diverse person. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 158588$, $z = -20.169$, $p < 0.001$).

Dating

The dating lives of plurisexual women has not been well documented. To examine their experiences, respondents were asked questions pertaining to their experiences and difficulties when dating. In response to a statement, 'In my experience, finding partners who are the same gender as me is harder than finding people of other genders to date', 9.5% of respondents did not agree finding same-gender partners is more difficult than finding people of other genders to date and 8.7% were neutral. The largest grouping of respondents (81.8%), however, did believe that it was more difficult to find same-gender partners than partners that were a different gender to respondents.

One of the most popular ways for people to find dates is through online dating or dating apps (Yau, 2019). Bisexual women's use of dating apps had been previously examined in my honour's dissertation (Pond, 2016; Pond & Farvid, 2017). However, to extend those findings, an examination of whether respondents used dating apps or online dating sites differently depending on the gender of the partner they were seeking and depending on what they used dating apps or online dating sites to find, was conducted. 61.9% of respondents had used dating apps or online dating sites to find dating or sex partners. Of respondents who had used these sites or apps, 6.5% of respondents used them primarily to find women or non-binary people to have sex with, 4.9% primarily used them to find men to have sex with, 13% primarily used them to find people of any gender to have sex with, 20.5% of respondents primarily used them to find women or non-binary people to date, 6.9% primarily used them to find men to date, 36.6% of respondents primarily used them to find people

of any gender to date, 8.1% primarily used these apps and sites to find friends, and 3.1% used them for other reasons.

For people who had used online dating sites and dating apps, 56.2% of respondents believed that it was a useful way to find sex or dating partners, 15.1% were neutral, and 28.7% of respondents disagreed that it was a good way to find dating and/or sex partners. Breaking this down further into finding partners of different genders, 48.2% of respondents who had used dating apps or online dating sites agreed that it was the easiest and/or best method for finding men to date; 14.1% were neutral, and 37.8% disagreed that it was the easiest method. Comparatively, 54.7% of respondents who had used dating apps or online dating sites agreed that it was the easiest and/or best method for finding women or gender diverse people to date, 13.2% were neutral, and 32.1% disagreed.

Respondents views about using dating apps were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to see whether there was a difference in believing that dating apps was the best method to find men or women. The test indicated, however, that there was no statistically significant difference between viewing dating apps as the best way to meet men to date, and the best way to meet women and gender diverse people to date ($T = 33878$, $z = -1.897$, $p = 0.058$).

Sex

Sex statistical overview

93.1% of respondents reported having engaged in consensual sex. The mean age for first consensual sexual experience was 16.5 years, with a median and mode both of 16 years and a range of 26⁶⁰. A sexual experience was defined to respondents as including oral sex, manual sex, and penetrative sex⁶¹. Eighty-one percent of respondents had sex with a cis man the first time they had sex, 16.7%

⁶⁰ Some respondents put ages as low as 5 for the first time they had consensual sex. I considered taking these ages out as they may skew the data but ultimately decided against it because it is not up to me to decide what people view as a consensual sexual experience, and I would not know what age to start counting as consenting.

⁶¹ I had not added this definition of sex for the pilot testing and a couple of respondents to the pilot test questioned whether their first-time having sex 'really counted' as sex as there was no penetration involved. As seeing penetration as the only form of 'truly' having sex is hetero- and phallogentric, I decided to add the definition of sex to include other (non-penetrative) forms of having sex to the question.

had sex with a cis woman, and 1.2% had sex for the first time with a genderqueer or genderfluid person. Other percentages were below 1%.

76.6% of respondents have had sex with people from more than one gender (e.g., men and women). Of the respondents who have had sex, 74.8% have had sex with cisgender women, 8.43% of respondents have had sex with transgender women, 90.7% have had sex with cisgender men, 7.7% have had sex with transgender men, and 14.7% of respondents have had sex with gender diverse people or people of other genders but whose gender was not specified. For people who have had sex with more than one gender, 21.7% of respondents prefer to have sex with (cis or trans) women, 14.5% of respondents prefer to have sex with (cis or trans) men, 1.9% of respondents are unsure if they have a preference, and 59.9% of respondents have no preference for the gender of the people they have sex with.

One-off or casual sex

77.5% of respondents have had one-off or casual sex. Of the people who have had casual sex, the mean amount of people respondents estimate they have had casual sex with was 16.2, with a median of seven, mode of one and a range of 399⁶². For the genders of casual sex partners, 65.2% of respondents have had casual sex with cisgender women, 4.4% have had casual sex with transgender women, 94% have had casual sex with cisgender men, 4% have had casual sex with transgender men, 2% have had casual sex with people of other genders but did not specify the gender, and 3% of respondents have had casual sex with non-binary people.

A great deal of research into casual sex has looked at why people decide to have casual sex, although most of this research is focused on heterosexual people (Macey et al., 2017). In this sample, 89.6% of respondents engaged in casual sex because they wanted to have sex, 55.1% chose to have casual sex because they were drunk or high, 40.1% had casual sex because they were feeling

⁶² This does not count having multiple encounters with the same partner. Like with the number of relationships respondents have been in, as respondents were all at different stages of their life which would impact how many partners they have had, this statistic doesn't hold much weight.

lonely, 27.9% wanted to test their sexuality, 27.7% did not realise the encounter was going to be one off, 10.6% wanted to get back at someone, 9.6% had casual sex because their friends were doing it, 1.6% had casual sex as an exchange of services in order to receive something, 1.3% had casual sex because of enjoyment⁶³, and less than 1% had casual sex for other reason including because they wanted to feel desired, were pressured into it, to 'lose their virginity', and 'friendship'⁶⁴.

Respondents were able to choose more than one answer as they may have had casual sex for different reasons at different times, and there may have been multiple factors that lead to the decision to have casual sex.

Sexual health

Previous research into the sexual health behaviour of women who have sex with women show that they are at higher risk for poor sexual health behaviours (Bailey et al., 2003). For respondents who have had sex with a female (i.e., someone with a vagina), only 6.8% have used a safe sex method when having oral sex. Of this group, 18% only used a safe sex method once, 34% used one occasionally, 26% used one sometimes, 12% used one regularly, and 10% used one always. However, it is important to note the sample size of respondents who have used safe sex methods is very small so the accuracy of this data could be disputed. 43.2% of respondents who have had sex with a male (i.e. someone with a penis) have used a safe sex method when having oral sex. Of this group, 20.9% have used a safe sex method only once, 29.6% used one occasionally, 22.2% used one sometimes, 15.1% used one regularly, and 12.2% always used a safe sex method when having oral sex with a male.

In comparison to respondents' actions around safe sex methods, respondents' beliefs around sexual health was also examined. 92.2% of respondents agreed that it was important to be conscious of

⁶³ It is possible this percentage would be a lot higher, but this was a 'write in' answer that respondents decided was different than the 'I wanted to have sex' option, rather than an option presented to them.

⁶⁴ Some respondents critiqued that the options presented to them were primarily negative and presented an unfavourable view of casual sex. While this is possible, the options were selected based on data from the qualitative interviews and feedback from the survey pilot study.

sexual transmitted infections (STI's) with having sex with a female, 4.8% were neutral, and 3% disagreed that it is important to be conscious of STI's when having a sex with a female.

Comparatively, 99% agreed with the statement that it was important to be conscious of sexual transmitted infections when having sex with a male, 0.8% were neutral, and only 0.2% disagreed that it is important to be conscious of STI's when having sex with a male.

Respondents opinions about awareness around STI's when having sex with a male and female were compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to examine whether plurisexual women placed more importance around STI's with either sex. On average, plurisexual women believed it was more important to be conscious of STI's when having sex with a male than a female. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicated that this was statistically significant ($T = 42470.5$, $z = -15.3$, $p < 0.001$). However, there were a higher number of ties than negative and positive ranks ($n = 658$). While it would be informative to run a statistical test to see if there was a significant association between believing that it was important to be conscious of STI's and practicing safe sex through the use of a safe sex method, the sample size of respondents who did not think it was important to be conscious of STI's was too low.

Mental health

Previous studies have found that there are higher rates of mental health issues among bisexual women than women with other sexual identities (Colledge et al., 2015). While a full examination of mental health experience for this sample was outside of the scope of this study, respondents were asked if they had ever been given a mental health diagnosis and 59.4% of respondents responded in the affirmative (in comparison, approximately 16% of Aotearoa's general population has been given a mental health diagnosis in their lifetime (Ministry of Health, 2019)). For those who answered yes, respondents were asked what the diagnosis was using an open-ended question. The majority of responses included more than one diagnoses. The largest classifications were for depressive disorders (e.g., clinical depression, major depressive disorder, post-natal depression) with 74.2% of

respondents having had being diagnosed with a depressive disorder; closely followed by anxiety disorders (e.g., Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) with 69.9% respondents indicating an anxiety related diagnosis. 6.3% of respondents had been diagnosed with a mood disorder (e.g., Bipolar), 6.2% had been diagnosed with a personality disorder (including Borderline Personality Disorder and Avoidant Personality Disorder), 5.8% had been diagnosed with a 'body related' disorder (such as Anorexia Nervosa, Post-Menstrual Dysphoric Disorder, or Gender Dysphoria), 3.9% had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Attention Deficit Disorder, 1.2% had been diagnosed with a psychosis-related disorder (including schizophrenia), 1% of respondents has been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (including Autism and Asperger's Syndrome), and 0.7% had been diagnosed with an addiction (including opiate addiction or polysubstance abuse).

Sexual assault

Past research has shown that people will respond differently to survey questions about sexual assault depending on the phrasing of the question (Gavey, 1992). For example, rape is sometimes not able to be articulated as such by sexual assault survivors and other language such as 'forced sex' is used instead (Gavey, 1992). With this in mind, both direct (i.e., 'sexual assault') and indirect phrasing (i.e., 'unwanted sexual practices') was used when asking about sexual violence to assess whether there was variance in results. When asked whether they had ever been sexually assaulted, 60.2% of respondents stated they had been sexually assaulted, 31.9% stated they had never been sexually assaulted, and 7.9% of respondents were unsure whether they had ever been sexually assaulted. Respondents said 97.4% of these assaults were perpetrated by men. When less direct phrasing was used (*'Have you ever engaged in sexual practices that you did not want to?'*), 69.2% of respondents said they had engaged in unwanted sexual practices, 25.2% of respondents said they had not, and 5.6% of respondents were unsure whether they had engaged in sexual practices they did not want to engage in. 70.7% of respondents had been pressured into sex by a man, 25.6% had

not, and 3.7% of respondents were unsure whether they had ever been pressured into sex with a man. Fourteen percent of respondents had been pressured into sex by a woman, 84.2% had not, and 1.8% of respondents were unsure whether they have ever been pressured into sex by a woman.

Chapter summary

In this chapter the results from the exploratory survey were presented with descriptive statistical form and additional statistical tests to examine the data more closely. These data explored different aspects of the experiences and opinions plurisexual women in Aotearoa/New Zealand held about identifying as being attracted to multiple genders. In the next chapter, these results are dissected and examined in relation to previous literature to provide a thorough analysis and discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion of Survey Results: Sexual Identity Characteristics and Experiences

Within this chapter, the survey results that were presented in Chapter five will be discussed and presented in the context of previous scholarly literature and current understandings of plurisexual women's experiences. This chapter will be divided into four main topic headings *Sexual identity*, *Social experiences and marginalisation*, *Romantic relationships*, and *Sexual experiences and sexual health*. Within each section, findings from the previous section will be examined in sequential order.

Sexual Identity

Sexual identity terms

The act of identifying with a plurisexual identity is fraught. As the concept of a sexual orientation is dominant in Anglo-Western contexts, sexuality is framed as enduring, singular, and innate (Seidman, 2015; Tiefer, 2004). For many plurisexual people this does not always map onto how they experience their sexual identity (Callis, 2016; Diamond, 2008). When able to select multiple terms to describe their sexual identity, only 29.6% of survey respondents selected one term. Further, of the 597 respondents that identified as bisexual, less than half (37%) identified as bisexual as their only identity term. This aligns with previous research that indicates that plurisexual people are more likely to report secondary sexual identities than monosexual people (Galupo et al., 2015). Several hypotheses for the use of multiple identities among plurisexual people have emerged in the limited scholarly research on this topic.

As plurisexual identity terms are often unfamiliar to monosexual people, plurisexual people may adapt their sexual identity term usage to fit with the audience and context (Galupo et al., 2016; Rust, 2000b). For example, some interviewees indicated that among queer friends, they are more likely to describe themselves as queer or pansexual, and among heterosexual people, may describe their identity as lesbian or bisexual to avoid explaining the definition of the other terms (this

phenomenon is further elaborated upon in Chapter ten). A secondary hypothesis is that terms such as bisexual are stigmatised. Particularly in rainbow communities, bisexual can be seen as a reductive term that indicates binary attraction (Hayfield et al., 2014). However, bisexuality is also a ubiquitous and familiar term to most people (despite its erasure in dominant binary sexuality discourses). Therefore, plurisexual women may want to identify as bisexual due to the familiarity of the term but use other terms to reduce the stigmatisation they may experience for identifying as bisexual. The findings from the survey questions about sexual identity preference seem to indicate that the above hypotheses may hold weight; over three-quarters of survey respondents selected 'bisexual' as their sexual identity when able to select multiple terms, but when asked what term they prefer to identify with, 'bisexual' dropped to just below half of responses. Further, respondents viewed the term 'pansexual' to be a more inclusive, less binary and less transphobic than 'bisexual'. This substantiates the hypothesis that pansexuality is a preferred identity term because bisexuality has more stigma attached to it.

A significant association was found between the sexual identity terms plurisexual women used the most often and the terms they preferred to use to denote their sexual identity. This means that, on average, people who *preferred* to use bisexual would use that term most often to describe themselves. The same also went for people who preferred to identify as pansexual, gay/lesbian, queer, and with other sexual identities (other sexual identities were grouped together for this analysis and so cannot be differentiated from each other in this circumstance). However, respondents who used pansexual or queer the most to describe themselves were unlikely to prefer to use bisexual as their sexual identity. Presumably, this is because they already have actively chosen to use a less known term to describe themselves in most contexts and prefer that identity term to describe themselves to bisexual.

People who used gay or lesbian to describe themselves the most preferred not to identify as bisexual. As gay is a commonly known sexual identity, it follows that they would not use the term

bisexual. People who identify as gay would not need to adapt their sexual identity in different contexts in the way that people who hold plurisexual identities would. Finally, respondents who preferred to identify as queer did not use bisexual to describe themselves most often. This result is consistent with interviewees who identified as queer and also described themselves as gay, rather than bisexual, or would not change the term they used in different contexts. Often this was because queer people viewed their sexual identity as unrelated to bisexuality, or because they viewed bisexuality as a binary term. Returning to the previous hypotheses about the use of multiple identity terms, this significant result indicates that while plurisexual women may adapt their sexual identity to the context they are in (such as with friends, family, or a work environment), plurisexual women are still more likely to be consistent in their sexual identity usage as they use their preferred identity terms in most contexts. This suggests a consistency between identity preference and identity usage. Therefore, it is likely that the use of multiple terms to describe their plurisexuality is primarily due to reasons other than context, such as the stigmatisation of bisexuality and wanting to describe their sexuality with more nuance than one term can cover.

The increasing popularity of the terms pansexual and queer to describe plurisexuality was clearly demonstrated in the survey results, with almost half of survey respondents identifying with either terms. Morandini et al. (2017) noted that the term queer is becoming increasingly preferred because it defies normative and potentially 'limiting' categories. Preference for the term queer among both interviewees and survey respondents can be attributed to the shift in preference that younger people have instigated away from categorical definitions of sexuality to terms that are more fluid and less rigid and defined (Morandini et al., 2017). This is further evidence to support scholarly research moving away from a strictly biological understanding of sexuality, to suggesting that people may identify with their sexual identity for emotional, practical, and political reasons. Pansexual was also a popular term for survey respondents (47.3%). However, when selecting one term they preferred to identify with, and singular term they used the most to describe their sexual identity, only around 10% selected pansexual for either category. It is likely that this is due to the

unfamiliarity many people have with pansexuality (although this is increasing in recent years with the identity appearing more in mainstream and digital media (e.g., Chatel, 2018)). Therefore, plurisexual people are less motivated to use the term pansexual publicly.

Some respondents identified with 'micro-minority' terms such as omnisexual, polysexual, androsexual, and sapiosexual (5.8% of respondents identified as polysexual, 4.1% as omnisexual, 0.1% as androsexual, and 0.3% as sapiosexual). Cover (2018a) sees the emergence in these 'micro' terms as a product of "rigorous labelling" because as a culture rainbow people are searching for more descriptive and nuanced language for sexual identity. The taxonomies of these identities shift away from (and disrupt) the concept of sexual orientation being primarily determined by the "desires, attractions and behaviours from one gendered subject to another gendered subject" (Cover, 2018a, pp. 19-20)⁶⁵. Eight percent of survey respondents identified as both (romantically and sexually) attracted to multiple genders and on the asexual spectrum, demonstrating the possibility to hold similar yet seemingly contradictory identities simultaneously. In addition, two of the interviewees discussed identifying as demisexual⁶⁶ – an identity on the asexual spectrum – but used language that distanced themselves from the term in order to assure (to themselves, or myself as the interviewer) that their plurisexual identity is their primary sexual identity. While a proportion of survey respondents identified with micro-minority terms, when looking at the term's respondents preferred to identify with and use the most, these proportions dropped to around 1% or below. This could be due to respondents viewing these 'micro-minority' terms as a way to understand and sort the complex and nuanced experiences of attraction they feel that more popular terms do not satisfy, but would not use these niche terms to describe their sexuality because of the lack of ubiquity and popular understanding around them.

⁶⁵ Cover (2018a) also views asexuality as one of these 'micro' terms but I would argue that this term is not an emergent term but a reclaiming of a previously (and still) pathologised term, into its own sexual identity (Foster, Eklund, Brewster, Walker, & Candon, 2018).

⁶⁶ Demisexual is defined as someone who does not experience sexual attraction unless a strong emotional connection is formed first (Miller, 2016).

The relatively high proportion of respondents that identify with the terms 'lesbian' and 'gay' provide interesting results (12.3% and 15.2% respectively). 'Gay' is often used by people within and outside rainbow communities as an umbrella term to describe rainbow community phenomena and events (e.g., gay marriage, gay pride). Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that due to the ubiquity of 'gay', some plurisexual people would take on the term for their own identity. It could also be a way to distance themselves from heterosexuality more than the term bisexual does, as bisexuality is seen to 'straddle' heterosexuality and homosexuality. The use of 'lesbian' by many respondents could reflect the increased fluidity in definitions of monosexual identity terms. Several interviewees also identified as lesbian or gay while also acknowledging their plurisexuality. This preference of identifying as gay or lesbian was seen by interviewees to be due to the social aspect of the label lesbian. Identifying as lesbian while being attracted to multiple genders allows for inclusion in a more publicly accepted minority group. The results of the survey show that while a proportion of respondents identify with the terms lesbian and gay, very few use the term as the main term they prefer or use the most. This may be due to the terms not capturing the idiosyncrasies of their plurisexual identity. However, when the statistics for the terms 'lesbian' and 'gay' are combined, the frequency is similar to terms such as queer and pansexual. Some respondents prefer to use monosexual terms despite acknowledging that their attraction extends beyond monosexuality which is likely due to the invisibility of plurisexuality in society and the upholding of the monosexual binary. Previous research has shown that lesbians do report attraction to different genders, although at a much lower frequency to plurisexual women (Diamond, 1998).

Broadly, the survey results indicate that there is diversity in the terms plurisexual women prefer to use identify as. There is multiplicity in interpretations of definitions of plurisexual identities; we can suggest, however, that plurisexual people's reasons for using or identifying with certain identity terms is both personal and contextual as it is informed by their social environment and individual preferences.

Identification and disclosure

Living in a heteronormative cultural context often means that identifying with a non-heterosexual identity requires extracting oneself from the mainstream sexual cultures within society. According to D'Augelli (1994), the process of identifying with a non-heterosexual identity begins with rejecting 'heterosexist essentialism' in order to develop a new sexual identity outside of heteronormativity. The average ages of identifying with their current sexual identity for survey respondents was between 14 and 17 years old, with a median age of 16. This supports previous literature that found most people commonly begin to identify with a non-heterosexual identity during adolescence (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). A significant difference in plurisexual women's age of self-identifying with their current sexual identity term and age for disclosure of their sexual identity to others was found in the survey data (Mean age of respondents self-identifying with their current sexual identity term was 17.3 years compared to 20.8 years for disclosing their sexual identity to others). This gap in ages between identifying as plurisexual and disclosing this to others is likely due to the difficulty of being in a heteronormative society and the need to overcome this before sexual identity disclosure (Garvey et al., 2018). Sexual identity development models attribute this discrepancy to a process of self-acceptance that non-heterosexual people must undertake prior to disclosing their sexual identity to others (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006). Consistent with this theory, a third of survey respondents felt negatively about their sexual identity when they first identified with it. The survey also indicated that on average, plurisexual women feel more positive about their sexual identity over time.

With a closer look at sexual identity disclosure we can see that survey respondents felt it was important to disclose their sexual identity to people close to them. However, there were variations in whether respondents *had* disclosed their sexual identity to their family, with half of respondents either not disclosing their sexual identity to their family, or to only some of their family. This is consistent with past research, as Pew Research Center (2013) found that only 28% of bisexual people had disclosed their sexual identity to people close to them, compared to 71% of lesbians who

have disclosed their sexual identity. For many non-heterosexuals, disclosing their sexual identity or 'coming out' to other people is seen as not only an important part but also a *necessary* step of being (openly and proudly) non-heterosexual, as people are to be assumed straight until otherwise stated (Maliepaard, 2018).

While essentialist sexual identity development theories individualise the sexual identity disclosure process (e.g., D'Augelli, 1994), recent research has shown that it is more often the social context that influences people's decisions to disclose their sexual identity to others (Garvey et al., 2018). Most survey respondents who did not disclose their sexual identity to their family did so in order to avoid tension, hostility or abuse. While studies have shown a link between disclosing sexual identity and positive mental health outcomes (Prell & Traeen, 2018), it seems that this would not be the case for many respondents who believed that 'coming out' would put themselves in danger of discrimination. McLean (2007), found that bisexual peoples' decision to come out often contravened sexual identity disclosure theories because of the added considerations of people being attracted to multiple genders. Plurisexual people are highly conscious that their sexual identity is stigmatised, and many family members may not understand their sexual identity. Thus, to not come out to people who may not understand their sexual identity relieves the anxiety around anticipating their reactions. The results of the present survey also demonstrated that three-quarters of respondents who did not disclose their sexual identity to their family selected multiple reasons for doing so. This suggests that non-disclosure is a complex decision and involves broader considerations than simply self-acceptance and pride in claiming a non-heterosexual identity.

According to Weinberg et al. (1994) disclosing one's sexual identity to family members is the most important part of coming out. Family acceptance can provide buffers against discrimination while family rejection can intensify feelings of alienation. The chi-square test conducted on the survey data indicated that for survey respondents, disclosing their sexual identity to their family is significantly related to whether they valued disclosing their sexual identity to people close to them;

survey respondents who were valued disclosing their sexual identity more highly were more likely to have 'come out' to their family and survey respondents who did not find it important to disclose their sexual identity were significantly less likely to have 'come out' to their family. It is important to acknowledge that the direction of this correlation is unknown; people who have not 'come out' to their family may justify this decision by not viewing sexuality disclosure as important, equally, people may disclose their sexual identity to their family *because* they see it as an important thing to do.

Weinberg et al. (1994) hypothesised that not having a sexual identity that is seen as clear and stable leads to a different and more complicated 'coming out' model for plurisexual people than for gay people. Within the present survey, almost all respondents had not disclosed their sexual identity in certain situations outside of familial relationships. Reasons cited by respondents were related to being aware of the potential consequences of disclosing their sexual identity and how it might affect how people view or relate to them. This reinforces the argument that sexual identity disclosure is highly contextual and often unrelated to personal development of sexual identity. Irrespective of fear of plurisexual-related discrimination, coming out with any non-heterosexual identity in situations such as workspaces creates anxiety (Popova, 2018). In a workplace context, marginalised sexual identities are seen as private and therefore not appropriate for the public sphere of a workplace. While a separation of public and private is often the case for people in professional environments, this issue is particularly salient for non-heterosexual people because of the heteronormativity of most professional spheres that work to silence queer identities (Gray, 2013). Gray (2013) argues that the culture of heteronormativity that exists in professional environments is complicated by the societal imperative to disclose your (non-heterosexual) sexual identity in order to be 'genuine', 'authentic' and self-accepting.

Over 40% of survey respondents avoided disclosing their sexual identity to avoid sexualisation. This is likely linked to the objectification of plurisexual women in society and through media (Fahs & Koerth, 2018). Women's plurisexuality has been appropriated by the patriarchal context which

shapes how plurisexual women are seen socially (Eisner, 2013; Fahs & Koerth, 2018). For example, research has found that heterosexual people believe women's bisexuality is related more to sexual behaviour than emotions (Boyer & Galupo, 2015; Swan & Habibi, 2015). As a result of people viewing their sexual identity based on enacting sexual behaviour, bisexual women are often expected to 'prove' their bisexuality through performing same-sex sexual behaviours (Boyer & Galupo, 2015; Swan & Habibi, 2015). In turn, bisexual women performing sexual behaviours with other men is perceived as performed not for themselves, but for the enjoyment of heterosexual men (Boyer & Galupo, 2015; Swan & Habibi, 2015). The appropriating of women's bisexuality for men's eroticisation can be disempowering for plurisexual women as it impacts how they express their sexuality, including being more cautious about disclosing their sexual identity. Previous studies have highlighted the unique negotiations bisexual people experience when disclosing their sexual identity (e.g., Brewster & Moradi, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2015). Other studies have noticed the positive impacts of sexual identity disclosure for plurisexual people (Brownfield et al., 2018). It appears that many plurisexual women value the importance of disclosing their sexual identity to others; however, many are still considerably cautious about in what contexts and to whom they will disclose their sexual identity because of their awareness that it could lead to rejection or at least a negative shift in others' perception or evaluation of them. In many situations, respondents and interviewees decided the 'freedom' of disclosing their sexual identity was not worth the potential discrimination.

Attraction

Sexual identity encompasses more than sexual desires. There is an assumption that romantic and sexual attraction are congruent. However, research has detailed many accounts of this assumption not being an accurate representation of attraction, particularly with plurisexual people (Diamond, 2003b; Lund, Thomas, Sias, & Bradley, 2016). Specifically, for plurisexual people there may be differing gender preferences between romantic attraction and sexual attraction, and attraction to different genders may shift across time (Diamond, 2000). Findings from the survey indicated that on

average, plurisexual women viewed their romantic attraction as more stable than their sexual attraction to different genders. However, the large number of ties in the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicate that many survey respondents viewed no difference between their sexual and romantic attraction. We can speculate from this finding that while romantic and sexual attraction can differ for some plurisexual women, often there is compatibility between the two. For example, some interviewees discussed being 'taken by surprise' when they had a strong romantic attraction to a man, after viewing women as more romantically compatible with them. For these interviewees, while they had acknowledged their *sexual* attraction to some men, they did not believe they were 'capable' of being romantically attracted to men enough to engage in (romantic) relationships with them. While there is limited scholarly work examining discord between sexual and romantic attraction, 89% of Lund et al. (2016)'s sample reported concordant sexual and romantic attractions. However, as they did not record their respondent's sexual identities, we cannot know how many identified with a plurisexual identity, and thus it is difficult to compare this to the present sample.

The main feature of plurisexuality that sets it apart from monosexuality is the attraction to multiple genders. However, attraction to different genders is not always equal (i.e., experiencing the same degree of attraction to men and women). Additionally, for plurisexual people, gender is not always viewed as the main factor on which to assess attraction (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2015). Almost half of respondents (48.6%) saw their attraction to different genders as unstable across time. This is consistent with previous research that links sexual fluidity and plurisexuality. The congruence between sexual fluidity and plurisexuality has been used to stereotype bisexuality as a temporary phase (Diamond, 2008). As Diamond's (2008) longitudinal study on women's bisexuality indicated, sexual identity can be experienced as fluid and this is not incongruent with identifying as bisexual. With further regards to gender preference, 65% of respondents were not attracted to all genders equally. Notably in my sample, queer and pansexual respondents were significantly less likely to be attracted to all genders equally than bisexual respondents. Comparatively, Galupo et al. (2016)'s participants that identified as bisexual and queer were significantly more likely to be attracted to

one gender more than others, than participants who identified as pansexual⁶⁷. This result in the present survey is likely because people who experience more fluidity in their attraction prefer to identify with a term that has less rigid connotations – as bisexuality is regularly assumed to reflect 50% attraction to men, 50% attraction to women.

Social experiences and marginalisation

Community

Rainbow community involvement is important for plurisexual people as it provides support and shelter from homophobia, biphobia and heteronormativity, as well as a place to meet other same-sex attracted and plurisexual people (McLean, 2008a). However, past research has consistently shown that a lot of the discrimination and invalidation plurisexual women face comes from *within* the rainbow community (McLean, 2008a; Schimanski & Treharne, 2018). The results from the survey indicated that plurisexual women have a large variation in opinions and experiences related to rainbow communities. This is possibly related to the diversity in identity terms respondents used, which has been shown to change how lesbian and gay people perceive plurisexual people (Mitchell et al., 2015). Almost half of respondents viewed themselves as connected to rainbow communities. However, the majority of respondents (66.8%) also believed they had less of a community than monosexual people. Further, a similar number of respondents felt isolated from rainbow communities (43.8%) than felt included (45.7%). The prevalence of mononormativity in rainbow communities, accompanied with a lack of plurisexual-specific networks, can isolate plurisexual people from feeling like they have a safe environment where their sexual identity is understood (Toft & Yip, 2017). However, as the findings indicate, at least half of survey respondents valued rainbow communities. This is likely because rainbow community spaces still provide a buffer from heteronormative environments as well as opportunities to socialise with other people with similar experiences and identities who experience marginalisation – even without explicit acceptance of

⁶⁷ As Galupo et al. (2016)'s study only had 172 participants, these statistical findings are not very reliable.

plurisexual identities. The high rate of feelings of isolation and less community networks than monosexual people that plurisexual women experience indicates that rainbow communities need to improve to be more explicitly inclusive of plurisexual identities.

Bi-negativity and attitudes towards plurisexuality

A portion of research on bisexuality examines monosexual people's attitudes towards bisexuals and bisexuality to demonstrate the existence of biphobia in gay and straight populations. An 'offshoot' of this research is an examination of the 'meta-perceptions' of attitudes towards bisexuality which examines how bisexual people perceive attitudes towards themselves (e.g., Beach et al., 2019). Beach et al. (2019) found that most of their bisexual respondents believed that others did not hold negative views towards their sexual identity. However, many respondents did believe that other people did not understand their sexual identity and upheld bisexual stereotypes such as bisexual people are confused, more likely to cheat, and are hypersexual (Beach et al., 2019). In the present sample, between half and almost 90% of respondents believed their sexual identity was misunderstood, particularly by straight men. Respondents were less in agreement about whether their sexual identity was seen negatively by straight people, however straight women were seen as having more negative attitudes towards plurisexuality than straight men. Respondents also saw a gender difference in attitudes towards their sexual identity as they perceived straight men as misunderstanding their sexuality more than viewing it negatively. Respondents believed the reverse about straight women: straight women were seen to view their sexual identity more negatively than misunderstand it. This suggests that while negative attitudes towards plurisexual identities are decreasing, straight men's 'acceptance' of bisexuality compared to straight women – which was found in previous research (Dodge et al., 2016) – is possibly because bisexual women are seen as sexually desirable by men, rather than due to an increase in social acceptance of plurisexual identities.

The sexualisation and 'exoticisation' of women's bisexuality by men has been discussed in numerous scholarly articles as a significant problem for plurisexual women (Fahs, 2009; Fahs & Koerth, 2018; Lannutti & Denes, 2012). Constructions of women's plurisexuality in Anglo-Western cultures are somewhat based on heterosexual men's fantasy of women's desire for other women as showcased in pornography, media et cetera (Thompson, 2006). This has numerous material consequences for plurisexual women. For example, plurisexual women have been found to be regularly asked or expected to perform sexual behaviours with other women for men's pleasure (Boyer & Galupo, 2015; Pond & Farvid, 2017); additionally, plurisexual people experience higher rates of sexual violence and victimisation compared to people with monosexual identities (Flanders et al., 2019a; Messinger, 2010; Walters et al., 2013). The hyper-sexualisation of plurisexual women and its related experiences has been linked to an unwillingness for plurisexual women to publicly identify as bisexual for fear of being objectified and exoticized (Thompson, 2006).

Survey respondents were familiar with the sexualised constructions of women's plurisexuality with most respondents (80%) believing that they are more sexualised by society because of their sexual identity. Additionally, around half of respondents believed they are sexualised by people they know, partners and potential partners. The sexualisation of bisexuality is perpetuated by media portrayals of bisexual or 'performatively bisexual' women for the pleasure and consumption of men (Eisner, 2013; San Filippo, 2013). Indeed, most survey respondents (91.3%) believed that plurisexual women were more sexualised in media than women of other sexual identities. According to San Filippo (2013), bisexuality in film is often "displayed as an exoticized, eroticized spectacle of social deviance and sexual decadence" (p. 95). In this way bisexuality is not seen as an authentic sexual identity but as a tool that women in films use for various endgames: to cater to men's sexual attraction, to get something they are wanting, to titillate the viewer etc (San Filippo, 2013). This portrayal of women's sexuality maintains plurisexuality's place in Anglo-Western culture as a delegitimised and hypersexualised identity.

One of the features of the marginalisation of plurisexuality that differs from other forms of marginalisation is identity erasure – regularly referred to as ‘bi-erasure’. While bi-erasure occurs through the systematic delegitimisation of plurisexuality (Yoshino, 2000), it also occurs at the individual level. Plurisexual identities are regularly erased when plurisexual women are in monogamous relationships as these relationships are often seen as either heterosexual or lesbian, depending on the gender of their partner (Feinstein et al., 2019). This erasure can be frustrating for plurisexual women as it renders their sexual identity invisible and perpetuates mononormativity (Feinstein et al., 2019; Popova, 2018). Consistent with past research on bi-erasure, most of the survey respondents in the present study (71%) disliked when they were assumed to be heterosexual. Interestingly, only 30% of survey respondents disliked when people assumed they were gay; the majority of respondents were neutral or did not mind being assumed to be gay. Further to this, many respondents (41.6%) also agreed that they would prefer to be assumed that they were gay than straight. It is likely that bi-erasure through being assumed to be gay is preferable for plurisexual women because it does not invalidate their queerness. Bisexuality is often seen as ‘not queer enough’ by rainbow community members (Brewster & Moradi, 2010; Yost & Thomas, 2012), and by being assumed to be gay, this form of prejudice is avoided.

A widespread belief about plurisexual people is that they have ‘heterosexual privilege’ – also described as ‘straight passing privilege’ (Ritchie, 2016; Wandrey et al., 2015). ‘Heterosexual privilege’ constructs bisexual people as benefiting from the protection of heteronormativity by being assumed to be heterosexual (Israel & Mohr, 2004). There is a debate among scholars and bisexuals whether being assumed to be heterosexual is a privilege, or a form of identity invalidation (e.g., Hayfield et al., 2014; Ritchie, 2016). The survey respondents in the present research largely believed they *benefited* from the privilege of ‘passing’ as straight. Despite this positive framing, 95% of respondents felt that their sexual identity was invisible when in a relationship with a man. Respondents also felt their sexual identity was significantly less visible when they were in a relationship with a man than a woman or gender diverse person. As most plurisexual women feel

that their identity is erased in a relationship with a man, it needs to be questioned what the 'privilege' is of being assumed to be heterosexual. As the 'heterosexual privilege' belief contributes to negative attitudes towards bisexual people from lesbian and gay people (Israel & Mohr, 2004; McLean, 2008a), this is an area that needs to be explored with more nuance.

Sexual Violence

Past studies have found that plurisexual women report the highest rates of sexual violence and rape in comparison to lesbians and heterosexual women (Canan et al., 2019; Hequembourg et al., 2019; Walters et al., 2013). In previous research, the lifetime prevalence of rape for bisexual women is between 46% and 63% (Canan et al., 2019; Walters et al., 2013). This rate extends to between 50% and 75% when any form of sexual violence including sexual coercion is included in the data (Dickson, 2017; Flanders et al., 2019a; Walters et al., 2013). Consistently, research has found that most perpetrators of sexual violence and rape against bisexual women are men (Hequembourg et al., 2019; Walters et al., 2013).

These findings are mostly consistent with the present sample. Consistent with past research, 60% of survey respondents reported being sexually assaulted with almost all of these sexual assaults (97.4%) were perpetrated by men. When examining rates of sexual assault, research has found that using different wording in questions about for experiences of victimisation increases the likelihood that sexual violence victims will acknowledge that sexual violence occurred, which gives a more accurate prevalence rate (Canan et al., 2019; Gavey, 2018). Therefore, when asked about engaging in unwanted sex without using the phrase 'sexual assault', more of my survey respondents answered affirmatively. There was a 9% increase in answering affirmatively when the language of the question changed from direct (*'have you been sexually assaulted?'*) to indirect (*'have you engaged in unwanted sexual practices?'*) and increased a further 3.7% when the language was changed to 'pressured' into sexual practices. As a result, the survey found that almost three-quarters of survey respondents (72.9%) had been pressured into sex. Most respondents had been pressured by men,

but 14% had been pressured into sex by women (including 11.5% of respondents who had been pressured into sex by men and women).

The high rates of sexual assault and coercion that plurisexual women experience is alarming. More research needs to be done to understand the complexity of mediating factors that leads to substantial differences in sexual violence prevalence between plurisexual women and monosexual women. One lens that these findings can be seen through is the hypersexualisation of plurisexual women; while same-sex behaviours between lesbians is presented as desirable for men, plurisexual women are more 'accessible' to men as they are more likely to go on dates and be in relationships with them (as compared to lesbians). As most perpetrators of sexual violence are known to the victim before the assault (Gavey, 2018), it seems likely that this is also true for plurisexual women. Therefore it is plausible that hypersexualised constructions of plurisexual women may contribute to men believing they are more 'entitled' to sex with plurisexual women, resulting in the sexual assault or coercion of a significant proportion of plurisexual women (Worthen, 2017).

Romantic relationships

Relationship types

Research from the United States has found that bisexual people in mixed-gender relationships are the most likely group in rainbow communities to be married (Pew Research Center, 2013). However, fewer bisexual people are married than the general public (Pew Research Center, 2013). Three quarters of the present survey respondents were not and had never been married. This is unsurprising as the average age of respondents skewed below thirty and in Aotearoa, the average age women get married (if they get married at all) is 31 years old (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). As same-sex marriage had been legal in Aotearoa/New Zealand for six years at the time of the survey it is possible that legal restrictions prior to 2013 were a factor in these findings. Due to the young age group of respondents and lack of contextual follow up questions, it would not be appropriate to conclude anything about how plurisexual women viewed the concept of marriage based on this

finding. Past research, however, has found marriage to be a pressure for bisexual women with partners who were men (Goldberg, Allen, Ellawala, & Ross, 2017; Lynch & Maree, 2013). Goldberg et al. (2017) found that their bisexual participants felt pressure by their families to get married to their partners to fulfil the traditional ideal of a heterosexual, monogamous family. In spite of normative pressures, some bisexual women resisted the expectation of marriage, arguing that these discourses are 'coercive' and marriage is heteronormative and unnecessary (Goldberg et al., 2017; Lynch & Maree, 2013). Therefore, the low rates of marriage in my sample may be due to age, but plurisexual women's ambivalence towards marriage as an institution may be another factor (Goldberg et al., 2017; Lynch & Maree, 2013).

Some research has suggested that there is a higher frequency of non-monogamy among plurisexual women than straight or gay women (Balzarini et al., 2018; Hauptert, Gesselman, Moors, Fisher, & Garcia, 2017). Stereotypes of hypersexuality may indicate that this is because plurisexual people are 'predisposed' to not be monogamous (Balzarini et al., 2018; Diamond, 2006a). Critical theories, however, suggest that plurisexual people practice ethical non-monogamy (including polyamory, swinging, and open relationships) more often than people of other sexual identities due to their position as 'outside' of sexual norms (Klesse, 2011; Li et al., 2013). As plurisexual people reject binary sexuality, they may also be more likely to question mononormativity and consciously reject socially embedded ideas of monogamy, instead trying other forms of sexual and romantic relating (Klesse, 2011; Li et al., 2013). In the present survey sample, 40% of respondents had been in an open or consensually non-monogamous relationship, and two-fifths of these respondents were in a non-monogamous relationship at the time of the survey. This is equivalent to past findings, which has shown that people in polyamorous relationships are much more likely to identify as bisexual than heterosexual, particularly women⁶⁸ (Balzarini et al., 2018).

⁶⁸ As the recruitment poster for this survey was shared among polyamory Facebook groups, its likely this also contributed to the high rate of consensual non-monogamy.

Ethical non-monogamy has been positioned as empowering for queer people because of the deconstruction of heteronormativity that is often tied to this relationship type (Barker & Langdrige, 2010). Interestingly, only half of the survey respondents that have practiced ethical non-monogamy felt that they preferred it to monogamy which, considering the high number of plurisexual people that practice ethical non-monogamy, is surprisingly low. Other research has found that bisexual women find value in ethical non-monogamy as it allows for an exploration of bisexual desire without the restriction of 'compulsory coupledness' (Farvid, 2015; Gusmano, 2018). Further, polyamory and ethical non-monogamy provide access to a community that "collectively understands what it means to build non-monogamous relationships in a mononormative world" (Gusmano, 2018, p. 26). This community is likely an empowering experience when plurisexuality is often associated with invisibility and isolation.

Plurisexual women's partners' gender and sexual identities

Past research – both from the 20th century and recent decades – has consistently found that most plurisexual women are in relationships with men (Hoang et al., 2011; McLean, 2004; Weinberg et al., 1994). In the present survey, two thirds of respondents were in relationships, and almost 70% of these respondents were in a relationship with men. There has been theories that explain this consistent finding, with some scholars suggesting that the higher statistical likelihood of finding a heterosexual person to date is responsible (Matsick & Rubin, 2018; Wu, Marks, Young, & Beasley, 2019). Consistent with this, while plurisexual women can be perceived as 'risky partners', according to research the majority of heterosexual men are willing to date bisexual women (Gleason, Vencill, & Sprankle, 2019; Matsick & Rubin, 2018). A more critical theory for the gendered pattern of plurisexual women's partners is the pervasive impact of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980). The dominance of heteronormativity may lead to plurisexual women feeling pressured to date men due to the ease and protection of heterosexuality compared to the increased marginalisation they may experience when dating women.

While substantially more respondents had been in and were currently in relationships with men than people of other genders, more than half of survey respondents did not see the gender of their partners as important factors in who they wanted to date. This finding suggests that while demographically, plurisexual women are more likely to date men, plurisexual women may not *seek* relationships with men over relationships with people of other genders. Therefore, pressures to ‘settle down’ with men are likely to be covert, possibly a result of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980). Gay and lesbian respondents were significantly more likely than other respondents to see gender as an important factor in deciding to date someone. This suggests that identity term preferences may be influenced by the strength or disparity of plurisexual people’s attraction to different genders (i.e., degree of attraction to women and men).

While most survey respondents were *currently* in relationships with men, data on the gender of past partners is more nuanced. Sixty-eight percent of respondents had been in at least one relationship with a (cis or trans) woman, and 25% of respondents have had gender diverse partners. The high number of gender diverse partners is an interesting finding and supports definitions of bisexuality as attraction to multiple genders – not just to cisgender men and women. In saying that, there was a relatively higher percentage of people who preferred to identify as queer or pansexual that had had gender diverse partners than bisexual respondents (29.8% of pansexual respondents, 38.5% of queer respondents, and 17.6% of bisexual respondents had at least one gender diverse partner). It is likely that people who had partners outside the gender binary chose not to identify as bisexual and viewed pansexuality or queer as better terms to fit their sexuality because of the mainstream association between binary-gendered attraction and bisexuality. Previous research that examined the gender of plurisexual people’s partners has rarely, if ever, reported on genders outside of men and women. Further, research has consistently found that the majority of plurisexual people are in relationships with men, but research has not examined the genders of past partners. Therefore, my finding that more than half of respondents have had relationships with women is not supported by previous literature.

Previous research has noted that bisexual people often date monosexual people; only a third of Toft and Yip (2017) and Weinberg et al. (1994)'s samples were in relationships with other bisexual people. It is likely that this is largely due to the high percentage of plurisexual women who date men – who are, presumably, heterosexual. As the highest proportion of rainbow communities identifies as plurisexual, it seems likely that many plurisexual women would have dated other plurisexual women. The survey results support this, with almost three-quarters of respondents (72.2%) (who had indicated on an earlier question that they had been in relationships with women and/or gender diverse people) had been in a relationship with plurisexual women or gender diverse people. Research has also noted that bisexual people find being in a relationship with other plurisexual people easier as it made them feel more comfortable (Toft & Yip, 2017). As the hostility towards bisexual women from some lesbians has been well documented (Hayfield et al., 2018; Rust, 2000a; Rust, 1993b; Turner, 2015), plurisexual women may feel safer knowing that their partner is also plurisexual and therefore they do not have to worry about potential bi-negativity. Notably, a fifth of respondents had been in romantic relationships with straight women. Research has consistently shown that some self-identified straight women experience romantic attraction and/or relationships with other women (Freud Loewenstein, 2000; Thompson & Morgan, 2008). As 4% of participants in the survey identified both as straight and plurisexual, it is possible that the stigmatisation of queer identities in society and individual tensions with identifying with a non-heterosexual identity may lead these women to identify as heterosexual while simultaneously having romantic relationships with women.

Comparatively, many less survey respondents have been in romantic relationships with plurisexual men (38.6%). This low result is likely because there are many more heterosexual men than plurisexual men. Further, as there is a higher rate of women who identify with plurisexual identities than men – possibly due to discourses of men's sexuality as rigid and the large amount of stigma plurisexual men experience (Armstrong & Reissing, 2014; Dyar & Feinstein, 2018) – this result is unsurprising. It is likely that respondents have encountered more women and gender diverse people

with plurisexual identities than men (Gates, 2011). One other potential hypothesis is that plurisexual women may be less willing to date plurisexual men. Many heterosexual women have been found to not be interested in dating bisexual men due to negative schemas of bisexual men (Armstrong & Reissing, 2014; Gleason et al., 2019). However, research has not yet examined plurisexual women's attitudes towards plurisexual men.

Dating experiences

'Dating' was defined in previous decades as premarital relationships (Christopher & Sprecher, 2000), but as discourses around marriage have shifted, what constitutes dating has changed in recent decades (Taylor, Rappleyea, Fang, & Cannon, 2013). While the end goal of going on dates is still often to find someone to engage in a long term 'committed' relationship with, modern dating is perceived as more casual and not as seriously focused on finding a spouse (Paik, 2010; Taylor et al., 2013). For plurisexual women, finding men to date is often straightforward – although dating men comes with its own complications such as bi-erasure, heteronormativity and 'coming out' to partners (Pond & Farvid, 2017). Finding women to date, however, is more fraught as the dating pool is smaller, lesbian women may be hostile towards bisexual women, and there are less opportunities to meet other queer women unless you visit overtly queer spaces (Pond & Farvid, 2017). Survey findings support claims that dating is fraught for plurisexual women, with most respondents believing that it was more difficult to find same-gender people to date than partners that were a different gender to respondents.

Increasingly, people are turning to mobile dating applications and online dating sites (henceforth shorted to 'dating apps') to find dates, relationships, and sexual partners (Yau, 2019). For queer women, navigating dating offline – particularly when they are seeking other women – can be a complicated practice (Pond & Farvid, 2017). Dating apps provide a convenient way to find other women, without having to enter an offline queer space – which comes with its own challenges (see DeHaan et al., 2013; Pond & Farvid, 2017). More than half of survey respondents (61.9%) had used

dating apps or online dating sites, with most of them using them to find people of any gender to date and/or have sex with. Further, more than half of respondents believed that dating apps were an easy method of finding sex or dating partners (56.2%). While many respondents believed that dating apps and online dating sites was the best way to meet queer women and gender diverse people to date, testing of the data indicated that respondents did not believe dating apps were significantly better for meeting women than meeting men. This leads me to suggest that for plurisexual women, technology-based dating such as dating apps and online dating sites were viewed as, on average, the best way to find dating partners irrespective of their gender.

Sexual experiences and sexual health

Most research into the sexual experiences of plurisexual women has been through a sexual health lens. Outside of a sexual and public health environment, the sexual experiences of plurisexual women is vastly under-examined, despite the associations between bisexuality and hypersexuality. Often, normative and scholarly understandings of sex is of penetrative intercourse (Horowitz & Bedford, 2017). Queer people, however, complicate this heteronormative understanding of penetrative sex as the 'be all and end all' of sex (Averett, Moore, & Price, 2014). To overcome the assumption that sex is only penetrative, within the survey, sex was explicitly defined as consensual acts that include various forms of sexual experiences such as manual (e.g., fingering, hand-jobs et cetera), oral (blow-jobs, cunnilingus et cetera) and penetrative sex (with a toy or penis, in a vagina or anus).

Almost all respondents had had sex at least once at the time of the survey (93.1%). The average age survey respondents had sex for the first time (16.5 years old) was similar to ages reported with heterosexual samples, including in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2009; Lowry, Dunville, Robin, & Kann, 2017; Psutka, Connor, Cousins, & Kypri, 2012). 38.8% of respondents had consenting sex for the first time below the legal age of consent in Aotearoa/New Zealand (which is 16 years of age), including 4% of respondents that had consenting sex for the first time prior to the

age of 13⁶⁹. Past research has indicated that non-heterosexual women have sexual intercourse at an earlier age than their heterosexual counterparts (Lowry et al., 2017; Tornello et al., 2014), although this research only examines penetrative intercourse.

Most respondents had sex with a male/cis man when they first had sex, which is likely the reason for the similarities in average age of sexual debut between this sample and past heterosexual samples. Dempsey, Hillier, and Harrison (2001) suggested that same-sex attracted young women have sex with men exclusively in high school because it helped them 'blend in' with their peers. Young women are socialised within heterosexual discourses which makes having sex with men (exclusively or before having sex with women) a normal and sometimes a necessary part of social development (Dempsey et al., 2001). While most plurisexual women are sexually attracted to men (to varying degrees), it is logical that they will engage in sexual acts with them as their first act of sexual experimentation as they must overcome 'compulsory heterosexuality' in order to act on their sexual desires with women. Further, during the average age most plurisexual women begin having sex, they may be less likely to encounter many other queer people in comparison to when they leave high school and widen their social experiences; this would limit their pool of potential sexual partners to predominately men .

While plurisexual attraction does not always (and does not need to) correspond with plurisexual sexual behaviour, most survey respondents (76.6%) *have* had sex with people of multiple genders. This is similar, but higher than the number of respondents who have had *relationships* with multiple genders, which sits at 70.1%. While there is substantial evidence that indicates that plurisexual women are significantly more likely to engage in relationships with men over people of other genders, there is little evidence of whether plurisexual women are more likely to have sex with men over people of other genders. The present findings indicate that slightly more respondents have had sex with other women than engaged in relationships with them. This may be because women's same

⁶⁹ Defining what constitutes consent can be ambiguous and often personal definitions of consent do not fit legal definitions. Therefore, it was left to survey respondents to self-define consensual sex.

sex sexual behaviours are viewed as pleasing to men and they therefore become normalised as a form of sexual behaviour for (heterosexual) women (Fahs, 2011). While this leads to an increase in the hypersexualisation of bisexuality, it may also provide room for plurisexual women to engage in sexual experiences with other women with minimal stigma even if no men are actually present.

Relationships with women overstep heteronormative acceptability (as it is no longer for male pleasure) and thus may require more personal and public acceptance of their own sexual identity prior to being in a romantic relationship with another woman (Fahs, 2011). While more survey respondents preferred having sex with women over men, most respondents had no preferences when it came to the gender of their sexual partners. As there are very few studies looking at women's sexual experiences with multiple genders, it is difficult to assess whether this is a common finding. Further, more work into plurisexual women's subjective experiences of sexual pleasure is also needed to contextualise this finding. Nevertheless, plurisexual women's lack of preference for the gender of their sexual partners is somewhat surprising as women are often perceived as more appealing casual sexual partners than men, as men are seen as more dangerous and having poorer sexual capabilities than women (Conley, Rubin, Matsick, Ziegler, & Moors, 2014).

Casual sex

In recent decades, casual sex has been a large topic of focus for the media and for researchers leading to what we now describe as 'hook-up culture': an increase in casual sex behaviours among teenagers and emerging adults (Farvid, 2014; Farvid & Braun, 2017; Monto & Carey, 2014). As this attention has largely focussed on heterosexual people and queer men, there is a limited understanding of plurisexual women's casual sex behaviours and experiences. In the context of this survey, casual sex was described as both one-off *and* long term 'non-committed' sex, (i.e., someone they did not have a romantic relationship with). Over three quarters of survey respondents had engaged in casual sex. Rates of casual sex in both queer and heterosexual populations are varied and inconsistent (Farvid & Braun, 2017), so it would not be appropriate to make links between

prevalence rates in this sample and other samples. While most respondents have had casual sex with people of different genders (60.5%), almost all respondents who have had casual sex have done so with a man at least once (93.4%).

Most survey respondents engaged in casual sex to seek sexual pleasure. Much of the research into casual sex is gendered with research often portrayed women as regretful of their casual sexual encounters (Farvid & Braun, 2017; Paul & Hayes, 2002) or suggest that women predominantly engage in casual sex in order to form a romantic relationship with their sexual partner (Heldman & Wade, 2010). As most respondents in my survey had casual sex to seek out pleasure, this indicates that narratives around the agency of women in casual sex situations need to change.

A quarter of survey respondents engaged in casual sex with other women at some point to 'test' their sexual identity. Macey et al. (2017) found that curiosity and (sexual) 'identity crises' were common reasons for their 'heterosexual' or 'mostly heterosexual'-identifying participants to engage in sex with people of the same gender as them. Plurisexual women may be unsure if their attraction to women is 'real' and not a side-effect of being part of a culture that objectifies women (see Chapter nine). Therefore, having sex with other women to see whether they found pleasure in it, or were 'really' attracted to women may be a way to distinguish 'false' attraction from 'real' attraction and assist in understanding their sexual identity.

Half of survey respondents engaged in casual sex at some point because they were under the influence of an alcoholic or illegal drug. Other studies have noted that alcohol is often involved in sex situations as a 'social lubricant' (Paul & Hayes, 2002; Watson et al., 2018b), however this poses concerns for consent as it can reduce the ability to communicate effectively such as in situations where there is different sexual expectations among the individuals involved (Littleton, Tabernik, Canales, & Backstrom, 2009). Further, plurisexual people are more likely to use substances such as alcohol and drugs, compared to other sexual identities (Loi et al., 2017; McQuoid et al., 2019). As substances can contribute to sexual assault such as through inhibiting the interpretations of cues of

potentially risky situations (Littleton et al., 2009), future research needs to examine this possible correlation so we can have greater understanding of sexual risk factors for plurisexual women.

Sexual health

Plurisexual women have been shown to be one of the most at risk sexual identity populations for sexual health problems including higher rates of sexual transmitted infection (STI) diagnosis (Steele, Ross, Dobinson, Veldhuizen, & Tinmouth, 2009), a greater use of emergency contraception (Tornello et al., 2014), and higher rates of teenage pregnancy (Goldberg, Reese, & Halpern, 2016). They are also less likely to access sexual healthcare including sexually transmitted infection testing, and regular Papanicolaou tests (Charlton et al., 2011). This disparity has been attributed to health providers who are uninformed about plurisexuality, and a poor rate of care (Flanders et al., 2019a). At a more systemic level, minority stress theory has attributed these sexual health deficits to the issues a heterosexist and mononormative society can create for plurisexual identified women (Feinstein & Dyar, 2017). Despite the amount of scholarship that has compared health outcomes and problems for plurisexual people to people of other sexual identities, there is limited research looking at the sexual health behaviours of plurisexual women.

Survey respondents placed high amounts of importance in being conscious of STI's. While more respondents believed it was important to conscious of STI's when having sex with males than females, the high number of ties from the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicates that most respondents believed that being conscious of STI's was important regardless of the gender of their partner. Despite the strong beliefs, in action, many respondents did not protect themselves from STI's or other sexual health concerns. Less than 10% of survey respondents had used safe sex methods, such as prophylactics, when having oral sex with another woman despite over 90% of respondents believing it was important to use them. This is consistent with past research, which has found that most women do not use dental dams when having sex with other females, and have poor cleaning habits when sharing sex toys (Bailey et al., 2003; Richters, Prestage, Schneider, & Clayton,

2010). Richters et al. (2010) also found that women most who had used dental dams had only done so once. Similarly, in the present sample, most respondents who had used dental dams had only used them occasionally.

Access to prophylactics such as dental dams is likely to be one of the largest barriers to plurisexual women practicing safe sex with women as there are limited places they are sold in Aotearoa, and they are not given away for free or subsidised (as condoms are). Beliefs around sexual health are another possible risk factor. This includes deprioritising prophylactics because there is no risk of pregnancy, and believing that there is virtually no risk of developing a STI when having sex with another women. Power, McNair, and Carr (2009) found that many queer women believed that “lesbian sex is not real sex” and so sexual health information did not apply to them (p. 75). However, in the present sample, most respondents and interviewees indicated that they *should* engage in safe-sex behaviours with other females and so it is likely this does not apply to this group. Almost all sexual health public information is catered for a heterosexual audience and imbedded with heteronormative assumptions (Hobaica & Kwon, 2017; McAllum, 2014). While most plurisexual women do have sex with men and therefore many parts of sex education are relevant to their experiences, it is evident that sexual health education does need to focus on queer women’s experiences to increase plurisexual women’s positive sexual health behaviour and normalise the use of prophylactics. While more survey respondents used prophylactics when having oral sex with males than with females, the number of respondents who used condoms was below half (43.2%). As STI’s are still able to be transmitted through oral sex, this is concerning. While previous studies have indicated that use of condoms for oral sex with males is low (Stone, Hatherall, Ingham, & McEachran, 2006), there has been minimal research that examined behaviour around condom use for oral sex and none with plurisexual women. While broadly, lack of condom use during oral sex with males can be attributed to poor educational resources on the transmission of STI’s, it is unknown whether there are extra barriers to plurisexual women engaging in STI protective behaviours.

Chapter summary

This chapter provided a discussion of the survey results that were presented in the previous chapter. Under four headings (*Sexual identity, Social experiences and marginalisation, Romantic relationships, and Sexual experiences and sexual health*), the characteristics of surveyed plurisexual women's lives and identities were examined. The next chapter introduces section three of this thesis and provides an introduction to the themes highlighted in the critical thematic analysis in the succeeding chapters.

PART THREE

*“Well it's complicated ... I am bisexual but I don't know that I'd identify as bisexual”
(Gabby, 68, queer, Pākehā).*

PREFACE TO PART THREE

The following three chapters examine the main themes that resulted from the critical thematic analysis carried out on the interview data. Each theme covers a topic that was evident in the data pertaining to interviewees identities and experiences as plurisexual women. These themes will also include discussions of the discourses about sexuality and identity that the interviewees drew on to situate their sexual identities. Each of the following chapters deals with separate themes relating to plurisexuality, however it was evident that the social marginalisation of plurisexuality permeated all aspects of plurisexual women's experiences relating to their sexuality. Therefore, to fully situate their experiences, a governing theme is presented below. The intention with outlining the governing theme – titled *Bisexuality as socially unacceptable* – is to ground the subsequent themes by contextualising the interviewees unified experiences as plurisexual women. The tenets presented in this governing theme informed and constructed interviewees experiences and perspectives on their plurisexuality. The congruent ways that interviewees described experiencing the marginalisation of their sexual identities and how they related to the three themes presented in **Chapters eight, nine, and ten** will be outlined, using sub-themes to organise the sections.

Bisexuality as socially unacceptable

As demonstrated so far throughout this thesis, plurisexual identities are typically marginalised; plurisexual identities are systemically erased and made invisible while simultaneously portrayed as being undesirable, particularly bisexuality – which is the most ubiquitous plurisexual identity. This marginalisation was a topic that was discussed by all interviewees. Specifically, stereotypes of *bisexuality* were salient for all plurisexual women. These stereotypes included bisexual women being risky partners, hypersexual, likely to cheat on their partners, and bisexuality being a contested identity. Consistent with past research, many interviewees had not directly faced hostility for their plurisexuality or perceived themselves to have overtly been the target of such stereotyping (Bostwick et al., 2014). Instead, interviewees reported being familiar with these stereotypes due to their cultural ubiquity. Most participants rejected the idea that their behaviour matched those stereotypes but nonetheless, their knowledge of them shaped the social interactions that related to their sexuality. While many interviewees *believed* they had not experienced discrimination, discussion of their experiences made evident their experiences of prejudice and identity erasure.

All interviewees discussed stereotypes solely in relation to bisexuality, rather than other plurisexual identities. Many interviewees noted that while bisexuality is discriminated against, they assumed that the majority of society does not know about other plurisexual identities such as pansexuality and queerness. These identities were often framed as ‘in-group’ identities – only familiar to other rainbow and plurisexual people. Therefore, negative stereotypes and schemas had not (yet) been attributed to those labels. However, all interviewees who identified as pansexual also used the word bisexual to describe themselves in certain contexts. Hence, by using both terms – and as monosexism is not specific to bisexuality – they were not protected from discrimination by identifying as pansexual. Interviewees who identified as queer (and who had never identified as bisexual or pansexual) argued that they did not personally experience bisexual stereotyping and discrimination. Queer-identified interviewees did, however, indicate that they were still conscious of the negative connotations around bisexuality.

In Chapter four, I noted that the erasure, invisibility, and marginalisation of plurisexual identities is a systemic issue that also operates at the individual level. Alarie and Gaudet (2013) proposed four mechanisms whereby bisexuality is invisibilised: by ignoring plurisexuality by placing heterosexuality and homosexuality in opposition; depicting bisexuality as a temporary or transient phase; by gatekeeping who can identify with a plurisexual identity; and devaluing plurisexual identities by portraying them as deviant. Below, three of these four mechanisms and how they informed interviewees' constructions of their plurisexuality will be discussed. The fourth mechanism, gatekeeping, will be discussed in Chapter ten.

Bisexuals as hypersexual

As demonstrated by previous research, a prominent stereotype of bisexuals is that they are hypersexual and therefore 'risky' partners (Brewster & Moradi, 2010; Klesse, 2005). Conscious of this stereotype, interviewees believed bisexuals were regularly deemed morally and sexually 'loose'.

This was summed up by Ava:

Ava: I think 90% of the world thinks about queer people in like this box; that they are all sexually fluid, they are all whores, they are all have no morals, have no commitment or integrity. Which is fucked (laughs) (26, pansexual, NZ Māori/Pākehā).

This link between bisexuality, queerness, and denigrated morality is viewed by Ava as mediated by sexual fluidity. There has been recent growth in acceptance of sexual permissiveness in mainstream Anglo-Western society (Farvid, 2012). Nevertheless, a vilification of women's sexuality leads women whose identities are associated with hypersexuality (such as plurisexuality) to be stigmatised (Klesse, 2011; Souto Pereira et al., 2016). By being depicted as 'whorish', bisexuals are associated with immorality and degeneracy (Feinstein et al., 2016). This extends beyond their sexual behaviour to reflect poorly on their character. Feminist scholars have suggested that this 'whore stigma' can render forms of women's sexual behaviour that are outside of men's control socially undesirable (Klesse, 2005). This stigma likely maintains regulatory control of queer sexuality through social

stigmatisation; further marginalising bisexuality by positioning people who identify as plurisexual as (sexually) immoral (Klesse, 2005, 2011).

Plurisexual identities are often hidden, which means that much of the stress of identifying as plurisexual does not directly stem from overtly 'biphobic' people. Instead, the marginalisation often comes from an environment that proliferates problematic and potentially dangerous stereotypes about plurisexuality (Souto Pereira et al., 2016; Yoshino, 2000). Encountering negative attitudes and perceptions of bisexuality are harmful to plurisexual people even if they have never personally experienced them directly. This awareness of negative stereotypes of bisexuals shaped how interviewees discussed their sexuality in social situations and with their partners:

Tara: Would you feel the need to maintain [the visibility of] your bisexuality if you were in a relationship? Do you think that the visibility of that personal identity would be important?

Nadia: Goodness (...) you know I wouldn't go on about it. I certainly wouldn't you know (...) it would feel like I was torturing them, or you know just unnerving them. If I was in a relationship with a woman and I said yeah but I'm bisexual it would be like I was reminding her that I might run off with a man (...). I would think that they would think I wasn't really committed and that's big; I realise it now that's a big thing about the bisexual label (63, 'bisexual for want of a better word', Pākehā).

Interviewees described being familiar with the associations between bisexuality and non-monogamy. That is – plurisexual people are seen as unable – or unwilling – to maintain a relationship with only one person at a time. This may lead to fears that their partners would, too, be conscious of the associations between plurisexuality and non-monogamous promiscuity. Consequently, plurisexual women's partners might assume they would inevitably be cheated on because their partner identifies as bisexual. Nadia noted that the fear was especially prominent when in a relationship with a woman. In addition to the association between bisexuality and cheating, plurisexual women are familiar with the negative attitudes some lesbians hold toward bisexual women (Beach et al., 2019). The political tension between lesbians and bisexuality is attributed to anger at bisexuality's close association with heterosexuality (due to plurisexual women's attraction to men) (Seidman, 2015). Due to this tension, previous research has found that bisexual women

worry about being rejected by lesbians (Beach et al., 2019; Hayfield et al., 2014). By not discussing her bisexuality with her partner, plurisexual women such as Nadia are able to avoid their (lesbian) partners associating them with heterosexuality.

A reading of Nadia and other interviewees description of bisexual stereotypes can be analysed through stereotype threat theory (see Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Stereotype threat theory postulates that individuals can fear being judged for confirming stereotypes about a group that they belong to (Fingerhut & Abdou, 2017). Consequently, when stereotypes relating to a person's identity are salient, this form of stigma can create fears of potentially confirming those stereotypes, and being discriminated against (Fingerhut & Abdou, 2017). Stereotype threat theory argues that familiarity with stereotypes can inform and shape people's behaviour. As prejudice against bisexuals largely manifests through stereotypes related to monogamy (Klesse, 2005), it follows that these stereotypes are most salient when plurisexual women are in relationships. Interviewees such as Nadia thus avoid discussing their bisexuality with their partners to decrease likelihood of invoking bisexual stereotypes. This unwillingness to discuss their sexuality with monosexual people that some interviewees described suggests that some plurisexual women are anxious about their partners seeing their (potential for) attraction to men as a threat and a risk to their monogamy.

In the above quotes we can see that interviewees are familiar with the association between bisexuality and 'risky' (or what Alarie and Gaudet (2013) termed 'deviant') behaviour. However, there was variation in how this impacted interviewees feelings towards their sexuality and their behaviours. Interviewees such as Ava viewed hypersexuality and stereotypes of cheating as untrue and problematic and she was more likely to critique negative depictions of bisexuality. Other interviewees, such as Nadia, believed the association between bisexuality and cheating to be accurate and were thus seemingly less likely to take pride in and form positive associations with bisexuality as an identity. Embedded in these narratives is a tension between individual *experiences* of bisexuality and social *representations* of bisexuality. The social unacceptability of bisexuality

informs both how plurisexual women see *themselves* as plurisexual, *and* bisexuality as an independent social concept. The sense of self sitting alongside external concepts of bisexuality can play off and inform each other. In this way, the varying subject positions that plurisexual women occupy within 'bisexuality as hypersexual' discourses may frame their relationship towards their sexual identity. Hence while Nadia sees herself as a non-promiscuous and monogamous bisexual woman, the external image of bisexuality as deviant and promiscuous continues to inform her behaviour surrounding how she depicts her own sexuality. These behaviours included avoiding discussing her bisexuality with partners to confine the negative associations with bisexuality within herself.

Bisexuality as invisible

Bisexual erasure is one way that plurisexual identities are marginalised, through denigrating bisexuality's legitimacy as a sexual identity. This is done systemically through discourses that naturalise a dichotomous model of sexuality (i.e., construct heterosexuality and homosexuality as the most 'legitimate' and innate sexual orientations). Individual plurisexual identities are also routinely erased, with bisexuality depicted predominantly as both a vacillating identity and illegitimate in the long-term. For interviewees, this erasure was most prominent when they were in a relationship. Interviewees discussed the ways bisexuality is erased from relationship narratives and a monosexual imperative is instilled in their lives:

Manon: Something that's putting me off dating at the moment as well is that it doesn't matter who I date, I know that I'm gonna have to hear from people that "oh so you've chosen now and you've finally decided" (...). If I started dating a guy then I kind of have this feeling - I know it's completely stupid to feel that way but can't help it – that it would lessen my identity in a way and like people would be like "oh you're not so much bi anymore" (23, bisexual, White European).

The mononormative lens that positions a relationship between a man and woman as heterosexual, and between two women as lesbian erases the potential for plurisexual people in relationships to be visibly plurisexual. Manon's criticising of her own feelings in the above quote ("*it's completely stupid to feel that way*") is consistent with the tension plurisexual women can face by not wanting to be

complicit in the delegitimising of bisexuality when in a relationship. The need to feel that they are appropriately displaying their sexual identity and not contributing to its erasure is an example of cognitive labour plurisexual women feel that they must enact in order to be a good bisexual citizen, while also avoiding their identity being invalidated (This theme is elaborated upon in Chapter nine). Consequently, mononormativity may inform how plurisexual women navigate their romantic and sexual lives and the partners they choose, as they may feel they need to prioritise avoiding bi-erasure in their intimate lives.

While invisibility of their sexual identity was something interviewees were uncomfortable with experiencing, this discomfort was increased when in a 'heterosexual-passing' relationship. Therefore, some plurisexual women express a preference for being seen as lesbian rather than straight because they are viewed as "still queer" – even though they are not seen as plurisexual. While policing of bisexuality in queer communities will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter ten, it is important to note here that bisexual women are highly conscious of their status as part of rainbow communities is conditional on being viewed as queer. This fear of erasure and rejection from rainbow community members is anticipated and shapes plurisexual women's behaviour. This includes forms of strategic censorship by not mentioning their partner's gender when in queer community groups and events if they are likely to be viewed as in a heterosexual relationship. Indicated in both my data and previous research, this strategy of not mentioning their partners gender is done for fear of being rejected from the community group or facing hostility from others, (Hayfield et al., 2014; Schimanski & Treharne, 2018). Other techniques mentioned by interviewees included favouring relationships with women, so their non-heterosexuality is more evident.

Another form of delegitimising plurisexuality lies in dominant representations of bisexual women as young, sexually desirable and promiscuous which we can see in mainstream media and pornographic depictions of plurisexuality (San Filippo, 2013). These depictions of bisexuality can lead to further invisibility when plurisexual women do not fit this representation:

Leigh: I feel like it's quite rare that you would see a 34 year old bisexual woman, because by the time you're 34 you're married, you've got children, and if you've married a woman you're gay, and if you've married a man you're heterosexual. I had that conversation with my husband must've been about 5 or 6 years ago and I said 'aw you know I still like women' and he goes 'but it doesn't matter because you're married to me' and I was like well actually it does matter because I'm still attracted to women regardless of who I'm married to (34, bisexual, Māori/Pākehā).

Bisexuality is often framed in popular discourse as a phase for young, white cisgender women. This can be seen in the language used in common lexicon to describe bisexual women, such as 'bar-sexual' and 'gay until graduation' as described in Chapter one (Fahs & Koerth, 2018). Each term implies that women who are university-aged and/or spend time at bars are more likely to 'experiment' with their sexual identity or identify as plurisexual. Most media depictions of bisexuals are young, often child-free cisgender white women which compounds this stereotype (GLAAD Media Institute, 2019; San Filippo, 2013). Women who are regarded as less desirable – such as women older than thirty and women with children – are less likely to be perceived as bisexual, possibly because men are less interested in objectifying them and their sexuality (Fahs, 2009). Resulting from this, people who identify as plurisexual but less conventionally desirable to the 'masculine gaze' are left without representation of their plurisexuality in society, as Leigh indicates in the above quote (Johnson, 2016). Visible representation, such as through media, is important for the resilience of rainbow people (Craig & McInroy, 2014; Craig, McInroy, McCready, & Alaggia, 2015). The lack of representation is problematic due to the importance of media in our lives as "media transmits cultural meanings and experiences (in both offline and online media) through characterological representations of identity and social location that socialize youth populations by creating and reinforcing behaviours, expectations, and meanings of cultural appropriateness" (Craig et al., 2015). Not being able to access representations of plurisexuality beyond limited perceptions of plurisexuals as young, cisgender white women may be detrimental to plurisexual women's perceptions of their sexual identity.

Further to both Leigh and Manon's points about the erasure of plurisexual women's sexual identities in relationships, plurisexual identities are seen as needing to be actively *enacted* – presumably by having relationships and/or sex with people of multiple genders – to be seen as legitimate. In comparison to plurisexuality, gay and straight identities are continuously visible in relationships which gives them more social legitimacy and less ambiguity⁷⁰. For plurisexual women, this erasure leaves them to face bi-erasure from society through the naturalisation of monosexuality. As a result, plurisexual women may be anticipating bi-invisibility and attempting to manage the erasure to avoid feeling that their sexual identity is illegitimate.

Bisexuality as transient

An enduring belief about bisexuality, upheld by mononormativity, is that bisexuals are 'on the fence' between heterosexuality and homosexuality and that they need to, or are eventually going to, choose one side (McLean, 2008b). Some interviewees problematised depictions of plurisexuality as transient identities:

Hana: Some gay men will come out saying they're bisexual but they're actually not, but they feel like it's more acceptable [than gay]. Those types of things can be harmful to the image of bisexual people as being sort of vacillating. But at the same time, I think what's wrong with vacillating? You know the sort of idea that everything has to be like always the same, which is not my experience at all (...) so I don't know why somethings [are] not valid unless it's like always like this kind of immutable thing (37, bisexual, Japanese/Pākehā).

Monosexual identities are framed as stable, innate and therefore superior identities in dominant discourse. Comparatively, the perception of instability and ambiguity of plurisexual identities can delegitimise them as sexual identities. As Hana muses above, one way in which plurisexual identities are seen as unstable is through being seen as a 'stepping stone' en route to a gay identity – one that gay people use to 'test the waters' of queerness. This reading of bisexuality views it as a 'safer' identity than gay, because it is still 'half heterosexual' in that gay individuals are still potentially attracted to women, thereby not fully rejecting compulsory heterosexuality. This 'stepping stone'

⁷⁰ Heterosexuality is also seen as legitimate because often it is not seen as an identity at all but a 'natural' form of being. So my argument is more strongly applied to homosexuality and gay identities.

perception perpetuates the erasure of plurisexuality by not viewing bisexuality as its own destination but a step on the journey to gay self-acceptance which upholds the dominance of monosexuality (a view taken by many sexual identity and coming out development models) (Eliason, 1996). Further, as Hana suggests, this perception indicates that fluidity is an unacceptable and immature form of sexuality. Therefore, while many bisexual activists work towards legitimatising bisexuality as a stable identity equal to heterosexuality and homosexuality, other plurisexual women argue that stability should not be equivocated with legitimacy.

Discourses that perpetuate bisexuality as a half-heterosexual and half-homosexual identity can create a sense of being “trapped between two worlds” for plurisexual women. An extract from Tessa illustrates this:

Tessa: There's no distinct position in society where like pansexual or bisexual people exist. So, like you are kind of forced to exist in either camp in terms of like heterosexual or lesbian. It's a really confusing position to occupy. [Bisexuality is] kind of not legitimised because you don't get bisexual support groups and (...) there's a lot of dating apps or websites that still won't let you truly identify as bisexual (...). There's not a true identity that is attached to [bisexuality] and therefore you kinda end up just being a mix of the other two (34, pansexual, Pākehā).

As a result of the privileging of monosexuality in our society, many plurisexual people exist in a ‘borderland’ space between – yet erased by – the (heterosexual-homosexual) sexual binary (Callis, 2014). Despite increased visibility of plurisexual identities in recent years, this ‘in-between’ state leaves many, such as Tessa, feeling like they are not as much a member of society, in comparison to people with more privileged and/or less marginalised identities. When plurisexual identities are acknowledged as legitimate, they are nevertheless placed on a continuum between heterosexuality and homosexuality. This positions plurisexual women as half heterosexual – through their attraction to men – and half homosexual – in their attraction to women. This depiction of plurisexuality reinforces the illegitimacy of plurisexuality by framing it as an identity that is not independent of monosexual identities, but an amalgamation of them. This framing rids plurisexuality of its unique experiences, challenges, and forms of attraction separate to monosexual identities.

The erasure and delegitimisation of plurisexuality, and the viewing of it as an amalgamation of homosexuality and heterosexuality creates tensions in navigating social environments for plurisexual people, such as community spaces and dating websites⁷¹, as Tessa described above. It is likely that many of the issues plurisexual people face when navigating social spaces is amplified by living in a small country with less rainbow resources. For example, there are very few rainbow communities' spaces and groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and currently only one offline bisexual-specific group. However other research has also noted that in other countries there are also few places specifically for bisexual people (Callis, 2014; Hayfield et al., 2014). This 'borderlands' position of plurisexuality can leave plurisexual women feel alienated and unsupported (Hayfield et al., 2014).

⁷¹ While many online dating apps and websites do not ask for your sexual identity terms, often only men or women are searchable, leading plurisexual people to having to choose what gender of people they want to look at and pursue on the sites (Pond, 2016).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Negotiating Hetero-society

We exist in a society that is heteronormative – that is a “system of beliefs, attitudes, and social practices that define and compel adherence to normative (hetero)sexuality.” (Habarth, Wickham, Holmes, Sandoval, & Balsam, 2019, p. 1). Heteronormativity often underpinned interviewees’ understandings of queer sexuality, informing how they positioned their own plurisexuality. This chapter explores how plurisexual women grapple with a heteronormative cultural context and deconstruct discourses around heterosexuality in their own lives⁷². Interviewees subject positioning was often fraught with contradictions – heterosexuality was both undesirable, yet a safe harbour from prejudice and marginalisation.

This theme is divided into three sub-themes: *Heterosexuality as the default sexuality* explores compulsory heterosexuality and how it shapes plurisexual women’s dating behaviours with people of different genders; *Normativity and rebellion* examines how heterosexuality is viewed as ‘boring’ and normative, and how plurisexual women frame their sexuality as a transgressive rebellion against heteronormativity; and *Discrimination and safety* discusses how plurisexual women must grapple with how heterosexuality is intertwined with the systematic oppression of plurisexuality, both as a problematic form of erasure and as a safe harbour from discrimination.

Heterosexuality as the default

Compulsory heteronormativity places men at the centre of women’s worlds, values, and romantic “choices” (Rich, 1980). A system of heteronormativity privileges heterosexual behaviour, cultures, and actions (Ingraham, 2005; Jackson, 1999). Therefore, women’s romantic relationships with men are presumed to be natural and inevitable. Due to this privileging of heterosexuality, queer people

⁷² In this theme I will be using ‘heteronormativity’ to refer to the idea that as a society heterosexuality is seen as the norm and default, and ‘heterosexuality’ to refer to heterosexual as a sexual identity.

have critiqued plurisexuals as benefiting from “straight passing privilege” when they are in a relationship that is viewed as heterosexual (Wandrey et al., 2015). However, as plurisexual activists have argued, being viewed as complicit with heteronormativity is not a privilege but instead part of the system of oppression and erasure plurisexual people experience (Hayfield et al., 2014; Ritchie, 2016). For example, as a consequence of both heteronormativity and mononormativity, plurisexual women’s queerness is presumed to be a transient identity that recedes when they are in a long-term relationship or marriage with a man.

Interviewees were cognizant of the privileging of heterosexuality in society. They described heteronormativity as leading to complications for them as plurisexual women who were attracted to men. Some interviewees expressed anxiety over not wanting to be complicit in heteronormativity and thus the erasure of their sexual identity. Interviewees explained that their awareness of compulsory heterosexuality had impeded their understanding of themselves as plurisexual in their past:

Nadia: I didn't consciously fall in love with a woman until I was 25. I'd just broken up with a man I was engaged to (...) and then I met this woman on a trip and just fell for her (...) and I decided then that I was a lesbian and I'd been one all along and I must have just repressed it with my heterosexuality (63, 'bisexual for want of a better word', Pākehā).

In the above quote we can see the tensions between binary positionings of heterosexuality, as Nadia framed her experiences of attraction at the time as either ‘heterosexual’ or ‘lesbian’. Her inability to construct her attractions as indicative of a bisexual identity indicates the erasure of plurisexuality in sexuality narratives. Reflecting on this time, however, Nadia constructs this moment as a form of compulsory heterosexuality, where her attractions to men and her attractions to women are incompatible. Compulsory heterosexuality, as described by Rich (1980), and other second wave feminists operates as a form of institutional patriarchal power that frames heterosexuality as an innate orientation (Millett, 1970; Oakley, 1972; Rubin, 1975). Compulsory heterosexuality is then forced on women, limiting their agency to choose other sexual identities (Rich, 1980). Although

originating in second wave feminist writing, in our current fourth wave of feminism, feminist concepts such as heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality have been inserted into many queer women's lexicon (Turley & Fisher, 2018). For plurisexual women, awareness and familiarity with the concepts of heteronormativity can lead them to transfer these constructions into readings of their personal experiences. As compulsory heterosexuality was intended to describe the form of systemic prejudice lesbian women face (Rich, 1980), the impact of this sits differently with plurisexual queer women as they *are* often attracted to men. For example, Nadia, a self-identified ardent feminist, described being uncertain whether her attraction to men was a product of the patriarchy or her personal desire. Nadia's lack of certainty illustrates a tension that plurisexual women experience as they fear that their attraction to men is not 'real' but is a product of the subjugation of women's sexuality through compulsory heterosexuality in a patriarchal environment. While the social workings of compulsory heterosexuality can facilitate uncertainty in plurisexual women's attractions, it can also take away women's autonomy towards discerning their own sexual identity. This is done by frame heterosexuality not a 'choice', but a given. Most interviewees pointed out that it was through their attraction to a woman that they 'realised'⁷³ they may be queer. Prior to this 'queer awakening' almost all interviewees identified as heterosexual or did not identify with a sexual identity – with the implication that they were heterosexual by 'default':

Tara: Before you understood yourself as bisexual did you see yourself as heterosexual or straight?

Luna: Yeah (...). I didn't know there was any other options to be honest (laughs). Nobody I knew was anything other than straight and nobody ever talked about it. Like the very first time I went 'huh' was watching the episode of Friends where Ross's wife is with another woman (...). I kinda knew that I was interested to know more about that but there was not much that I could learn from or read about [as] it was the 90s (37, bisexual, Pākehā).

Luna was one of many interviewees that described feeling as though they did not have a choice about their sexual identity until they became aware of other options via media. The stigma

⁷³ An exploration of the use of language such as 'realised' as it pertains to sexual identity development occurs in Chapter ten.

surrounding women's attraction to women – accompanied by heteronormativity – meant there had to be a 'trigger' that instilled the idea that they may not be heterosexual. Interviewees cited television shows and films, such as Luna above, or an obvious attraction to another woman as ways that they were 'released' from heterosexuality. Extending the idea that compulsory heterosexuality creates hurdles for women to identify as lesbian (Rich, 1980), it may be more difficult for plurisexual people, in comparison to lesbians, to realise they are not heterosexual as their attraction to men is used as 'evidence' that they *are* heterosexual, and therefore delays awareness of their attraction to women. This is supported by research that found that lesbians identify with queer identities younger than bisexual people do (Balsam & Mohr, 2007). This finding may reveal that a plurisexual woman's capacity to claim a non-heterosexual identity is often constrained to using contextually supported representations (e.g. through media) to 'discover' their queerness.

Interviewees who claimed to have always known they were attracted to multiple genders cited growing up in an inclusive environment which demonstrated other ways to desire people outside of compulsory heterosexuality. An example of this is Emily, who believed she always knew she was 'different' (i.e., not heterosexual) as a result of her unique upbringing:

Tara: Could you tell me about your journey, like when – if you ever – realised you weren't straight or if you did identify as straight when you were younger?

Emily: It had always been there. My family– my dad's gay, I lived in a house with transgendered [*sic*] women when I was a child, and I lived with a drag queen, so my life was very different. So, my identity around who I was wasn't really as heavily influenced about specifics because I knew lots of people who were quite different (39, 'bi/pan/queer/everything', Pākehā).

The contextual environment of their early lives appeared to have afforded women such as Emily alternative sexuality discourses. This seems to have acted to reduce the power of influence of the dominant social discourse of heteronormativity. Broadly however, plurisexual women's sexuality and attraction to both men and people of other genders continue to be confined by heteronormativity.

In recent decades there has been an increase in discourses that encourage sexual exploration, and growth in visibility of non-heterosexual individuals in many facets of society such as in media, politics, and business (Callis, 2016; Fahs, 2009; Houro, 2019; Institute, 2019; Kerrigan, 2018). This visibility suggests that people are increasingly becoming more aware of other potential sexual identities beyond heterosexuality (Compton & Bridges, 2019). Nevertheless, heteronormativity continues to successfully create a system of privilege for heterosexual people that can make life more complex for non-heterosexual people. As a result, many interviewees felt pressure – even when aware of their non-heterosexual identity – to conform to heteronormativity:

Tara: When you were younger before you identified as gay? Did you identify as heterosexual or did you see yourself as heterosexual?

Casey: Yup (...) just 'cause (4 second pause) that's kind of how it happens unfortunately.

Tara: And so, did you date men because you felt a pressure from people to do so? Or did you do it because you were attracted to them? Or you wanted to date them?

Casey: I think it was more a pressure thing like that's what you do, that's what my friends were doing, that's what I should do (25, bisexual/gay, Pākehā).

For interviewees such as Casey, attraction to men was not often the driving force behind dating men. Above, I argued that some plurisexual women feel pressured to downplay their attraction to men to be deemed 'queer enough' for the queer community. The opposite can also occur, where plurisexual women can feel pressure (from themselves, family members, friends et cetera) to date men (Lahti, 2018). Heteronormativity appears to affect plurisexual women in a different way than lesbians, as it can lead to an added pressure and/or enticement to engage in relationships with men because they already hold the potential to be attracted to them. Thus, it could be argued that there is an inevitability of a 'heterosexual' relationship for plurisexual women. This pressure is described by such women as regulated by social discourses and social relationships, such as wanting to mirror their peers' heterosexual behaviour in order to appear 'normal'.

The policing of plurisexual women's desire appears to manifest through their experiences of pressure to date women to be viewed as queer, date men to conform to heteronormative

expectations, and finally to provide 'evidence' of their plurisexuality through listing their dating and sexual history to others. As such, personal decisions relating to their intimate relationships could be indicative of a pattern of conforming to societal pressures. While plurisexual women are attracted to men and may desire a relationship with one, this may be viewed not as a form of queer desire but operating within compulsory heterosexuality. For example, Goldberg et al. (2017) argued that by not disclosing their bisexual identity to others when in a relationship with a man, bisexual women do not properly represent bisexuality as a "viable form of desire" (p. 3) and uphold heteronormativity. It is due to this 'straight-passing privilege' narrative that many plurisexual women, as interviewees described, felt like they were not being 'true' to the queer community by dating men. This sets up plurisexual women to hold the burden of changing society from a system of heteronormativity and mononormativity, at a potentially great cost to their own psychological wellbeing.

Normativity and delightful rebellion

This sub-theme covers how interviewees de-politicised heterosexuality, viewing the identity as boring. Their framing of heterosexuality led to joy and pleasure in their perceived rebellion by identifying as plurisexual, and some interviewees revelled in the idea of living outside what they see as the mundanity of normativity.

As heterosexuality is often synonymous with heteronormativity, it can often be framed as a normative and therefore a 'vanilla' or uninteresting identity (Beasley, Holmes, & Brook, 2015). Some interviewees depicted heterosexuality in this manner:

Nadia: I got attracted to a man and feeling like I was kicked out of the lesbian community. I, you know, didn't really belong anywhere unless of course I married him but then I was a little bit worried that I wouldn't ever entirely fit in that heterosexual world either but at least I'd be in a relationship with him.

Tara: Why did you feel like you wouldn't fully fit in?

Nadia: I think by now I've been so enculturated by the lesbian and feminist world that I would find [heterosexual] dinner parties incredibly fucking boring (laughter) (63, 'bisexual for want of a better word', Pākehā).

For Nadia, being with a man *and* being a part of lesbian and feminist networks could not co-exist as she felt that she would be kicked out of the ‘lesbian world’ for not being ‘queer enough’. This is indicative of the “trapped between two worlds” experience of plurisexuality (described above). The hostility of lesbian communities towards bisexuals and their relationships with men can isolate plurisexual women from communities that provide protection from marginalisation (Balsam & Mohr, 2007; Bradford, 2004). While research has found that lesbian communities often consider plurisexuals ‘too straight to be gay’, there is also an incongruence between heterosexuality and plurisexuality. The difference being, discourses that privilege monosexuality can lead to plurisexual people continuing to face prejudice and discrimination from heterosexual people (Dodge et al., 2016). As a result, plurisexual women such as Nadia feel torn between their attraction to men and a sense of community.

Nadia positions her lesbian community as much more desirable than the “incredibly fucking boring” world of being part of a ‘heterosexual’ couple. This invokes a dichotomy that was taken up by some interviewees – viewing heterosexuality as boring and a-political, and queerness as political and interesting (see Chapter nine for a larger discussion on queerness as a political identity):

Katie: I probably have slight judgements towards heterosexual people just for leading normal lives or normative lives (...). I fell in love with one of my female friends and she came over to visit. She's really gorgeous, she's a really lovely person and I was like ‘ah I’m actually- I think I’m in love with you’ and she's like ‘I’m so straight’ and I’m like ugh how boring (31, bisexual/pansexual, Thai/Pākehā).

At the beginning of our interview, Katie stated that she identified as “unconventional” and that this was an important part of how she saw herself. In the above quote you can see that she saw heterosexuality – through her lens of being unconventional and therefore non-normative – as “boring” (Beasley et al., 2015). Katie noted that she judged heterosexual people for this, with the implication being that they have autonomy over ‘complying’ with normative heterosexuality, which they decide not to take (Beasley, Brook, & Holmes, 2012). By positioning heterosexuality as normative, plurisexuality and non-heterosexuality is still positioned as ‘other’, which is already an

implicit part of heteronormativity. But in this reframing by interviewees, non-heterosexuality, and being 'other' to dominant sexual ideologies is seen as desirable and enjoyable.

Interviewees, by positioning their sexual identity in defiance to 'heterosexuality', sought to destabilise the hetero-centricity and patriarchy of society within their own lives. This 'rebellion' was an important part of their identity for many interviewees,

Tara: Do you feel like it's political, your sexuality?

Tui: Absolutely, definitely. But I like that because I love pushing people (laughs). I want people to realise that the world isn't straight and narrow and like, it's not the perfect body and it's not black and white, there is vibrant colour, there is lots of different sizes of people, lots of different skin tones and background and cultures and sexualities and genders. We don't have to live in such a constrained world (27, queer, Māori/Pākehā).

Tui used her queerness, which she attributed earlier in the interview to her "rebellious nature", as an armour to 'push back' against normative and dichotomous societal structures. By being on the outside of heterosexuality – which she viewed as "constrained", Tui can freely embrace what society has deemed 'undesirable'. This maps onto a positioning of queerness as challenging heteronormativity through rebellion that has been an integral part of queer communities for over half a century (Westerfelhaus & Lacroix, 2006). While being pushed to the margins as a form of oppression, queer people have reclaimed this marginalisation as a form of power against systemic structures such as heteronormativity. This rebellion against heterosexuality is talked about as a joyful and agentic response to the constraints of 'normativity' which strengthens their identity positioning. Therefore, the 'goal' of Tui's form of queer politics is not to enculturate non-heterosexuality into the same status of normativity in which that heterosexuality exists, but to disrupt heteronormativity.

Other interviewees, while rebelling against heteronormativity, also felt that their identity rebelled against the 'masculine gaze':

Tara: Do you think your enjoyment of sex and casual sex is related to your sexuality?

Jess: Yeah 'cause I love women so much (...). I often feel like it's like such a fuck you as well because I love women a lot and I love people that aren't a man or a woman and I'm like yeah it's really enjoyable, like we enjoy each other's bodies, we enjoy having sex (...). I think it's a lot of it's like a fuck you to a lot of men who are like 'aw you just haven't slept with the right man yet that's why you're gay' and I'm like no I have slept with some great men but (laughs) I still prefer women (21, queer, Pākehā).

Jess is primarily attracted to women and non-binary people and this is something she described as relishing. She described a sense of agency over her sexuality by usurping men's assumptions about sex and enjoyment. By favouring sex with women, plurisexual women can feel that they are destabilising heteronormative assumptions about men as the centre of women's priorities and enjoyment. The integration of sexual pleasure and political subversion of men's (sexual) entitlement that Jess suggested above identifies a core part of many plurisexual women's readings of their own experiences: the personal is political (Glick, 2000). Desire for women can create a reprieve from – and subversion towards – heteronormativity for plurisexual women; it positions sex between two women not for the consumption of men, but instead, purely for the enjoyment of the women involved. Again, this relates back to Rich's (1980) discussion of compulsory heterosexuality. Specifically, Rich (1980) described how women's pleasure is economically prescribed under capitalism, particularly in the realm of pornography which routinely exploits queer women:

“The most pernicious message relayed by pornography is that women are natural sexual prey to men and love it. (...) [pornography] widens the range of behavior considered acceptable from men in heterosexual intercourse – behavior which reiteratively *strips women of their autonomy, dignity, and sexual potential*, including the potential of loving and being loved by women in mutuality and integrity” (Rich, 1980, p. 641, emphasis my own).

Rich describes love between women as desecrated in and through pornography. Extending this argument, sex and pleasure that does not cater for the masculine gaze is equally as important and rebellious for queer women. For plurisexual women, seeking pleasure for themselves, and rejecting the desire of men while doing so, can add an enjoyable defiance and salaciousness to their behaviour.

Discrimination and safety

This sub-theme examines the landscape of heterosexuality in plurisexual women's lives. Being viewed as heterosexual can be damaging and constraining for plurisexual people, as previous research has found (Crofford, 2018; Doan Van, Mereish, Woulfe, & Katz-Wise, 2019), but there is also value in 'passing' as heterosexual for plurisexual women. This sub-theme will first situate how the interviewees framed being in relationships with men as intrinsically heterosexual (despite their bisexuality) – and the consequences of this in their identity positioning. The sense of safety and protection that being viewed as heterosexual provides plurisexual women will then be explored.

While interviewees had issues with heteronormativity as a system, many also problematised *heterosexuality* and did not like being mistaken as heterosexual. For some interviewees, being partnered with a man felt oppressive, which was often attributed to being mislabelled or misidentified as heterosexual:

Fay: If my partner were male (...) and everyone would assume I was straight, I would probably be going around yelling more that I was bisexual (...) because it [being assumed to be straight] would feel very oppressive and like I was being put in this box (35, queer/pansexual/bisexual, White European).

Being mislabelled or assumed to be heterosexual – rendering their sexual identity invisible – has been linked to mental health problems in bisexual women because it invalidates their sexual identity (Brewster et al., 2013; Watson, Morgan, & Craney, 2018a). Fay mentioned during the interview that she was regularly called a lesbian by both friends and acquaintances due to her long-term relationship with a woman but did not feel the need to correct most people. In a hypothetical relationship with a man, however, she positioned correcting people's assumptions about her sexual identity as a priority for her to avoid feelings of oppression and erasure. The power of heteronormativity is that it silences plurisexual women's 'queering' of heterosexual (seeming) relationships when partnered with a man. When in a relationship with a woman, plurisexual women's plurisexuality is often invisible, however their queerness is highly visible. When in a

relationship with a man, both of these are simultaneously erased. Thus, a heterosexual-seeming relationship increases the isolation created by bi-erasure by separating plurisexual women from their non-normative and queer sexuality (Klesse, 2011); particularly as plurisexual women believe they are unwelcomed in queer spaces when in a heterosexual-seeming relationship.

Fay explained that she would make more of an effort to make her bi-identity more visible if her partner was a man. Mononormativity renders plurisexuality invisible in monogamous relationships and perpetuates the assumption that all people are either heterosexual or homosexual. Therefore, if plurisexual people place importance in making their sexual identity visible, this is something they must actively engage in. For plurisexual women like Fay, the practice of making their sexual identity more visible was more important to them when in heterosexual-seeming relationships. The upkeep of a 'bisexual display' (Hartman, 2013) – using visual and verbal cues to indicate their bisexuality – to make their identity more visible and try disrupt the systemic erasure of plurisexuality in their lives can be exhausting due to the cognitive labour it entails. Therefore, plurisexual women may decide there is more worth in making their bisexuality more visible to overcome heteronormativity when in heterosexual-seeming relationships, than disrupt mononormativity when in lesbian-seeming relationships.

For some interviewees, being in a heterosexual-seeming relationship which rendered their queerness invisible, became too difficult:

Luna: I just found myself getting sadder and sadder and realising 'cause there was nothing wrong with our marriage really, that I would never find out who I really was (...). As soon as I knew for sure I was bi I didn't- I don't want to go back into my little straight closet anymore (...), I actually thought that if I had to go back to pretending to be straight, in the straight world with all my straight- with all the straight families, and at straight school, and straight friends and everything that I would actually die (37, bisexual, Pākehā).

Luna stated that as she was married to a man she saw herself as not 'bi enough' to be bisexual.

However, when she met her current partner – a “non-binary woman” – Luna described realising she felt oppressed by being viewed as heterosexual, which she described as leading to depression and

suicidal feelings. For some plurisexual women, as Luna and Fay discussed, the act of being in a relationship with a man can create feelings of invalidation of their sexual identity in a way that being with a woman or nonbinary person may not. Many of the problem's interviewees attributed to being in relationships with men were core components of heteronormativity. Included in this was gendered socially accepted behaviours in relationships that come from essentialist beliefs about gender and heterosexuality such as fulfilling socially enforced roles as a wife and mother (Habarth et al., 2019); participating in heteronormativity (by being perceived as in a heterosexual relationship) with other heterosexual people in the "straight world" – our heteronormative society – felt like pretending for plurisexual women. More broadly, scholars have pointed out that heteronormativity as a dominant undercurrent to our society is detrimental to queer people as it perpetuates the oppression of non-heterosexual identities and privileges heterosexuality (Habarth, 2015; Kitinger, 2014).

While heterosexuality was framed as oppressive and restricting, it was also positioned as a safety net. Being seen as heterosexual was positioned as beneficial for some plurisexual women and led some interviewees to favour relationships with men:

Katie: I felt so smug about it, I was like to my friends and family I've got a boyfriend (...) I was like this is so crazy! Oh, how mysterious and unusual! (...) I couldn't tell if it was just my imagination because I was feeling smug about it or whether there was slightly more status to be walking around like 'look at my boyfriend aren't we a unit'.

Tara: What do you mean like status?

Katie: Like social status like look they're two people together (laughs) in a culturally acceptable desirable configuration (31, bisexual/pansexual, Thai/Pākehā).

Katie is polyamorous and has two long-term partners, her primary partner is a transgender woman and her secondary partner is a cis man. Her secondary partner is the first man she had been in a relationship with and she discussed the relief she experienced from having a partner that she can introduce to family members and exist in a social space with without worrying about discrimination. Katie, in the above extract, discussed that she is aware that a large part of her enjoyment of having a

boyfriend comes from being a part of a “culturally acceptable desirable configuration” in that she can experience the benefits of heteronormativity by being a part of what looks like a socially valuable (i.e. heterosexual) relationship. As heterosexuality is privileged in our heteronormative society it follows that people in relationships that are viewed as heterosexual (i.e., between a man and a woman, regardless of their sexual identities) has beneficial elements. This creates a contradicting view of heteronormativity for plurisexual people as heteronormativity is simultaneously experienced as a form of oppression, *and* as a place of ‘safety’ from the systemic oppression queer people face. These two things by no means cancel each other out or are experienced equally. Recall, in the above sub-theme *Normativity and delightful rebellion* an extract from Katie detailed how she found heterosexuality (and heterosexuals) “boring”. Contrasting Katie’s view of heterosexuality as ‘disappointingly normative’, and her detailing the pleasure she felt from being perceived as normative indicates the importance of context in plurisexual women’s relationship to heterosexuality. As Katie has other identities that help her feel that she rebels against normativity (Katie explained in our interviews that she felt that her plurisexuality, polyamory, and interest in kink⁷⁴ made her feel unconventional), it may have felt indulgent to be perceived as ‘normal’.

Other interviewees, such as Gaby, discussed more explicitly the safety heterosexual-seeming relationships afforded them because of the protection of heteronormativity:

Gaby: You know it's very harsh moving out of being in a heterosexual world, just being absolutely outside it (...). When I left my children's father I really felt like I'd gone from within heterosexuality really, and that that was like a beautiful garden with fences around it and I'd gone out through this gate in the fence onto like a harsh like land, sort of heath you know where all the storms and everything that was happening, and I had no protection. I think probably my mental health at different times with women was quite compromised by that feeling of that vulnerability (68, queer, Pākehā).

Gaby invoked imagery of heteronormativity as a beautiful and fenced garden and compared it to a harsh wasteland of queerness to explain her experiences of no longer being in a relationship with a

⁷⁴ Kink is a form of sexuality that includes non-conventional sexual practices and fantasies.

man. She viewed access to the protection and benefits of a “heterosexual world” as temporary and conditional on her being in a relationship with a man. This description echoes what Rich (1980) argued is the power of heteronormativity: it functions as a regulatory mechanism that grants feelings of legitimacy and safety to people who are viewed as operating within the confines of heteronormativity. For people that are not seen as abiding by heteronormativity, they are positioned as outsiders and ‘bad’ sexual/social subjects. This puts queer and plurisexual women in an impossible position where they are compelled by our heteronormative society to be in relationships with men, which can create feelings of safety from queer oppression, while experiencing the discrimination of their sexual identity being invalidated.

Chapter summary

The theme of *Negotiating hetero-society* was described and analysed in this chapter. This theme presented the different understandings and beliefs about heterosexuality that interviewees held, and how heteronormativity operated in their lives. There were three main threads across the data that were analysed with data extracts used as evidence: heterosexuality as the default and natural sexual identity, queerness as an enjoyable rebellion against the normativity of heterosexuality, and experiencing heterosexually-seeming relationships as both oppressive and invalidating of their sexual identity, and as a way to escape discrimination. In the next chapter I will present and analyse the theme *The Labour of Plurisexuality* and look at how plurisexuality was constructed as a political identity by interviewees.

CHAPTER NINE

The Labour of Plurisexuality

In this chapter the overarching theme of *The Labour of Plurisexuality* and its three sub-themes *Becoming a bi expert*, *a decision to educate*, and *I'm 'just me' – a private identity* will be presented and analysed. In this theme it is argued that due to the politicised nature of plurisexuality as a marginalised identity, identifying with a plurisexual identity comes with the burden of emotional labour. 'Emotional labour' is a concept that critiques the free labour people – particularly women – enact under capitalism (Hochschild, 2003). Specifically, emotional labour is the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labour is sold for a wage and there has an exchange value (Hochschild, 2003, p. 7). Hochschild (2003), who first described the concept of emotional labour, viewed it as a coordination of 'the self', including the cognitive and emotive aspects. The emotional labour, Hochschild (2003) argued, can alienate people from aspects of their self, due to the artifice of the performance. 'Emotion work' extended ideas of emotional labour to describe emotional labour done in private *and* public life. The difference between these two is that emotion work has a 'use value' rather than a monetary value (Hochschild, 2003). This emotion work is regulated by cultural and social structures, and norms (Wharton, 2009). Emotions are not innate, Hochschild (2003) argued, but an active process of management of emotions that in turn create feelings. Therefore, the emotional work people undertake in their private lives are driven by 'feeling rules' that are socially guided (Hochschild, 2003).

The different ways this emotional work is enacted by plurisexual women, and where interviewees situated themselves in relation to the obligation of labour is discussed within this chapter. The first sub-theme, *Becoming a bi expert*, relates to how some interviewees were highly engaged in critical thinking and discussions about sexuality and the social context of their plurisexuality. The necessity of being versed in sexuality theory that some interviewees described is one form of laborious work plurisexual women enact. The second sub-theme, *A decision to educate*, presents how plurisexual

women felt that their sexual identity was not understood in specific social contexts. Some interviewees described feeling obligated to disclose their sexual identity to others and educate people about plurisexuality as not doing so would be complicit in bi-erasure. The final sub-theme '*I'm just me*' – a private identity complicates how plurisexuality was engaged with politically by interviewees. For some plurisexual women, their sexual identity was positioned as a private identity. These women attempted to subvert dominant discourses about queer sexuality by resisting the pressure to frame their sexual identity as political or a large part of their self-identity. In the following sections I address these sub-themes respectively by providing illustrative data extracts and analysing them in depth.

Becoming a bi expert

The interviewees were often well educated about sexuality. It was evident that many interviewees had spent time in formal education, and/or in their personal time researching and educating themselves about sexuality and the representation of plurisexual identities in society⁷⁵. For example, when prompted to describe if they grappled with the relationship between different parts of their self-identity, specifically their sexuality and ethnicity, many interviewees displayed critical reflection:

Tara: Does your ethnicity impact how you understand your sexual identity?

Demy: Yeah, it's a very westernised concept. I'm Pākehā so yeah the idea of bisexuality is kind of a western concept by calling it bisexuality if you know what I mean, and the old kind of binary of male and female is kind of a colonial import to New Zealand. I would still say that a lot of my politics have been formed from overseas people particularly American people so it's still a very white idea (24, bisexual, Pākehā).

Demy, alongside many other Pākehā and tauīwi⁷⁶ interviewees described viewing their own sexuality through the Western-Anglo discourse of sexuality that permeates Aotearoa's culture. Aotearoa's power structures – as a result of colonialism – privilege whiteness in often covert ways. For example,

⁷⁵ Reflexively, this thesis is a result of my own interest in learning about my own sexual identity and doing bi activism through creating knowledge that relieves some of the marginalisation of plurisexuality.

⁷⁶ Tauīwi is a term in Te Reo Māori to describe non-Māori people.

ethnicity intersects with social status, social experiences, and informs other identities including sexual identity (Bowleg, 2013; Crenshaw, 1990). When asked to engage with this in interviews, many Pākehā interviewees (including several of the interviewees who identified with multiple ethnicities) reflected on this privilege and how it informed their sexual identity⁷⁷. For some interviewees this reflexivity involved engaging with often invisible cultural and ethnic structures that shaped their understanding of their sexuality by grappling with their own identities in relation to hegemonic norms. Interviewees argued that their understandings of their own sexuality were shaped and limited within dominant social discourses. However, this critical reflection was mostly concentrated around whiteness and sexuality and did not often extend to critiquing other aspects of hegemonic sexual discourses such as sexual essentialism⁷⁸.

Kiri, a Māori woman, also talked about tensions between her sexual identity, Māori perspectives of sexuality, and Western discourses of sexuality:

Tara: How does your ethnicity impact your understanding of your sexual identity?

Kiri: (...) I would like to think in Te Ao Maori being Takatāpui is natural and good and embraced and accepted (pause) and for me like just telling my parents- as long as my parents knew and were okay it didn't matter that anyone else had an opinion that was anything other than supportive you know. If they weren't supportive well then (pause) they have to figure it out. But for me it's part of Te Ao Maori the Maori world, it always is and always has been and its colonisation of our people, that's the issue and we're very colonised folk (59, Wahine Takatāpui, Māori).

A takatāpui identity is predicated on a Māori worldview (Te Ao Māori) and concepts of identity to reclaim and disrupt the damages of colonialism on Māori lives and identities (Kerekere, 2017). Kiri explained that while takatāpui is founded on historical and traditional Māori understandings of sexuality, colonialism has eroded this tradition/meaning leading to tensions between iwi⁷⁹ and people who hold takatāpui identities. Kiri described feeling uncomfortable with terms such as

⁷⁷ While some interviewees – including Pākehā interviewees – discussed the relatedness of culture, ethnicity, and sexuality for them without being prompted, for most interviewees it was asking about the intersection of ethnicity and sexuality for them personally that created this discussion.

⁷⁸ Interviewees subject positions within dominant sexuality discourses is discussed further in Chapter eleven.

⁷⁹ Iwi refers to what would be described in English as a tribal group.

lesbian and bisexual to describe her sexuality as “that’s not my word”. Aspin and Hutchings (2007) examined current and historical Māori sexuality and found their participants rejected Western sexuality paradigms and were more likely to be influenced by Māori culture when understanding their sexuality. Like Kiri, becoming aware of and studying the impact of Western discourses on Māori culture led to a decolonisation of their participants’ sexuality through rejecting colonial paradigms (Aspin & Hutchings, 2007). Kiri described taking part in takatāpui community hui⁸⁰ and using this to learn about and shape her sexuality. This form of becoming an expert in her sexuality through kōrero⁸¹ contrasts with more formal forms of learning that Pākehā participants undertook to become informed about colonial discourses, such as university papers and engaging with online texts.

While being able to deconstruct the relationship between their sexuality and colonialism, many interviewees also drew on concepts such as the patriarchy, heterosexism, misogyny, and mononormativity (as demonstrated in the previous chapter), to explain the marginalisation and discrimination they experienced as plurisexual women. The analytical lens of some plurisexual women towards the social, historical, and cultural contexts that shape individual identity constructions demonstrates the high level of examination plurisexual women apply to understanding and theorising about their own sexuality. The ability to critically reflect and deconstruct such concepts among young and emerging adults is becoming commonplace with the ubiquity of social media (Parker, Graf, & Igielnik, 2019; Turley & Fisher, 2018). The accessibility to digital spaces where discussions of feminist, queer, and politically leftist concepts and issues are ubiquitous can lead to more familiarity with critical concepts such as colonialism, intersectionality, and heterosexism (Turley & Fisher, 2018).

⁸⁰ Hui is a word in Te reo Māori for a meeting or conference.

⁸¹ Kōrero is a word in Te reo Māori that means verbal communication.

The Internet was described by all interviewees as a research and social engagement tool. It was also problematised, seen as a place where (both plurisexual and monosexual) women were regularly exploited and harassed. However, the Internet and social media was largely framed as empowering and useful. Some interviewees used the Internet as a place to create and join queer spaces:

Tara: Do you think using the Internet helped you understand your sexuality a bit more? Did it allow you to research and things?

Jess: I had a computer, my parents let me have a computer in my room (both laugh). I don't know who thought that was a good idea, from the ages of like maybe 11 or 12 until I left home (laughs). Definitely like I always would chat with girls on MSN [messenger]⁸² (laughs) (...). I struggled with not having any representation when I was younger like I never saw myself in a movie, like I never saw myself in a TV show, I never saw myself as a feminine woman liking other women, yeah we were like an oddity. You know like I saw like butch lesbians or I saw transgender people and while that's fantastic representation I never had that representation for myself so the Internet was good like I was like 'oh we do exist' we're not just a really weird oddity (21, queer, Pākehā).

Jess saw the Internet and social media both as forms of representation to help her validate the normalcy of her queerness, and as a tool to privately connect with other queer girls/women.

Research has linked rainbow youth's social and online media use to increased resilience (resilience is defined in this context as the ability to successfully navigate adversity) and increased comfort and pride in their sexual identity (Craig et al., 2015). Online media has a greater diversity of representation of queer people in comparison to traditional media and because queer people can create content for themselves online, these representations are less likely to be stereotypical (Craig et al., 2015).

As well as a discovery tool, the Internet and social media was framed by interviewees as a resource for sexuality education. Some interviewees indicated that they unintentionally or passively acquired knowledge about sexuality through the Internet and stumbled across information on social media sites, such as Tumblr (a microblogging and social media site popular with teenagers and young adults), without intentionally seeking it out. Other interviewees sought out sexuality resources on

⁸² MSN Messenger was a popular instant-messaging software in the first decade of the 21st century.

the Internet in order to accrue more knowledge on the subject. Hana was passionate and interested in queer and feminist theory at university when she was younger, and extended this knowledge recently through the Internet:

Hana: I can't really imagine what it would be like to be monosexual (...). [Being bisexual] is just like a thing that's part of me that I never felt was very important to kind of [talk about] until I started reading more about sexual identity. I think I realised people are quite biphobic and I thought oh well maybe you know it's good to identify this way as sort of a political thing (...) (37, bisexual, Japanese/Pākehā).

Plurisexual women such as Hana used their interest in her own sexual identity as a jumping off point to engage in gender and sexuality related study. The commitment to researching sexuality that interviewees demonstrated is possibly linked to finding security in answers. As bisexuality is viewed as a phase, many plurisexual women feel that they must engage in soul-searching before (or while) they identify as bisexual to be confident and secure in their sexual identity (Knous, 2006). The study of sexuality and gender can allow plurisexual women to attain a deeper understanding of their own sexual identity and the broader implications for their self-identity. For Hana this led to her taking up bisexuality as a part of her political identity as a queer feminist woman. Through her education Hana learnt how to recognise the biphobia that permeated her social interactions.

Other interviewees also reported being inspired by feminist literature to disrupt dominant patriarchal behaviours. This knowledge of feminist concepts allowed them to critically examine popular culture and social media through this lens:

Tara: How do you think women's queerness is seen [in our society]?

Tui: I think that it may scare people because it shows that women are able to be sexual without a male and I think that in archaic senses women's bodies have been assumed to be owned by men and a woman having a sexuality and sexual experiences without a male present scares people (...). I think that [women's queerness is] still [seen] through a lens of masculinity but I feel a lot of Instagram accounts are trying to take that power away from the male gaze and trying to have a female gaze. Maybe not even a female gaze, maybe a queer gaze (27, queer, Māori/Pākehā).

Tui saw women's sexual behaviour as catered towards – and degraded by – men, particularly through the objectification of queer women. As someone who positioned herself as “rebellious

against traditional nature”, Tui described using her queer politics to guide the social justice activism that she participated in online. This included disrupting the ‘lens of masculinity’ that Tui described queer women’s sexual identity as viewed through. Tui used Instagram (an image-based social media platform) as a tool for subverting the “male gaze” by disrupting the narrative of women’s queerness existing for men’s consumption. Research has noted that social media is regularly used in recent feminist and queer political practices to challenge heterosexism and misogyny (Craig et al., 2015; Jackson, 2018; Turley & Fisher, 2018). Digital platforms such as Instagram allow for a broad dissemination of feminist ideas that are no longer limited by offline concerns – including not having a platform to reach a diverse audience (Turley & Fisher, 2018). Online feminist action allows women to engage in personal advocacy while also finding a collective network of support (Craig et al., 2015; Turley & Fisher, 2018). The powerlessness that plurisexual women may feel as a result of the exoticification and objectification of their sexual identity can thus feel like it is being reclaimed through applying feminist and queer theory to online action.

Through online activism and engaging in feminist, queer, and intersectional theory, plurisexual women enact their sexual identity in ways other than through sexual and romantic attraction. This filtering of their sexual identity through a broader, more political lens is a form of emotional work plurisexual women choose to engage in. It is a form of labour as it involves learning and studying about their sexual identity, and critical reflection. Positive and empowering discourses of plurisexuality are not often easily accessible due to the marginalisation of plurisexual identities. Through becoming an ‘expert’ in their sexuality, plurisexual women create counter-discourses that allows them to critically engage with their sexual identity and provides more visibility to their plurisexuality in their own lives.

A decision to educate

In this sub-theme I will analyse the obligations some plurisexual women feel towards educating people about their sexual identity, thereby performing a type of emotional labour. The different

positions interviewees took in relation to the obligation to educate others and how this informs their sexual identity disclosure in social environments is also discussed.

Queerness and plurisexuality was presented by some interviewees as unfamiliar to heterosexual people. This unfamiliarity seemed to be linked to viewing queerness and plurisexuality as confusing and complicated concepts. This imagined or real naivety of heterosexual people about different forms of sexual identity informed how interviewees navigated disclosure around their sexual identity:

Fay: Because my partner is a woman and we live in a very rural part of the country you don't want to confuse people. I get called lesbian a lot and I don't argue with it 'cause it's like, well the details of this are not pertinent to this conversation and I don't want to make your brain explode (...). They are very confused, it's like they haven't downloaded the latest software installation (...) so I probably want to keep it simple and on a level that they can understand so will probably say lesbian (35, queer/pansexual/bisexual, White European).

Fay implied that identities that are considered 'confusing' are regularly collapsed into identity categories that are easier to decipher. This text from Fay reveals how she is subjected to an ongoing process of misrecognition of her sexual identity; she is in a context where the social discourse only recognises the identity categories of heterosexual and lesbian/gay, erasing plurisexual identities. Fay opted not to discuss her preferred sexual identity term – or plurisexual attraction – to people in her local community as she felt like trying to educate them was futile, due to the rural-ness of her environment and people's presumed unfamiliarity with plurisexual sexual identities. While disclosing one's sexual identity is not an imperative, non-disclosure is often associated with feeling shame with one's sexual identity, or fearful of prejudice (Maliapaard, 2018). However, in Fay's situation, not disclosing her sexual identity was identified as an easier option. While still visibly non-heterosexual, mononormativity and her local community's unfamiliarity with bisexuality led Fay to decide that it was a more rational option to not discuss her plurisexuality. This illustrates the way in which plurisexual women are marginalised through linguistic processes and people's lack of knowledge of non-monosexuality.

Notably, interviewees did not view the ignorance (or presumed ignorance) of heterosexual people as malicious or a form of discrimination. It was instead viewed as an inevitable necessity they had to navigate as a queer person in a hetero- and mononormative society. Academics, however, have argued the opposite – that lack of education on topics related to oppression requires active reproduction of ignorance that is socially maintained (Gilson, 2011). It is theorised that ignorance is cultivated by those with power – such as men, white people, monosexual and heterosexual people – with the outcome being a perpetuation of the vulnerability of marginalised communities which exacerbates systemic oppression (Gilson, 2011; Kitzinger, 1991). As plurisexual women do not view adapting their language and identity terms for their uninformed audience as overtly hostile, ignorance is not seen to perpetuate oppression and marginalisation.

Due to the assumed ignorance of heterosexual people, interviewees often had to perform a calculation when talking to people about their level of knowledge about queer identities and described themselves with different terms based on this. The evaluation of people's level of knowledge about sexuality and consequently decision making about the languaging of their sexuality that plurisexual women undertake could be described as a performance of 'emotion work'. One form of emotional work is 'deep acting', where social actors genuinely alter how they feel to fit the role or context (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). Within deep acting, the situational prescriptions thus dictate the behaviours of the 'actors'. By avoiding the labour of educating others about their plurisexuality, and instead allowing their sexuality to be assumed, the identity management plurisexual women engage in could be viewed as a form of 'deep acting' emotion work.

As I have noted previously, plurisexual people use different labels for their sexual identity in different contexts. For some interviewees, such as Fay above, this involved using the term 'lesbian' despite not personally identifying with the term. Other interviewees favoured describing themselves

as bisexual instead of pansexual or queer due to the 'newness' and assumption of most people being unfamiliar with these terms⁸³:

Tara: Are you likely to use other terms like pansexual or something like that around different sorts of people?

Leigh: Yep so people that are kind of more my people I guess, so people that know me, people that are within the communities that I roll around in I would say yeah I'm pan[sexual]. 'Cause I've got a lot of transgender friends and they understand that it means that I like people. Whereas if I'm out in the more heteronormative world I guess I would just say bisexual because I don't have to explain it. I don't have to say 'aw pansexual means this thing'. Sometimes that I'm all for education and sometimes I'm really not you know. So bisexual is just kinda like a cover-all, just yes I'm attracted to men and women (34, bisexual⁸⁴, Māori/Pākehā).

Leigh, alongside other interviewees, described evaluating her social context before disclosing her pansexuality. She identified as pansexual only when she was around queer and transgender people. In other contexts, Leigh described herself as bisexual to signal her plurisexuality but to avoid the burden of educating others about pansexuality. Returning to the idea of emotional work, pansexual women's decision to identify as bisexual in some contexts could be viewed through the lens of trading one form of labour for another; the labour of having their identity being seen as unfamiliar and having to enact the labour of educating others about pansexuality was ultimately seen as a larger burden than 'mis'labelling themselves. The act of assuming others' knowledge about sexual identity and weighing the cost-benefits of identifying as pansexual were forms of labour that plurisexual women regularly enacted in social contexts. Using the term bisexual allowed women to provide visibility to their plurisexuality while also adapting to their contexts.

Educating heterosexual people about queer and plurisexual identities was framed as a 'duty' of being plurisexual. Many interviewees believed that educating people about plurisexuality would reduce the confusion around these identities and, hopefully, the discrimination plurisexual people

⁸³ While pansexual and queer are not technically new terms to describe sexual identity, with pansexual being around since (at least) the 1980s, and queer having been used for around a century, interviewees believed the reason straight people were not familiar with these terms is because they are new usages in our society. While they are not relatively new terms, they are not ubiquitous.

⁸⁴ While Leigh described herself as identifying as both pansexual and bisexual during our interview, I am only identifying her as bisexual after quotes. This is because on the demographic information form, Leigh only described herself as bisexual.

face as a result of ignorance. This duty was seen as a burden by many interviewees, and some preferred not to engage with it:

Fay: I can remember a while ago I went into pay for the gas at the servo⁸⁵ and the woman behind the counter was like 'is the woman in your car you know your sister?' (...) I said nope and she said 'aw she is a relative?' and I looked at her and I said no and she sorta looked at me and I looked at her and I was like if she asks one more question this is going to be a half an hour discussion with a PowerPoint presentation on stuff and I am bored with that so I'm going to go away now (35, queer/pansexual/bisexual, White European).

Educating the petrol station worker was framed by Fay as laborious, so she decided not to provide an answer to the woman about her relationship to avoid the burden of education. While Fay did not provide any evidence of guilt over not educating this woman, other interviewees who did not engage in educating others were more regretful of their decision:

Tara: Do you use the word queer around straight people as well or would you use another term?

Jess: (Loud sigh) I use the word lesbian a lot around straight people. I guess it helps me not have to answer 5 million questions but sometimes it's just easier, which is also slack of me (...). I definitely probably don't use queer as much as I should around my heterosexual friends or my family as well, I feel like that would encourage conversation that I'm just like (exaggerated sigh) you know? (21, queer, Pākehā).

By not putting in the labour of educating heterosexual people close to her about being queer, Jess represents herself in the interview as neglectful of her responsibilities as a queer woman to educate and inform others of her change in sexual identity (from lesbian to queer). This may also relate to the "coming out" imperative, where there is a sense of obligation put onto non-heterosexual people to disclose their sexual identity, lest they be seen as disingenuous (Maliapaard, 2018).

Past research on 'coming out' and identity disclosure has identified that normative coming out narratives are complicated for plurisexual people due to the complexities of having a plurisexual identity in a mononormative society (e.g., Maliapaard, 2018; McLean, 2007; Wandrey et al., 2015). The narratives of the interviewees extend these discussions of strategic disclosure; beyond being

⁸⁵ Servo is an Australian slang term for petrol station.

considerate about whom and when to come out to avoid discrimination and monosexism, sexual identity disclosure is framed as a political act. By disclosing their sexual identity in situations where hetero- and mononormativity occurs, and 'coming out' to people who are unfamiliar with forms of non-heterosexuality, plurisexual women can use their sexual identity as an instrument for decreasing bisexual erasure and increasing the awareness of diversity of queer identities.

As argued above, if ignorance is a form of power, so is placing the burden of education onto marginalised communities rather than those with normative power (Kitzinger, 1996). By being non-heterosexual in a heteronormative culture, many interviewees such as Jess saw themselves as obligated to enlighten others about their sexual identity which lead to feelings of guilt when they avoided this believed responsibility, and a sense of duty in education. Other studies have found that the burden of responsibility on educating others about lived experiences of oppression often falls on marginalised groups such as people of colour and individuals with non-heterosexual identities (Dessel, Woodford, & Warren, 2011). However, these studies also note that this was not positioned by some queer people as a burden but as an opportunity to educate others and act as 'agents of change' (Dessel et al., 2011).

Other interviewees framed plurisexual activism as the responsibility of plurisexual people. Drawing attention to injustices was seen as a step towards dismantling marginalisation of plurisexuality. The following extract presents being an 'agent of change' as an obligation of plurisexuals if they are wanting to reduce prejudice:

Hana: Even now actually I don't feel like I should necessarily identify as bisexual per say but I think its kind of a political thing. I feel like if people don't identify as bi it continues to be a kind of erased identity (...). I think that bisexual people need to allow themselves to be more visible in the sense that it is uncomfortable because yeah often there is that feeling that both gay and lesbian people and straight people will kind of give you the side eye and that's not a comfortable place to be. At the same time if you think about gay people coming out like 20 years ago or whenever it probably wasn't very comfortable either and if you just get through the weirdness then you know people just kind of get used to it (37, bisexual, Japanese/Pākehā).

Hana invokes the gay historical politics of coming out as something that gay people were obligated to do in order to reach the 'homonormativity' that now exists⁸⁶, and something that plurisexuals need to do in order to form their own 'binormativity'. Hana notes the discomfort of disclosing a bisexual identity, especially as coming out is something one must do more than once, but nevertheless positions 'coming out' as a necessity. As gay liberation was successful thanks to pioneering queer activists fighting for legal recognition of gay identities and condemning systematic homophobia, bisexual people are seen by Hana as needing to do the 'hard yards' of fighting in order to be worthy of visibility (Gusmano, 2018).

'I'm just me' – a private identity

Many interviewees perceived the obligation of educating people about plurisexuality and disclosing their own sexual identity was related to positioning their sexuality as a political identity. A political identity, it was implied by interviewees, comes with obligations and extra labour such as sexual identity disclosure, education, and activism. Even when not explicitly positioned as a political identity, being queer often comes with expectations to be 'pride-full' of your identity (Renn, 2007). This is accompanied by an expectation of fighting for social justice for yourself and the collective (Renn, 2007). However, some interviewees actively stayed away from viewing plurisexuality as linked with political expectations. Interviewees who discussed their sexual identity in this way invoked the idea of 'I'm just me', rather than a part of a collective movement:

Tara: When you started using that label [pansexual] did you immediately use it to other people, or did you keep it to yourself for a while?

Iris: I normally keep it to myself like I didn't come out at work, I don't say this is what I am I'm just kind of like 'I'm myself' (20, pansexual, Pākehā).

The idea of 'I'm just me' runs counter to normative ideas of non-heterosexuality identity development which encompasses both sexual (and/or romantic) orientation and attractions *and*

⁸⁶ Homonormativity is the enculturation of gay identities into normative society.

taking public ownership of a queer identity and integrating it into your larger sense of self and social identity (Renn, 2007). Particularly, when discussing 'I'm just me', most interviewees brought up how they sought to subvert 'the big coming out narrative'. The 'coming out narrative' as described by interviewees, entails gay people (or bisexual people in rare instances) revealing that they are not heterosexual to other people, thus cementing their acceptance of their own sexual identity⁸⁷.

Research has noted that some bisexual people experience dissonance between the pressure to 'come out' formally and the preferred method of casually hinting at their bisexuality to others by alluding to celebrity crushes or past partners of different genders (e.g., McLean, 2007; Wandrey et al., 2015).

Traditionally, research positions non-disclosure as 'hiding in the closet' (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006).

Recently, however, this has been critiqued as a heteronormative notion (Maliepaard, 2018).

Heterosexual-identified people do not need to 'reveal' their heterosexuality to others because it is viewed as the default sexual identity. Through the 'hiding in the closet' position, if you have a non-heterosexual identity, not disclosing this indicates that you are ashamed of your sexual identity (Maliepaard, 2018). For some interviewees, however, not explicitly disclosing their sexual identity was framed as a way to avoid forms of labour normally associated with a queer identity such as coming out.

All interviewees acknowledged the systemic erasure of bisexual and other plurisexual identities. For some interviewees, as discussed above, plurisexual people are believed to have a duty to reduce inequalities through sexual identity disclosure, activism, and disrupting binary sexuality discourses. Other interviewees saw this obligation as unbalanced, as heterosexuality does not come with the same forms of labour as queerness. Therefore, they choose to not visibly display their sexual identity as a political act. Instead, some interviewees framed plurisexual-identities as akin to heterosexuality:

⁸⁷ See television shows such as *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (2013), *Glee* (2009) *One Day at a Time* (2017), *Pretty Little Liars* (2010) and films such as *Love, Simon* (2017) for examples of this trope.

Demy: It's kind of an open secret (laughing) you know I wouldn't- I don't want to have to tell them because I shouldn't really have to. I should just have to be like aw I'm dating a girl now but obviously that's not gonna happen.

Tara: Why do you think you shouldn't have to tell them?

Demy: 'Cause its stressful sitting them down going 'mum dad I'm a lizard' but no its 'aw I'm a bisexual' you know its stressful, and its worrying and I would much prefer to have it accepted you know. I don't like when I tell people and they go 'oh!' you know and then it becomes a thing and they ask questions and then it's it instead of me being like 'oh I'm right handed' and then go 'oh I'm left handed' and they go 'oh yeah cool' and then move on. 'I'm bisexual' 'oh! so' and then it always goes 'so how many women have you had sex with?' it's always that question or 'have you dated women before?' and when I was younger and I'd never dated women before that was really stressful question 'cause it felt like I was invalidating myself by saying no (24, bisexual, Pākehā).

Demy anticipated the labour that would go into disclosing her sexual identity, including navigating policing of her sexual identity by asking for her 'bisexual credentials' to prove she is actually bisexual. By not having the 'credentials' plurisexual women may feel like they are not 'bi enough', which concerned several interviewees. Therefore, the burden of coming out is placed upon bisexual people as it would lead to them having to educate and deal with questions about their sexual identity that they would prefer not to answer⁸⁸. Wandrey et al. (2015) described a participant who reframed her sexuality disclosure due to the negative stereotypes she encountered. Rather than explicitly disclosing her bisexuality, the interviewee argued that 'sexual orientation shouldn't matter', thus minimising her sexual identity to protect herself from potential discrimination (Wandrey et al., 2015). By declaring themselves 'I'm just me', plurisexual women subvert and resist the dichotomy of heterosexuality as normal, and non-heterosexuality as an intrinsically political identity that encompasses all of the self.

Some interviewees positioned the assumption that queer people have to 'come out' in order to be perceived as non-heterosexual as unequitable and prejudiced. These interviewees, therefore,

⁸⁸ As a personal and reflexive note, I too 'came out' as bisexual in the same way as Demy, Tessa, and many other interviewees did or intended to – I disclosed that I was dating a woman and let my family 'figure out' my sexual identity so I could avoid the pressure of discussing my sexual identity explicitly. After I mentioned my partner's gender, my sister asked me what number I was on the Kinsey scale in order to assess my sexual identity.

rejected publicly holding a plurisexual sexual identity which they justified through invoking the 'unfairness' of having to come out:

Tara: Did you feel the need when you were younger, when you figured out that you weren't straight or queer or bi did you feel the need to tell your family about it?

Emily: No.

Tara: How come?

Emily: (...) I've read something about this recently it's that idea where you don't have to say, 'aw I'm straight'. I didn't really have to feel like I had to say- it's kind of like I didn't think there would be any problems if I just turned up with a girlfriend. Although my mum when she got unwell was quite intolerant, I just don't think they would've it would've been an issue for me whereas I think for a lot of other people it's a big deal (39, bi/pan/queer/everything, Pākehā).

Emily mentioned not disclosing her sexual identity because of the 'double standard' of sexual identity: as heterosexual people do not need to 'come out', non-heterosexual people should not have to disclose their sexual identity either. Alongside Emily's belief is the caveat that she also did not need to disclose her sexual identity because her family would have been accepting of her regardless, suggesting that people that were more unsure of the reaction of others may need to 'come out'. The labour of coming out is then dependent on the reaction of others and would not need to be enacted if their family would accept their queer identity.

By not explicitly disclosing their sexual identity and by not linking it to their self or political identity, interviewees attempt to eschew the pressures of heteronormativity. This act could be seen as an active resistance against subjugating to dominant discourses of non-heterosexuality. Queerness is often assumed to be inherently political and a 'lifestyle' that includes parts of the self beyond attraction (Renn, 2007). It could be said that interviewees are trying to integrate the 'naturalness' of heterosexuality into the lens of their own queerness. The 'I'm just me' discourse thus decentres the radicalness of queer identity and gives agency to the individual to control how their sexual and self-identity is framed.

Chapter summary

In this chapter I presented the theme of *The Labour of Plurisexuality*, using the three sub-themes of *Becoming a bi expert*, *A decision to educate*, and *'I'm just me' – a private identity* to analyse and explore this theme. This theme discussed how plurisexuality was presented by interviewees as a political identity that came with extra burdens and labours attached to it. *Becoming a bi expert* explored how interviewees were highly engaged in critical thinking and learning about their own sexual identity and the social context of plurisexuality. By being plurisexual, many interviewees became experts of their own sexual identity in order to understand more about their own desires and attractions. *A decision to educate* discussed how queerness was positioned as confusing for monosexual people. Some plurisexual women felt obliged to educate people about plurisexuality to alleviate the bi-erasure that they viewed as coming from ignorance. Those that did not want to provide the labour of education performed labour in other ways, such as by assessing the level of knowledge people had about plurisexuality and using this to inform how they described their sexuality. The final sub-theme of *'I'm just me' – a private identity* discussed how some interviewees did not want to position their sexual identity as political or related to other parts of their self-identity. These interviewees distanced themselves from this experience of plurisexuality by positioning their sexual identity instead as internal and personal. This was done to resist heteronormativity and the pressures of the 'coming out narrative'. In the next chapter I will be discussing the theme *The Linguaging of plurisexuality* and how interviewees used language to invoke dominant and counter-discourses of sexuality in their own lives in complex and contradictory ways.

CHAPTER TEN

Theme Three: The Linguaging of Plurisexuality

This chapter examines the third theme that was identified through the critical thematic analysis. This theme discusses the complexity of the way dominant and counter-discourses of sexuality are applied in plurisexual women's lives and the constructing of their sexual identity. The language used by interviewees invoked dominant discourses of sexuality as biologically determined, while many interviewees also wanted to respect inclusivity and fluidity of sexual identity. Four sub-themes are used to demonstrate this argument: *(Pluri)sexuality is innate*, *The search for sexual 'authenticity'*, *The regulation of plurisexuality*, and *Gatekeeping and policing*. The first sub-theme, *Sexuality is innate*, discusses the ways that sexuality is understood by plurisexual women, such as through invoking 'everyone is bisexual' and 'born this way' concepts. This sub-theme will explore how interviewees used these concepts to attribute causes to their plurisexuality. The second sub-theme, *The search for sexual 'authenticity'* explores the language that interviewees used when discussing their sexual identity development. This will include a discussion of how identity is conceptualised by plurisexual women and how this aligns with how interviewees see their sexual identity development as a journey. The third sub-theme, *The regulation of plurisexuality*, discusses how interviewees grapple with identity terms privately and publicly. This includes how the rigid regulation of categorisation creates limits for how interviewees can experience their sexual identity. Finally, *Gatekeeping and policing* discusses the perils of categorisation. This is explored via interviewees positioning bisexuality as a problematic term in comparison to the 'superior' term of pansexual, and through interviewees self-policing (and being policed by others) for the identity terms they use. I argue that the counter-discourses of sexuality that seek to be inclusive continue to constrain experiences of sexuality and further stigmatise people with bisexual identities.

(Pluri)sexuality is innate

As I outlined in Chapter three, an essentialist approach to sexuality can reduce sexual identity to biological determinist qualities. Namely, essentialism has been critiqued for its lack of consideration of cultural, historical, and social contexts that informs our sexuality (see Tiefer, 2004). The essentialist paradigm argues that sex – and what drives our sexual desires – is part of our natural biological function. This essentialist view can posit that any sexual behaviour outside of normative discourses is due to dysfunctional biology or pathology (Tiefer, 2004). In the past, this has created a view of non-heterosexuality as deviant. However, work of activists, sexologists, and psychologists in the past half century have changed non-heterosexuality (most successfully with homosexuality), to be also seen as another possible ‘natural’ biological state (Seidman, 2015). Despite its reductionism, essentialism is the most ubiquitous model in Western countries for understanding how human sexuality is constructed (Seidman, 2015; Weeks, 2010).

Interviewees relied heavily on the biological determinism model to conceptualise sexuality; it informed how interviewees understood their sexual identity and informed their descriptions of their sexual identity development. Within this biological deterministic narrative there are many interrelated theories of sexuality development which interviewees drew on to help make sense of their sexual identity. As plurisexual identities are often not seen as legitimate within the dominant monosexual understandings of sexuality, the essentialist discourse allowed interviewees to frame their sexual identity as ‘normal’ and ‘natural’. This certainty can lead to a greater sense of acceptance and pride with their plurisexuality.

Bisexuality as the (biological) human norm was brought up by some interviewees as a way to understand their sexual identity. Gaby used this theory of sexuality to make sense of her attraction to multiple genders:

Gaby: I just I think- by the time I was a teenager I sort of had the concept that mammals are basically bisexual, like I think I must've seen you know sheep and cows and dogs you know having you know sexual experiences between ones of the same

gender and I just thought well, we're mammals so we're bisexual too (68, queer, Pākehā).

Gaby equates humans and animals in the above quote, where she describes mammalian biology as the reason humans are bisexual, as she stated that bisexuality has also been recorded in animals. Gaby positioned this argument as a logical way to make sense of her sexual attractions and to try and normalise her sexual identity. This 'everyone is bisexual' discourse that Gaby takes up naturalises bisexuality, viewing it as normal and innate. As discussed in Chapter two, plurisexual scholars have argued that this logic continues to render bisexuality a theoretical – rather than material – identity; if everyone is bisexual, bisexuality is no longer its own sexual identity (Plessis, 1996). Contained in this narrative, bisexuality becomes an ideal in a sexual utopia but not a true sexual identity in our current social contexts. In addition, the naturalisation of bisexuality argument renders bisexual politics and activism an impossibility; it provides little room for improvement in the experiences of plurisexual people because it declares their marginalisation universal.

Interviewees such as Bea cited the 'everyone is bisexual' concept as a problematic claim:

Bea: Something that I've seen - not just for myself but for many bisexual people in the beginnings of their coming out, going 'actually everyone's bisexual, I'm bisexual and so is everybody else'. I mean I now I see that as very problematic position to hold because it invalidates peoples view of their own sexual identity. It's going 'not your sexual identity doesn't count I know what your sexual identity is really' and I think it's very very dodgy. If you start- you know the logical extension to that is the religious right trying to train re-train a homosexual people and make them straight because they know what their sexual identity really is underneath (47, bisexual, Pākehā).

Bea equates calling everyone bisexual with the use of conversion therapy on gay people, as both of these things disregard the identity of non-heterosexual people. Lesbian academics and activists have also been outspoken on the importance of rejecting this 'bisexual as default' narrative using similar logic to Bea: Adrienne Rich (1980) argued that the narrative of everyone being bisexual in an ideal world eliminates the autonomy of lesbians to choose not to engage in intimate relationships with men. The 'everyone is bisexual' argument seems to run counter to dominant beliefs that sexuality is naturally dichotomous by positioning bisexuality as the one truly innate human identity. But as we

can see through interviewees and sexuality scholar's discussion, positing bisexuality as 'the default' continues to reduce sexuality to biological determinist models.

While the 'everyone is bisexual' discourse is a popular shorthand for arguing that attraction to multiple genders is innate and natural, a more ubiquitous discourse of non-heterosexuality is framed through a 'born this way' narrative. 'Born this way' puts forth the argument that everyone is born into their sexual identity. Sexual identities are framed in this discursive practice as discrete and measurably different and stemming from a (unknown) biological source. In the current Anglo-Western political and social climate, fitting marginalised sexualities into dominant sexuality models creates a more 'convincing' argument for legal and cultural acceptance than calling for a revolutionary destabilisation of how sexuality is seen as biologically destined. The 'born this way' discourse provides queer people with a justification for their sexual identity to be legally and socially recognised that fits into the essentialist model of sexuality (Seidman, 2015). This discourse places homosexuality alongside heterosexuality as written into biological makeup; it argues that due to lack of autonomy over their sexual identity (as it is biologically instilled in them), non-heterosexual-identified people should hold the same rights as heterosexual people (Seidman, 2015; Wood & Bartkowski, 2004). This argument is largely used to advocate for legal rights for gay and lesbian people rather than plurisexuals as the association between mixed-gender attraction and fluid sexuality could be understood as counter to sexual identity as biologically fixed (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2015).

Some Interviewees drew on the 'born this way' argument as justification of the legitimacy of their sexual identities. This was most saliently demonstrated by Katie who, unsure about her sexual attractions or identity when she was younger, kept track of her emotions and attractions related to different genders:

Katie: I kept data for a couple of months and I found that when I was super horny I was more attracted to men and when it dipped - you know during different parts of my cycle - when it dipped I was more attracted to women. I was like this is weird, but I guess it makes sense in like a biological kind of way.

Tara: In what way is it biological?

Katie: I don't know, I guess like in a drive to create babies' kind of way (31, bisexual/pansexual, Thai/Pākehā).

Katie positions her sexuality as relative: invoking Kinsey-scale ideas of attraction to men and women on a single spectrum, when her attraction to men increases, her attraction to women decreases.

Katie also views her attraction to women as occurring mostly when she is not “super horny” (which she suggested was when she was not menstruating or during ovulation). This may reveal how Katie constructs notions of desire and gender in same and other-sex attraction. Historically, desire between women has been de-sexualised, framed in the manner of romantic or platonic ties, rather than sexual desire (Rich, 1980). Katie also sees her bisexuality as intrinsically linked to her sexual attractions: she is bisexual because her body tells her she is bisexual. Her use of ‘drive’ to describe her attraction to men invokes a ‘myth of sexual naturalism’ model of sexuality (Tiefer, 2004). This model emphasises that the most basic and biological function of sex is the evolutionary drive for reproduction (Tiefer, 2004), and theorises that the diversity of sexuality experience and pleasure is controlled by our biological destiny.

Some interviewees attributed the different ways men and women experience their sexuality to biological differences between men and women. Namely, that while men were static in their attractions and predominantly monosexual, women had a greater fluidity in their sexual behaviour and attractions. Interviewees were familiar with statistics that have found that many more women identify as plurisexual than men (e.g., Compton & Bridges, 2019). This dichotomy of gendered experience of sexuality provided interviewees with a way to make sense of why they, as women, identified as plurisexual and why men were less likely to identify as bisexual. The explanations for this gendered relationship to sexual identity differed among interviewees, from biological to social. Interviewees who saw this relationship as caused by social restrictions saw themselves privileged as women because they could identify as plurisexual with less social consequences than bisexual men

would. However, for older interviewees, this difference in sexuality between men and women was viewed as innate and related to biological differences between males and females:

Gaby: Men have got that such a clear indication with their erection about whether they've got desire or not. Somehow everything is much clearer for them around sexuality and for women I think it's all much more (pause) fluid (68, queer, Pākehā).

Nadia: You know it's funny I think I've got a judgment about that I actually think it's less possible for men to be bisexual because men are much more sexually identified.

Tara: What do you mean by sexually identified?

Nadia: Um it- they identify their sexuality as who they're sexually attracted to whereas for women it can be a mix of who they're in love with and sexually attracted to (63, 'bisexual for want of a better word', Pākehā).

Both Gaby and Nadia saw men's sexuality as incompatible with bisexuality. The 'men are static' discourse regulates men's sexuality by positioning men's attractions as strict, rigid, and therefore more masculine. In this view, masculine sexuality is innately sex-driven and desire is controlled by their phallus (Hollway, 1984; Seidler, 1987). Social conceptions of masculine sexuality as animalistic feminises fluidity, and positions women's sexuality as morally superior to men's (Seidler, 1987). This reduction of men and women into 'men are from Mars, women are from Venus' type caricatures centres physiology at the heart of sexuality and uses this as the only frame of reference in experiences of sexuality (Tiefer, 2004). Similarly to Nadia and Gaby, Pennington (2009) noted in her research on bisexual people's performance of gender in romantic relationships that her interviewees used stereotypical notions of gender roles that were based in biological dispositions. These 'naturalised' dichotomies between genders were likely used by interviewees because they are the dominant and therefore most easily accessible way to understand gendered differences in experiences of (pluri)sexuality (Pennington, 2009).

Interviewees such as Gaby and Nadia, while identifying men's sexual identity as inherently monosexual, were also more critical of men who did identify as bisexual. They viewed bisexual men

as ‘pretending’ to be bisexual, a belief that monosexual people are also likely to endorse (Gleason et al., 2019). Nadia mentioned that she had a friend who was bisexual and married to a woman but believed him to be “deep down homosexual”. While these women are bisexual themselves, they saw masculinity as incompatible with bisexuality. This is a highly gendered understanding of bisexuality, where bisexual men are perceived to be more deceitful and confused about their bisexuality than women (Gleason et al., 2019). But despite Nadia acknowledging that this is a prejudice she has, this gendering of bisexuality was seen as biological (and therefore natural), and they did not see this as a problematic double standard to hold.

While interviewees like Gaby and Nadia saw the differences in how men and women experience their (pluri)sexuality as biologically driven, other interviewees positioned gender disparities in identifying as plurisexual as culturally driven. Interviewees attributed differing experiences between men and women’s bisexuality as due to the rigidity and surveillance of masculinity, while women – exempt from strict masculinity – were free to ‘explore’ their (natural) fluidity:

Katie: I found that a lot of the guys that were attracted to guys would not ever consider themselves bi as maybe a woman might, if she felt the same level of attraction that they described. So, my personal anecdotal opinion is that men will only come out as bi if they are extremely bi otherwise they'll stay in one of the other two camps even if they are a gay guy and sort of attracted to women.

Tara: Why do you think that is?

Katie: Probably because (laughs) probably because society would penalise men a lot more for been in a vague area (31, bisexual/pansexual, Thai/Pākehā).

According to Katie, while men may experience sexual attraction to multiple genders, the social cost for identifying as bisexual was higher for them than for women. Katie calls bisexuality ‘a vague area’ in the above quote; she sees the ambiguity surrounding bisexuality resulting in less men who were ‘behaviourally bisexual’ to describe themselves as bisexual. While Katie emphasises this is anecdotal evidence, past research has found that same-sex sexual encounters are likely to precede men identifying with a non-heterosexual identity as this allows them to ‘confirm’ their sexual identity through experiencing sexual behaviour with multiple genders prior to enduring the social cost of

identifying as bisexual (Macey et al., 2017). As research has found that the social consequences of identifying as bisexual are perceived to be higher by men than women, Katie's assessment is likely true (Preciado & Johnson, 2014). Interviewees such as Katie conveyed how the social structures of power inform how people experience their (pluri)sexuality. As women's same sex sexual behaviour is often tied to the exotification of their sexuality by men, heterosexual men presumably gain more pleasure out of women exploring queer sexual pleasure, than other men's sexual exploration. Therefore, another possible explanation for discourses that feminise sexual fluidity while disparaging men's plurisexuality is that it fits within discourses that subject queer women to objectification.

The search for sexual 'authenticity'

While the term 'sexual identity' is used throughout this thesis to describe how people self-identify their sexuality, the term 'sexual orientation' is more commonly used both in mainstream research and in everyday language. This term, 'sexual orientation', is used to describe a conglomeration of variables (i.e., sexual/romantic attraction, behaviour, preferences) that form one's sexuality (e.g., Kaestle, 2019; Klein et al., 1985; Sell, 1997). As I discussed in Chapter three, sexuality researchers have critiqued the use of the phrase 'sexual orientation' as it implies certain biological assumptions about the nature of sexuality, which should not be taken for granted (Barker & Langdridge, 2008). By positioning sexuality as solely or largely biologically driven, this implies that social or cultural factors have zero or minimal influence in the arena of sexual identity. However, the interviewees drew heavily on the discourse of sexuality as inherently biological. Viewing sexual identity as internal and innate was often a taken-for-granted assumption about their sexuality that created tensions for interviewees who wanted to 'discover' their 'true' sexuality.

As outlined in Chapter one, within a social constructionist perspective language is understood as shaping what we consider to be reality (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Tiefer, 2004). A perspective of language as (re)producing social discourses allows for a closer analysis of the language used by interviewees. This allows for a greater understanding of the discourses plurisexual women draw on

when discussing their sexual identity. In this sub-theme I will be focusing on four ways interviewees discuss their sexual identity: as a realisation, as something you can deny or repress, a journey of identifying their real and true label, and being authentic in their sexuality. Through this, I examine how interviewees see their sexuality within the confines of the essentialist construction of sexuality. Heterosexism was implicit in these constructions; sexual identity was framed largely as something internal that one must 'discover' – but only if you are not heterosexual. As heterosexuality is naturalised as the default human experience of sexuality, a journey of discovery is redundant for heterosexual people but essential if you suspect you are not heterosexual.

Some interviewees described that identifying as plurisexual was preceded by a 'discovery' or 'realisation' around their attraction to multiple genders. Living in a heteronormative society means that we are assumed to be solely attracted to people of the 'opposite sex' unless something disrupts this assumption. While a couple of interviewees noted they had always known about their queerness, the majority of interviewees had an attraction to a woman or girl precipitate their shift to understand themselves as non-heterosexual. For example, Katie had lived in Thailand for a year at sixteen and presents this as the inciting 'realisation' of her attraction to women:

Tara: When were you in Thailand like age-

Katie: (Overlapping) When I was 16 and that was also the year that I came out and I'm not sur- yeah I probably would have sorted it out like figured it out eventually but um there was just so many gorgeous women around.

Tara: So, living in Thailand you think impacted your understanding of your sexuality?

Katie: Yes 'coz I was um quite tomboyish (...) so I kept getting (laughing) very feminine women kind of flirting with me and I was like 'I'm confused and aroused' um but yeah that was just after I started realising I liked women, it happened about the same time (31, bisexual/pansexual, Thai/Pākehā).

Katie's experience of women flirting with her and then noticing her own reaction contributed to her 'realisation' that she was attracted to women, and subsequent identification as bisexual/pansexual. If we look at Katie's experience of sexual identity discovery using an essentialist model of sexual identity development, her heterosexual identity (which she may or may not have been cognizant of)

was replaced by a non-heterosexual identity at the point in which she 'realised' she was not heterosexual. Within this paradigm, the implication is that this new identity is "an accurate reflection of the essence of the individual" (Rust, 1993a, p. 53). This puts an emphasis on an internal (and therefore biological) true identity waiting to be discovered through an attraction or sexual experience with a woman. Katie's linking of her attraction to women as experiencing "arousal" also attributes attraction to women to a biological process, as discussed in the previous sub-theme.

One's sexual identity, through a non-essentialist lens, can be understood as created by social interactions, rather than as discovered through introspection (Rust, 1993a). This view regards non-heterosexual identity formation as effected by contextual factors such as sexual experiences, political ideologies, and social acceptability of non-heterosexual identities (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1977). Essentialist models have been critiqued for framing sexual identity development as a passive process without any self-governance of its construction (Rust, 1993a). The essentialist discourse is demonstrated in interviewees' construction of their sexuality as dormant until realised. In this way, queer sexuality was positioned within the dominant essentialist worldview by interviewees, even by those who tried to contravene normative conventions of sexuality (see Chapter nine). While sexual identity is framed as a discovery, what is implied within the accounts is that only non-heterosexual sexual identities need to be discovered and require this introspection. This positions heterosexuality as the baseline or 'norm' which non-heterosexuals then deviate from. The pervasiveness of essentialist discourses of sexuality limit people's personal narratives of their sexuality as it 'others' their plurisexuality. For example, queer people must undertake a journey of sexual identity 'discovery'; while due to heteronormativity, heterosexual people are seen as naturally born with the knowledge of their true sexuality and do not need a journey of discovery to reach their 'truth' (Maliapaard, 2018).

While a queer identity was talked about by interviewees as something that can be 'realised', it was also framed as something that can be repressed or ignored. For example, Steph discusses suppressing her attraction to women for most of her life:

Tara: Do you think you would have come out sooner or learnt more about yourself sooner if [your Chinese culture] was more accepting?

Steph: I think so. I hadn't met that person who is sort of like 'oh god'. I've usually been able to suppress it, like move on (...) but it kind of got to a point where I was just repressing it so much that I thought I was going to go crazy to be honest. (...) I've been so ignorant and naïve y'know and in denial for so long as well so even though I've been attracted [to women] I was like no no no I can't y'know (48, bisexual/gay, Chinese).

In the above extract, Steph describes a peripheral awareness of being attracted to women since she was a teenager. Yet, as she believed she would be ostracised by her family, she 'suppressed' her attraction to women. By interpreting events and attractions a certain way and emphasizing their attractions to a specific gender, plurisexual people can reflectively frame their experiences to suit the narrative they wish to build and see their sexual attractions through a monosexual lens (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1977). However, when queer people take on a different sexual identity, their old sexual identity is often framed as an act of unconscious repression of their 'true' identity. This notion of suppression of one's true sexuality invokes Freudian ideas of mental repression of unconscious desires that create a 'psychic struggle'⁸⁹ (Weeks, 2010). According to Freud (and later, models of sexual identity development) this denial of one's 'true' sexuality manifests in mental distress (Weeks, 2010). To avoid such anguish one must realise or embrace their true (queer) identity (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008; Weeks, 2010). Psychoanalytical defences have become a part of dominant Western discourses and therefore, psychoanalytic terms such as repression, denial and suppression are used by plurisexual people such as Steph to describe their 'psychological defences' against sexual identity awareness and disclosure (Kelly, 2014).

⁸⁹ While I am using the terms 'suppression' and 'repression' seemingly interchangeably here, I should note that in a psychological context suppression is seen as the act of consciously denying ones feelings while repression is an unconscious or subconscious level of denial (*PEP Consolidated Psychoanalytic Glossary*, 2016).

For non-heterosexual people, sexual identity development is often framed as a 'journey', where, at the end of this journey, people will 'find' or 'realise' their true sexual identity. Many interviewees described their own experience as a tumultuous voyage of sexual self-discovery. Alongside this journey was the pressure to be authentic by finding the 'right' sexual identity label to describe themselves. While some interviewees (such as Katie, described above), used their attraction to women as the beginning of introspection about their sexual identity, some interviewees framed introspection as an inadequate 'confirmation' of their sexual identity. These interviewees relied on engaging in sexual behaviours with people of different genders as a 'test' to see whether their hypothesis about their sexual identity was valid:

Tui: When I was with my [now-husband], I had slept with a couple of women and he (pause) didn't like it at the time but he kind of sees now that it was like necessary for me to move into like a more queer identity and helped me and he says that its - I'm not excusing cheating because it was devastating I think on him and I think I could've done things way, way differently - um but he understands I think that it was kind of like, I needed to see what was going on and I did (laughs) (27, queer, Māori/Pākehā).

Tui, having not had sexual experiences with women, did so while in a monogamous relationship with her partner to help understand her own sexual attractions, which led to her identifying as queer.

Unlike the view sexologists hold that sexual behaviour is a compulsory factor in one's sexual orientation, incongruence between sexual identity and behaviour has been found to be a common phenomenon for individuals of all sexual identities (Rust, 1993a). However, this use of sexual behaviour to 'confirm' one's sexual identity relates to the experience many plurisexual people have of being told to prove their sexual identity (Boyer & Galupo, 2015). As monosexuality is seen as the 'natural' form of sexuality, often plurisexual people question whether they are truly attracted to multiple genders, or whether their attraction to a particular gender is imagined (Boyer & Galupo, 2015). This compulsory monosexuality, as an extension of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) means that for plurisexual people such as Tui, same-sex sexual experiences were perceived as almost a necessity in feeling satisfied that they have discovered the truth of their sexual identity.

Essentialist models of sexual identity development dictate that the goal at the end of the sexual identity journey is to find authenticity by locating the essence of their sexual identity (See Chapter three for a discussion of sexual identity development theories). These models of sexual identity centre the notions of 'truth' and authenticity to stability in sexual orientation. Fluidity in sexual identity or attractions is therefore seen as inauthentic and destabilises the affordance of certainty and surety in the claiming of non-heterosexual sexual identities. This association between stability, authenticity, and legitimacy creates an unattainable goal for plurisexual people as for those who are not behaviourally plurisexual – in that they are not having sexual experiences with people of different genders – this can lead to feeling like they are being inauthentic:

Emily: When I was about 32 or 33 I started to freak out really badly that I missed out on something (...). I was in this relationship with a male and that was not right, maybe it wasn't right, and it didn't feel right. So, then we broke up and I had a relationship with a woman, and it was horrible, like the worst relationship in my life horrible and I thought god if that's what it's like, what was I thinking! (Laughs) So maybe I was throwing away a whole bunch of stuff just for this idea of a relationship that was in my head that never happened. And then after that I thought I don't know, what do I do? (...) I felt like I had to define myself and that definition had missed out- like I'd missed out on something because I hadn't defined myself specifically one way or the other (39, 'bi/pan/queer/everything', Pākehā).

The privileging of monosexuality in essentialist discourses of sexuality can lead plurisexual people to see a false dichotomy of authentic versus inauthentic in their sexual identity. For example, Emily worried because she had not defined herself "specifically one way or another", making her identity in the borderlands outside of heterosexuality and homosexuality. This is unique to plurisexual queer people as they can feel like they are doing their sexuality 'wrong' by being in a monosexual relationship (this is discussed more in Chapter nine). This mononormativity can lead to distress if plurisexual people do not experience the expected feeling of congruence and authenticity, as many interviewees described. Due to lack of visibility of plurisexual experiences of sexuality and relationships, this congruence may not be achieved. Essentialist models privilege monosexual identities, as staticity in sexuality is held to the highest standard (Rust, 1993a). As plurisexual people

draw on these models to understand their sexual identity, this leaves them seeking a goal that is incongruent with plurisexuality.

The regulation of plurisexuality

Discourses that argue that sexuality stems from biological (rather than social) origins dominates our cultural understanding of sexual identity. These discourses shape and limit the possibilities of how individual plurisexual people understand and experience their sexual identity. Recently, as a modern extension of this discourse, there has been an increase in terms used to describe variations in sexual identity experiences and attractions (Cover, 2018b). The broadening of terms used to describe sexual identities beyond gay, straight, and bisexual allows people who do not feel like these terms reflect their 'authentic' identity to take up new sexual identity labels. The increase in new sexuality terms is also intended to allow for a destabilisation of sexual identities that are linked to medical and essentialist sexual orientation discourses (Callis, 2016). In doing so, however, plurisexual women are constrained, and constrain others with these 'counter-discourses' that ultimately further stigmatise people.

In this sub-theme I will be discussing current counter-discourses within rainbow communities that interviewees discussed. The previous two sub-themes demonstrated plurisexual women's usage of dominant essentialist discourses to construct their sexual identity. This sub-theme will present how counter-discourses that use social constructionist concepts of sexuality are also used by plurisexual women to construct their sexual identity. The importance that people, institutions, and social norms place in labels was emphasised by plurisexual women and I will elaborate upon how labels were seen as important for restricting and regulating sexuality. Language reproduces ideas that hold social power and constitutes meaning that is located in social groups, contexts, and historical periods (Gavey, 1992). For plurisexual women, sexuality knowledge is taken from both normative, dominant discourses and discourses specific to rainbow communities. The languaging of sexuality that

plurisexual people used in interviews reproduced specific power relations and reflected increasingly regulated language around sexuality – especially in rainbow communities.

Michel Foucault conceptualised power as continuously reproduced in relational and productive forms to shape our behaviour and practices (Foucault, 1978). Foucault viewed sexuality, specifically, as a domain of social control and regulatory power through social norms and institutions (Foucault, 1978). This social control means that people are often limited by – or try to resist – the positions and discourses available to them in the domain of sexuality. Rather than being a biological ‘drive’, Foucault argued that sexuality was a system of historically and socially located power relations (Foucault, 1978). Using the metaphor ‘technologies of power’, Foucault argues that social technologies structure our world through constructing a set of knowledges and practices which limit how we make meaning of our personal and social worlds (Foucault, 1978). Academics have expanded this argument to discuss the ways technologies of power construct practices of phenomena such as gender and sexual coercion (Gavey, 1992). We can understand plurisexual women’s experiences within this metaphor too, as ‘technologies of (pluri)sexuality’. Their experiences as plurisexual women is constituted through – or resistant of – the powerful discourses available to them which also shape the understanding of their experiences (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1977). Hegemonic conceptions of sexuality informed how interviewees constructed their personal sexual identity and how they saw sexuality as constructed in their social world.

Sexual identity and sexual orientation terms were traditionally used by sexologists to classify a set of sexual attractions and behaviours into heterosexual, homosexual, and (occasionally) bisexual categories (Galupo et al., 2016). However, these terms were problematised by queer activists for pathologizing and not accurately capturing their experiences and identities (Seidman, 2015). The definition of bisexual was critiqued by bisexual people for reproducing mononormative assumptions – such as bisexual being ‘half gay and half straight’, and for reducing attraction to multiple genders to a male/female binary (Galupo et al., 2014). This led to a reconstruction, rooted in a queer

movement, of terms such as bisexual and a creation of other terms to accommodate diversity in sexuality, including pansexual and queer. Some people still see bisexual as inherently binary, and extrapolate from the 'bi' prefix that bisexual identified people's attraction fits in a gender and sex binary (e.g., Elizabeth, 2013). But another accepted narrative of bisexuality and similar terms is that it is not defined in reaction to heterosexual and monosexual terms but an 'experiential space' that is rooted in the experiences of people attracted to multiple genders (Rust, 2000b).

This inclusive construction of sexual identity provides more room for circumventing normative identities. However, the increase in inclusive terms to describe sexuality is still located in (and reproduces) a system of sexuality theories that is defined and regulated by categories. Some interviewees spoke about this normative regulation of sexuality as informing and impeding how they understood their sexual identity:

Fay: I think that their idea is once you're in a long-term relationship, well then you've picked your team and you've decided whether you're straight or gay and that's not how that works. But I think that that's very much like, we like putting people in boxes and we sort of think that that's a nice way to organise people and it makes us feel like our life is tidy if we have labelled people appropriately (35, queer/pansexual/bisexual, White European).

Fay positioned bisexuality and monogamy as 'normally' perceived as incompatible, leading to bisexual people's sexuality being erased, and instead their sexual identity defined by the gender of their long-term partner. Fay constructs this erasure of bisexuality as a way for monosexual people to fit bisexuality within a dichotomous view of sexuality and gender. While this presents bisexual erasure as a problem at an individual level, it also fits within the system of hetero- and mononormativity that denigrates plurisexuality while presenting monosexual identities as preferable (Yoshino, 2000). As bisexuality is not easily homogenised into normative constructs of sexuality because of its fluidity and malleability, it is viewed as a fallacious identity (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1977). This presents monosexual categories of sexuality as more legitimate due to heterosexuality and homosexuality being easy to classify and easily mapped onto a normative regulation of sexuality as fitting within set definitions – or 'boxes' as Fay described them (Yoshino, 2000). While these

assumptions of monosexuality as strict and simple may be inaccurate (see Beasley et al., 2015), it presents austere categorisation as the dominant and accepted way to understand sexual identities. Thus, identities that fit outside of these highly regulated concepts of sexuality (and, by proxy, gender) are amalgamated within hegemonic categorical constructions of sexuality. As plurisexuality is deemed difficult to define, particularly when plurisexual people are in monogamous relationships, it is usurped into a monosexual categorisation system, creating discomfort and invalidation of plurisexual people and their identities.

Categorisation of sexual identity was accepted by interviewees as the norm. However, many relayed that their experiences of their sexual identity diverged from this construction of sexuality so had to work to fit their identity into these categorises to maintain social acceptability.

Katie: I guess I'm trying to say it's so much more- it's so much more fluid than having a label attached to it would be really. The reason maybe that I identify as bi is a way of signalling to pretty much anyone, because bisexual is a pretty understood term (31, bisexual/pansexual, Thai/Pākehā).

The technologies of (pluri)sexuality produces the material practice of categorising sexuality into identities and 'labels'. For people who feel like their sexuality diverges from socially agreed upon definitions for terms such as heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual, the compliance with this construction of sexuality is seemingly reluctant. Similarly to the previous sub-theme's discussion of 'authenticity', Katie describes bisexuality as a *socially* understood signal of attraction to multiple genders while in our interview also invoking biological notions of bisexuality as innate (see sub-theme *(Pluri)sexuality is innate* for a discussion of Katie's interpretation of her bisexuality). However, Katie *also* portrays labels such as bisexual as not representative of her own experience of sexual identity. While bisexuality represents an attraction – or potential for attraction – towards people of different genders, it is limited to conventional representations of sexuality as an orientation and/or identity that reflects both sexual and romantic behaviours and preferences. Katie tries to reject restrictive constructs of sexuality by noting that “[sexuality is] so much more fluid than having a label”. However, as there are no other socially dominant means to describe her sexuality, and

because categorisation remains important in the current socio-cultural context – Katie relies on ‘bisexual’ as a description of her sexual identity.

Orientation-based understandings of sexual identity fail to capture the nuances of plurisexual attraction, leading to a surge in the popularity of different terms for attraction to multiple genders (Galupo et al., 2016; Rust, 2000b). One of the intents behind this practice is to identify terms that better capture an individual’s sexual identity. While the broader consequences for the increased number of terms for plurisexuality is expanded upon later in this chapter, one consequence of this practice is identity confusion. As identity terms hold greater meaning than a description of sexual attraction and behavioural practices, these identity ‘labels’ hold great value for many people that use these terms (Harper & Swanson, 2019). Some interviewees discussed how this led to them being unsure about what terms they should use to describe their sexual identity:

Leigh: I identify as bisexual and have done since I was about 14 which I found really interesting when the word pansexual came out because - I mean that was probably 8 years ago or so roughly - and because I’m sexually attracted to men, women and other it did fit me quite well and so I was like do I switch? Like do I then become pansexual and let go of the bisexual label? or do I just continue as I want? So, I identify as bisexual ‘coz it’s just easier (34, bisexual, Māori/Pākehā).

While pansexual as a description for attraction to multiple genders has been in use since at least the 1990s, in recent years it has become much more widespread within the queer community (Harper & Swanson, 2019). Definitions of pansexuality and how it differs from bisexuality vary, and due to the overlap in people who use both pansexual and bisexual to describe themselves, it is difficult to describe them as discrete identities⁹⁰. Unlike the large amount of plurisexual people who use multiple identities to describe their sexuality, Leigh framed pansexual and bisexual terms as mutually exclusive; she would have to “let go” of one to use the other. The hegemony of the system of sexual categorisation presents sexual identities as discrete, which could be considered in conflict with the heterogeneity of plurisexual experience (Morandini et al., 2017). Models of sexual identity

⁹⁰Although this is disputed by some scholars, who argue that bisexuality and pansexuality are individually distinct identities and there is some differing values, beliefs, and experiences between pansexual and bisexual identified people (e.g., Elizabeth, 2013; Greaves et al., 2019).

argue that to take up a new sexual identity, one must let the other one go (Cass, 1984). While some scholars have argued that these models simplify or disregard experiences of plurisexual people, hegemonic models of sexual identity continue to hold mainstream acceptance which in turn shapes how bisexual people, such as Leigh, choose to identify (Callis, 2014; Harper & Swanson, 2019).

Plurisexual people's sexual identity – even when they are trying to actively resist the categorical system – is defined by the labels they use. Most interviewees saw terms such as pansexual and queer as preferable to bisexual because they represented 'no label labels', unlike heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual. Pansexuality, omnisexuality, and queerness were also seen to defy normative categorisation by being linked to fluidity and individual expressions of plurisexuality (Morandini et al., 2017). For example, Ava alternated between using bisexual and pansexual to describe herself in our interview but also strongly emphasised that she disliked describing herself using sexual identity terms:

Ava: I think in this situation we are kind of looking- like we need a label for it so we can write it down in the PhD but honestly when people ask me, if they ask respectfully and I was to talk about it then I just say (pause) I'm attracted to people (laughs).

Tara: And so why do you prefer not having a label?

Ava: I find it restrictive and I'm always you know, like one week I'll be like my god I wanna just like men, this is what I wanna do and then I'm like 'man I'm so feeling this particular transgender artist at the moment' and I'm like you know I really wanna explore that, and then another week I'm like I never want to see another dick in my life. So, I think when I say to people I'm pansexual they have the instant um assumption that I'm like 33.3% women 33.3% men and 33.3% other genders and I hate that (laughs) 'cause it's never that simple is it? (26, pansexual, Māori/Pākehā).

Ava acknowledged that her use of pansexual was for my benefit – she believed that I was wanting her to use a label to categorise her sexual identity in our interview. Pansexual was seen by her as the closest label she preferred, but in general found labels restrictive. The dominant narrative of sexual identity is that it is static and enduring across time – thus when people identify with a non-monosexual identity, it is believed to be a temporary condition and their innate and enduring

(monosexual) identity will eventually be chosen (Klesse, 2011). Ava sees this narrative of staticity as inconsistent with her experiences of her sexual identity as her preferences and attractions to different genders vacillates. For individuals such as Ava, while pansexual is seen as a 'no label label', the contradiction of trying to condense their sexual identity into an identity term can inspire reluctance to define their sexuality in social situations. Instead, Ava elects to broadly say that she is attracted to people and only uses terms to describe her sexual identity in situations that it is believed necessary, such as in an academic context. Kiri also described bisexuality as a term she does not identify with but "if it was a choice on a form (...) I'd put a tick". When there is opportunity to describe the nuance of their sexual identity, such as during interviews, or avoiding using terms, such as social contexts, this appeals to plurisexual people like Kiri and Ava. Being able to avoid categorising their sexual identity provides room for plurisexual people to present their sexual identity to others in a way that feels congruent with how they view their sexual identity. Nevertheless, the categorization of sexuality is difficult for plurisexual people to traverse in most contexts.

It is evident that the essentialist quantification of sexual identity is at odds with the multiple and individual meanings of plurisexuality. This leaves plurisexual people reluctant to use terms that are within dominant sexuality discourses, such as bisexual, but unable to easily step outside of the categorization of sexuality altogether. The queer rebellion against regimented sexual identity has increased the number of labels to attempt to be inclusive of the varied ways people experience their sexual identity. However, due to the privileging of hegemonic discourses of sexuality in our society, these novel attempts at diversity are still restricted to fitting into our current sexuality system that rigidly defines sexual identity. Another outcome of the increase in terms to describe plurisexual identities is that queer sexuality becomes a highly regulatory domain, as I will elaborate on in the next sub-theme.

Gatekeeping and policing

While categorisation creates or limits expressions of plurisexual women's sexual identity, we are also in a social world that is increasingly aware of the importance of self-expression and diversity (Turley & Fisher, 2018). This has given birth to new counter-discourses of gender and sexual identity that try to challenge rigid categorisation of sexuality. For example, a growing minority of queer young adults do not describe themselves as gay or bisexual because of a belief that these terms have historically excluded people who do not fit into hegemonic notions of gender (Cover, 2018b). While these counter-discourses attempt to deconstruct binaries such as hetero/homosexual, it has also led to increased problematising of bisexuality for its role in this binary, which has consequences for people that identify as bisexual.

While bisexual scholars and activists have repeatedly noted that bisexual attraction is diverse and inclusive, there are large numbers of rainbow and plurisexual people who reject bisexuality for "straddling and thereby reinforcing both sides" of the heterosexual/homosexual binary (Cover, 2018a, p. 14). Dominant discourses see bisexuality as caught 'between two worlds' and contradicting the hetero/homosexual binary, yet queer activists that champion counter-discourses to destabilise categorisation see bisexuality as not going far enough in its inclusivity of identities. This conflict between bisexuality being too radical and not radical enough can create division and 'in-fighting' which may be harmful for people who identify as bisexual. This tension was evident in how interviewees discussed bisexuality and positioned other plurisexual terms such as queer and pansexual. While wanting to disrupt categorisation binaries, bisexuality, pansexuality, and queerness was often framed within a 'good word/bad word' binary. Interviews demonstrated that the problematisation of bisexuality and preference for terms such as pansexual and queer created forms of self-policing and policing of people who identified as bisexual.

Despite the ubiquity of the term bisexual to describe plurisexual attraction, only four interviewees identified as bisexual specifically because it fit their attractions; other interviewees discussed that

they identified as bisexual for other reasons. These reasons included the already existing public awareness of the term, because that was the first plurisexual term they were aware of and have formed an attachment to it despite them not viewing it as 'perfectly' fitting their attractions, or for 'political reasons' such as wanting to increase awareness of bisexual erasure. Pansexuality and queerness were held up by interviewees as a 'better' identity than bisexuality for signalling one's dedication to gender and sexuality inclusivity:

Tara: What do you think about the idea of pansexuality?

Emily: I think that the students at school think it's amazing and I think it's a trendy thing at the moment and I don't know if that will change or not. I think it's still a subset or a new word for the same thing it's just a way of describing [bisexuality] I don't know better? Or more inclusively? People like to be inclusive so maybe that's what it is (39, 'bi/queer/pan/everything', Pākehā).

These neo-identities such as pansexual and queer are beneficial for plurisexual people as they allow them to discuss their identity in a way that is more grounded in their experiences and allows multiple and fluid identities to co-exist. This is counter to dominant essentialist notions of sexuality as static and binary and instead accommodates variation in sexual identity. However, terms such as pansexual and queer were framed as inclusive and preferable at the expense of terms such as bisexual. This has been noted in previous studies, with participants stating that they are more likely to use terms like queer or pansexual because of the association between bisexuality and hegemonic binaries of gender (e.g., Callis, 2014). As a result of this good/bad word binary, many of my interviewees defined pansexuality in opposition to bisexuality:

Tara: How do you define pansexual?

Ava: I think that my beliefs about gender and the fact that, you know, it's not a binary kinda thing (pause) means that for me, because I've been attracted to people who are transgender or genderfluid I can't call myself bisexual because there's been more than male and female for me.

Tara: So how would you define bisexual?

Ava: I think it's really hard. For me, I think it is being attracted to men and women um (pause) it's complicated nowadays isn't it?

Tara: Yeah people have lots of definitions for it.

Ava: Yeah definitely but I suppose (pause) I've almost rejected that because I think it's too (pause) reductive, for me anyway (26, pansexual, Māori/Pākehā).

In this account, pansexuality is framed as *not* bisexuality, where bisexuality is positioned as “reductive” and transphobic. Gonel (2013) argued that pansexuality is a more inclusive identity than bisexuality because “the object of desire is not limited to two sexes” (p. 37). The belief that bisexuality is limited to “dualistic social constructions of male/female and man/woman” (Gonel, 2013, p. 37) has created a dichotomy that posits that bisexuality as a discriminatory identity, and pansexuality is an inclusive and therefore better identity.

Queer people use counter-discourses and ‘neo-identities’ to disrupt hegemonic binaries through taking up new constructions of sexual identity as multiple and fluid. The new terms associated with this construction are intended to usurp terms such as homosexual and bisexual, but by doing this, it can further stigmatise people who use terms such as bisexual to describe their sexual identity.

Alongside this, consequences associated with hegemonic identities including policing the limits of categories, ascribing regulated definitions onto labels, and re-using stereotyping in these counter-discourses (Cover, 2018a).

While bisexual is positioned as a reductive identity, it still holds social power through its ubiquity and familiarity across broad groups of people. Due to this, all interviewees who currently identified as pansexual or queer held a bisexual identity prior to taking up a pansexual identity. For some, identifying as pansexual was the result of seeing bisexuality as incongruent with how they viewed themselves as inclusive of diverse identities. Leigh, for example, described identifying as bisexual as in conflict with having a genderqueer partner:

Leigh: I was like oh okay I'm bisexual and then I went on to date the genderqueer person who wasn't happy with the term bisexual. So, then I was like okay I'm, you know, more pansexual. I've been involved in a bit of advocacy for transgender individuals through the work that I do. I was like yeah I can definitely see myself dating- happily dating someone that was transgender as well, um which kind of fitted better in with the label pansexual (34, bisexual, Māori/Pākehā).

The increase in use of identities that are positioned as more inclusive than dominant identities reveals the shifting socio-cultural landscape of sexual identity. This allows people to take up subject positions that are more inclusive of the diversity of how sexuality and gender is experienced. The increase in popularity of these discourses can also create forms of self-policing where plurisexual people avoid using terms they see as outdated and take up terms that are seen as more congruent to themselves as a transgender ally, and someone that is inclusive of the diverse ways gender can be expressed beyond a man/woman dichotomy. Leigh viewed pansexuality as challenging normative beliefs of gender and sexuality which led to her to use that term instead of bisexual⁹¹. Leigh's replacing of bisexual as her sexual identity with pansexual could be seen through a larger practice of self-policing.

Policing who is allowed – or should be – using certain sexual identity terms has been noted as a longstanding practice within rainbow communities (Schudson & van Anders, 2019). Recently, in regards to plurisexuality, policing included debates over definitions (and overlaps of definitions) of bisexuality, pansexuality, and other related terms and identities such as pomosexual, polysexual, and omnisexual (Schudson & van Anders, 2019). While all these terms are under the umbrella of attraction to multiple genders, distinctions between the terms and how they distinguish attraction to people of different genders is highly debated (Byron et al., 2019; Schudson & van Anders, 2019). Within my sample, many interviewees identified the difference between bisexuality and pansexuality in varying, and often imprecise ways:

Tara: How do you define [pansexuality and bisexuality]?

Iris: I guess bi is just like yeah, I'll go like guys and girls but pansexual's more like going for personality types, which is like people you have a connection with and not really caring so much about the two different genders. Whereas bisexual, I find, is like the only two [genders] whereas pan is like whatever, don't really care that much (laughs) (20, pansexual, Pākehā).

⁹¹ However, Leigh chose to write 'bisexuality' on the demographic survey form I gave her after the interview, which is why she is described as 'bisexual' in brackets.

Among interviewees, there was no consensus as to the discrete difference between bisexual and pansexual attraction (One interviewee, Bea, mentioned that the difference between bisexuality and pansexuality is that “people who tell you they're bisexual are bisexual and people who tell you they're pansexual are pansexual”). Pansexual was presented as an ideology broader than a sexual identity, as an indication of taking up counter-discourses that seek to disrupt dominant gender and sexuality ideologies.

Interviewees were familiar with external policing of identities, and it led to some self-censoring to avoid experiencing prejudice for their bisexual identities. For some interviewees this involved not using the word bisexual to describe themselves in queer spaces to avoid hostility:

Nadia: I think I would keep - I would privately keep the bisexual label.

Tara: Why privately? Do you think your partner wouldn't accept it if you identify as bisexual in a relationship?

Nadia: I guess not so much privately then but I wouldn't go on about it (laughs (...)). But that would be silly because I'd be denying my past. I never realised how problematic the whole label [bisexual] is (63, 'bisexual for want of a better term', Pākehā).

Nadia avoided using the term bisexual specifically around other queer women which she stated (after realising over the course of our interview), was because of how “problematic” she saw this label. One reading of Nadia’s extract is that she is experiencing internalised bi-negativity – an internalisation of the discrimination and marginalisation of bisexuality in the world (Obradors-Campos, 2011; Scales Rostosky et al., 2010). Another reading is that marginalisation of bisexuality sets up an environment where bisexual people do not want to disclose their identity for fear of being ostracised. Many interviewees discussed experiencing or seeing others experience gatekeeping within the queer community for using the term bisexual.

While past research has noted the ongoing policing between people who hold various plurisexual identities, much of the gatekeeping that was discussed came from lesbian or gay women who did

not want women who were attracted to multiple genders (as one of those genders was often men) within their communities.

Kiri: From the first time that I began a relationship with a woman and then discovered that lesbians (...) were quite suspect of women who were in relationships with men or who were attracted to men. If you were attracted to women you were supposed to be y'know full on attracted to only women yeah so how do I feel about [bisexuality]? Eh, I wouldn't, I don't want to say it out loud (59, wahine takatāpui, Māori).

Bisexual women experience surveillance from the queer community about the authenticity of their identity and attractions (Hayfield et al., 2018; Hayfield et al., 2014; Turner, 2015). This can create an environment of self-censoring, where plurisexual women are wary to disclose their identity within queer environments. This self-policing of language was also practiced by interviewees outside of queer communities, where some bisexual women, like Steph, would opt to avoid noting her attraction to multiple genders:

Steph: Sometimes I refer to myself as gay, it just sounds much more nicer and it has less of the connotations with the associated with bi.

Tara: In what contexts, like only when you are dating would you use the word gay?

Steph: Um no sometimes when I'm going out to different friends or something.

Tara: What's the connotations of being bi do you think? How do people see bisexuality?

Steph: Well it's more of the older generation, in the younger generation it doesn't matter so really I guess depends on who I'm talking to, so depending on that it will- it adjusts according to the audience as such, bit of like a chameleon (48, bisexual/gay, Chinese).

Steph likens being bisexual with being a chameleon – making judgements about whether you might be in danger and adapting to your surroundings. This practice of self-policing or self-erasure of bisexuality within queer and wider social communities is likely related. As I noted earlier, bisexuality is seen as an unfavourable identity because of the association between bisexuality and binary genders. This reinforcement of binary attraction is seen as transphobic because it is believed that if bisexual people are attracted to binary genders, this leaves out gender non-conforming and

transgender people as potential partners. Aside from this being critiqued and dispelled by bisexual activists, this privileging of pansexuality (and other terms) as a superior term to bisexuality reinforces the rejection of bisexuality that has been systematically practiced by heterosexuality and homosexuality (Yoshino, 2000).

While moving forward as a society that acknowledges the diversity of experience and the lack of 'real-world' applicability of essentialist categories of sexuality, the discourses that seek to counter these notions continue to regulate sexuality. This is done externally through policing plurisexual people's behaviours and relationships (by erasing their identities when in monogamous relationships) these neo-identities also enhance the stigma around bisexuality. This leads to self-surveillance around the language used to describe plurisexual women's identities and censoring the language they use in social settings. Therefore, the debates about the different identity terms plurisexual people should use, and the increase in counter-discourses of sexuality and gender, continue to exist within our dominant knowledges and technologies of sexuality that regulate and oppress queer and plurisexual identities.

Chapter summary

This chapter consisted of an examination of dominant and counter discourses of sexual identity and how this informed how plurisexual women understand their own sexual identities. *(Pluri)sexuality is innate* discussed how essentialist discourses informed how interviewees discussed sexuality including the origins of their sexual identity. These ideas extended to sex and gender as controlling one's sexual identity as interviewees discussed their sexuality as rooted in their biological imperatives as women. *The search for sexual 'authenticity'* discussed the relationship between language use by interviewees and creating narratives around a sexual identity journey. *The Regulation of plurisexuality* sub-theme explored how sexual identities were often constructed as labels for the self and for society and the restrictions of labels shaped how interviewees understood their sexual identity. *Gatekeeping and policing* explored the use of counter-narratives of sexuality to

be inclusive of diversity of sexuality and gender expression. These counter-discourses were linked to the use of terms besides bisexuality to describe plurisexuality. This created an environment of surveillance and self-policing over the 'proper' terms plurisexual people should use to describe their identity.

The discussions of these three themes indicated that there is a contradiction in how plurisexual women understand sexual identity; an essentialist ideology is used to define a "cause" of their bisexuality. Contradictorily, interviewees took up a fluid, and inclusive position regarding sexual identity labels that related to a modern understanding of sexual identities as socially driven and constructed. The next chapter will include a general discussion of the findings from the data and conclude the thesis with a look at future directions.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Negotiating Identity and Marginalisation as Plurisexual Women: Conclusions

In this thesis multiple forms of data have been analysed, resulting in an examination of an extensive number of topics pertaining to women's plurisexual identities. This chapter will conclude this thesis by first providing a summary of the previous chapters and then looking beyond the data to understand the answers we received to the research questions. Following this, there will be a critical examination of this research including possible limitations of the methodology and analysis. Finally, there will be a look forward at where to go from here.

Thesis summary

For clarity and to delineate the different goals, this thesis was divided into three parts. **Part one** included **Chapters two, three, and four** and provided context on the social construction and past research on women's plurisexuality. This section also provided the justification for this research and introduced the three main questions that guided the research. **Part two** began with setting up the research methodology in **Chapter five** and went onto present the analysed survey data in **Chapter six**, and this data were discussed in **Chapter seven**. This section of the thesis provided a look at the characteristics of a sample of plurisexual women to understand their experiences and identities. **Part three** was made up of three chapters that examined the three themes that made up the critical thematic analysis. **Chapter eight** discussed the theme *Negotiating hetero-society*, **Chapter nine** provided insights into women's plurisexuality through the theme *The Labour of plurisexuality*, and finally **Chapter ten** used the theme *The languaging of plurisexuality* to interrogate social constructions of (pluri)sexuality. This section drew more heavily on social constructionism to situate plurisexual women's experiences in broader social discourses. In each of these sections, the theories that underpinned this thesis – critical feminism and intersectionality theory – guided the discussion and analysis by providing lenses to make sense of the data.

Conclusions and insights

Responding to the research questions

As the topic chosen for this research was broad – plurisexual women’s experiences related to their sexual identities – the three research questions were essential for navigation of this exploratory research. To conclude this research, each research question will be returned to below.

The first research question (*How is sexual identity talked about by plurisexual women in Aotearoa?*) was explored using a critical thematic analysis with results from the survey data also providing insights into how plurisexual women perceived their sexual identities. Through this thesis we have learned that the main theme linking plurisexual women’s experiences is their heterogeneity.

Previous research, I believe, had downplayed the diversity among plurisexual people; as I argued in part one of this thesis. The amalgamation of bisexuals with gay populations ignores the great disparities that exist in experiences of – and social reactions to – plurisexuality and homosexuality.

While I, and researchers before me, have emphasised the diversity *between* queer populations, I believe there needs to be a discussion on the social and academic ramification of the multiplicity of plurisexualities.

Within this thesis, I have suggested that the increase in discourses that privilege inclusivity has led to the explosion of different identities under the plurisexual umbrella. Alongside this, however, it is possible that increase in the awareness of the heterogeneity in attraction to multiple genders and the insufficiency of essentialist categories has also contributed to the rise in different ‘micro’ identities. It may be that in the Anglo-Western neo-liberal social context, discourses of personal responsibility and agency have overtaken an overt reliance on powerful societal structures (Bay-Cheng, 2015). For sexual identities, this may mean that as society moves away from a biological orientation narrative of sexuality, we – as citizens – are becoming less tethered to the idea of fitting into few broad categories of sexual identity (Galupo et al., 2015; Galupo et al., 2016). Instead, by wanting to indicate our individualism while also maintaining the socially and scientifically embedded

practice of categorising experiences, a shift has occurred (Callis, 2016). Bisexuality is now one of multiple sexual identities people can hold that exist under a plurisexual banner and – as demonstrated throughout this research – multiple identity terms are held simultaneously (although not without complications – as shown in Chapter nine).

For descriptions of sexual identity, the Anglo-Western context of neoliberalism, micro-identities, and heterogeneity of plurisexual experience means there is an ongoing tension between discrete categorisation and fluidity for plurisexual women. Sexual identities are comprised of more than a biological element, containing romantic and sexual attractions, desires, behaviours, social identities, social discourses, and political alignments. With all this considered when describing their sexual identity, wanting the relief of fitting in a pre-ordained sexuality category is impeded by the need of finding a sexual identity (or identities) that can fit these considerations. Interviewees demonstrated this tension through describing how they agonised over discovering their ‘true’ identities (Chapter ten). Other plurisexual women, however, were happy with their vacillation of attractions and identities and sitting in the ‘borderlands’ between heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality.

Genderless attraction was one dominant tenet of how plurisexual women describe their sexuality, particularly among survey respondents. Until the rise of pansexuality – which often emphasises attraction *regardless* of gender – plurisexuality (and in particular bisexuality) was often constructed by dual attraction to men and women. This deprioritising the gender of the ‘object of attraction’ for plurisexual people continues to be overlooked in psychological literature and sexuality studies.

Plurisexuality often remains positioned *between* heterosexuality and homosexuality, and therefore bisexuality (as other plurisexual identities have had little academic attention) is often placed in past research upon a single continuum of attraction to men and women without other ways of considering attraction irrespective of gender.

Within my research, however, gender was often framed by plurisexual women as largely irrelevant.

Feminist research has extensively argued the importance of gender roles and scripts in the

experiences of relationships (e.g., Farvid & Braun, 2017; Gavey, 2018; Hollway, 1984). Therefore, going into this thesis I had assumed that societal gender roles and the structural oppression of heterosexuality would mean that plurisexual women would express less preference for relationships with men. Furthermore, I hypothesised that plurisexual women would prioritise their attraction to people who were not men as they would be less constrained by heterosexist and gendered expectations by doing so. However, both interviewees and survey data de-emphasised gender in experiences with their sexual and romantic partners. This brings up questions of the importance of gender for plurisexual women. Is it that partners' characteristics are not gendered as society emphasises? Or is it that attraction is experienced differently for plurisexual people than how mainstream psychology categorises and measures sexual and romantic attraction? More discussion needs to be had on the fight plurisexual people wage in shifting narratives about gender in attraction and experiences, and this should be used to change romantic and sexual discourses.

Plurisexuality, data has revealed, is disparate, changeable, and fluid. This vacillation was embraced by some interviewees but was largely seen as incongruent with sexual identity labels. Some plurisexual women, therefore, felt anxiety over the perceived lack of language that reflected the complexity of their sexual identity. As mentioned previously, the dissonance between terms such as bisexual and the multifaceted experiences of sexuality may have led to the uptake in other terms that plurisexual women use to describe their sexual identities. A movement away from bisexuality may also be caused by negative perceptions of the term. Discussions with interviewees and survey results both indicated that bisexuality is generally not seen favourably. Results from the survey found that despite the majority of participants identifying as bisexual, most also perceived bisexuality as transphobic and un-inclusive. Furthermore, interviewees who described themselves as bisexual often did so begrudgingly or placed distance from themselves and bisexuality. Despite interviewees and survey respondents largely aligning themselves with bisexuality, and interviewees holding themselves (and presumably other bisexual people) to be trans-inclusive, they nonetheless hold the term bisexual to be transphobic. There is a disconnect between what they understand

bisexuals to be and how they define or perceive bisexuality – bisexual people are not binary, but nonetheless bisexuality is. Perhaps we are in the midst of bisexuality ‘rebranding’ in a way that echoes homosexuality’s rebranding as gay and lesbian in the 20th century. In reflecting a societal movement towards trans-inclusivity and accepting sexual fluidity, bisexuality may be being replaced rather than the reimagination that bisexual scholars and activists have been advocating for.

The second research question (*What are the demographics and general characteristics of women who identify with plurisexual identities in Aotearoa?*) was intended to be answered with the data gathered from the online survey with the interview data providing more context to the results. As this survey used a community-based sample (instead of a nationally representative sample), the results could not be extrapolated for the entire population. The results did, however, provide a broad overview of plurisexual women’s experiences and opinions that can be used as a basis of future research and to understand their lives in a way that has not been done as broadly before in academic research on plurisexuality. Through this data collection technique, it is impossible to conclude whether the demographics and characteristics of the sample speak to broader trends among plurisexual women in Aotearoa. However, we *are* able to compare our results to results from previous research to identify insights.

In summary, most of the survey results were supported by previous research. Of particular interest in this thesis was the diversity of terms plurisexual women use to describe their sexual identity.

Previous research had suggested that plurisexual people use multiple terms to describe their sexual identity, however previous research had only indicated that a minority of plurisexual individuals use more than one term to describe their identity (Belous & Bauman, 2016; Galupo, 2018). The results from this research, however, suggested that use of multiple terms was a normal practice within this sample. This indicates that research that either ignores plurisexual identities other than bisexuality, or views bisexuality and other plurisexual terms as independent may be misunderstanding plurisexual people’s relationship to their sexual identity.

While previous research has highlighted the marginalisation of plurisexuality both within and outside of the rainbow community, the tensions over identity term usage *among* people who identify with plurisexual identities has not been well documented in research. I suggest that the rise in usage of different plurisexual terms is due largely to the stigmatisation of bisexuality, the fraught-ness of the term bisexuality, and the popularity of counter-discourses of inclusivity and diversity; in comparison to the stigma of bisexuality, pansexuality was framed as a more inclusive identity by many plurisexual women. This may be due to the newness of pansexuality in social discourse and thus aspects of marginalisation such as stereotypes have not yet become salient (this is not to say that pansexual-identified people do not experience marginalisation, but the term itself may not have salient stereotypes connected to it). Narratives of bisexuality versus pansexuality were apparent in interviews and (while difficult to capture quantitatively) pansexuality presented as a less used but preferred term for survey respondents. In the survey results, this was evident by the low number of respondents (comparative to the bisexual variable) who believed pansexual was a binary and transphobic term. This tension of which is the 'better' plurisexual identity creates distance within a community that already lacks the social power and resources to be visibly united. The popularity of 'post-bisexual' identity terms and tension between holding 'right and wrong' plurisexual identities was a salient discourse of plurisexuality and a characteristic of plurisexual women's lives that has been understated in research (Callis, 2016). More work needs to look beyond creating an empirical bisexual and pansexual dichotomy to unpack the beliefs that are underpinning this tension.

A further significant characteristic of women's plurisexuality identified within this research was tensions around sexual identity disclosure. Past research had highlighted the incongruence between models of coming out and plurisexual people's lived experience of disclosing their sexual identity (Harper & Swanson, 2019). Through the interviews and survey data, however, we can see that culturally powerful narratives of coming out are still valued for many plurisexual women. This, juxtaposed against the large amount of respondents who had not disclosed their sexual identity or

were only passively 'out', reflects the incongruities between heterosexist cultural narratives such as 'coming out' and plurisexual women's navigation of holding a marginalised sexual identity.

Women's plurisexuality has been characterised culturally as performative: a behaviour or identity women enact for men's sexual consumption. Past research has spoken to the sexism of this and the expectations it sets up for women (Fahs, 2009). Behaviours plurisexual women have been asked (or felt obliged) to perform were confirmed with this research. Sexualisation of their sexual identity was highly salient for plurisexual identified women as evident from my research findings. They viewed this sexualisation as both an individual experience (they had personally been sexualised by partners and people they knew), and culturally embedded (perpetuated through media and porn). This creates a dilemma of visibility: if plurisexual women are open about their sexual identity to others, there is more opportunities for sexualisation and objectification to occur. One way this was experienced was through 'unicorn hunting' (a likely-heterosexual couple seeking a bisexual woman to have sex with them) on dating apps. Signalling their plurisexual identities in their dating app bio's burdens plurisexual women with repeated requests for threesomes. In saying that, some interviewees found freedom in being able to 'explore' their sexual identity through threesomes. Having a man present for their first sexual experience with a woman helped present a somewhat familiar sexual script for plurisexual women. Therefore, it is important to endeavour to be critical of social narratives of hypersexuality for plurisexual women while not dismissing the sexual agency of individual plurisexual women.

For plurisexual identified women, there is a further toll of seeing plurisexuality exoticized culturally. The respondents' experiences of sexualisation, and their anxiety around the objectification of their sexual identity highlights an invisible burden plurisexual women may navigate. Plurisexual women are very conscious of the oppression and systemic delegitimation of plurisexuality that occurs in society and this often informs how they see their sexuality and discuss their sexual identity to others. It is evident, through the experiences of sexual assault described by interviewees and high

rates of sexual coercion, violence, and rape among survey respondents, that the objectification of plurisexuality may inform a culture of masculine entitlement that informs plurisexual women's experiences of their sexuality. The implications of this are that a gendered lens of plurisexual experiences and a plurisexual lens of *gendered* experiences (including objectification and sexual assault) need to be applied more in psychological literature. The normalisation of sexualisation of plurisexual women leaves it underexamined, under theorised, and with minimal interventions.

Some characteristics of plurisexual women's intimate lives including their romantic and sexual experiences are supported by previous literature. This research supports the substantiated finding most romantic partners of plurisexual women are men (Hoang et al., 2011; Weinberg et al., 1994). My research also indicates, however, that this finding is more nuanced than previously understood as most respondents have also had partners of other genders. Little else of plurisexual women's romantic and sexual relationships has been empirically categorised. Specifically, little research has been conducted on plurisexual women's sexual experiences and behaviours, and that which *has* been reported is largely deficit focused. By ignoring women's sexual pleasure in narratives of sexual behaviour we are at risk of continuing to objectify plurisexual women. In this research, both interviewees and survey respondents sought sexual relationships out with people of multiple genders – most of these relationships casual or one-off – for their sexual pleasure.

Finally, the third research question (*How are the social processes of marginalisation experienced and made sense of by plurisexual women?*) was returned to repeatedly throughout this thesis. The two key discourses I have identified that marginalise plurisexuality and impact how plurisexual identities are perceived are heteronormativity and mononormativity. The structural privileging of heterosexuality is a key tenet of Anglo-Western society and has led to the oppression of all queer identities. In Chapter eight particularly, the unique ramifications of compulsory heterosexuality for plurisexual women was made salient. Intertwined with mononormativity, plurisexual women are perceived as beneficiaries of heteronormativity – compared to gay and lesbian people – due to

their ability to “go stealth” as queer by “passing” as heterosexual when in relationships with men (Maliepaard, 2017b). This, too, was seen as a privilege by many plurisexual women (as demonstrated by the high number of survey respondents who saw themselves as benefiting from “straight-passing privilege”). While being viewed as heterosexual was described by plurisexual women as a safety net from the oppression of queerness, a key consequence of this is plurisexual invisibility. This invisibility stemmed from discourses that erase plurisexual identities by privileging a binary model of sexual orientation. As narratives of some plurisexual people maintain, there is increasing relief from this erasure with plurisexual identities – particularly bisexuality – increasingly recognised in research and popular culture (Compton & Bridges, 2019; Copen et al., 2016; Institute, 2019). Evidence of the *deconstruction* of dominant sexuality models that systemically privilege heterosexuality and (to a much lesser extent) homosexuality through suppressing the possibility of a third, or fourth categories of sexuality, or a shift to an entirely new dominant view of sexuality is less evident as occurring.

Discourses that create or maintain the invisibility of plurisexual identities affect plurisexual women lives – as evident by the data found from this research. Findings also reflect the alienation from communities, partners, and social structures can plurisexual women experience. Consistent with past research, plurisexual women experience less of a community than other rainbow communities, and risk being separated from their queer networks by being in relationships with men (Byron et al., 2019; Davila, Jabbour, Dyar, & Feinstein, 2019; Hanckel & Morris, 2014; Schimanski & Treharne, 2018; Welzer-Lang, 2008). Discourses that erasure plurisexuality also create blind spots in public health promotion around plurisexual women’s sexual health (Bailey, 2003, 2004, Tornello, 2014). any respondents felt that their sexual health knowledge was poorer than that of heterosexual women and a dearth of accessible resources has led to poorer sexual health knowledge and behaviours – which is an area that needs both more literature and demonstratable praxis. Most substantially, awareness of the stigma of plurisexuality and its associated stereotypes may heighten individual identity struggles including internalised sexual identity negativity, as demonstrated by some interviewees.

Gendered discourses were evident in plurisexual women's experiences. This was largely manifested in the sexualisation and objectification of plurisexuality that exists both in our Anglo-Western context and in the social interactions of plurisexual women. For plurisexual women, this sexualisation created obstacles for navigating sexual identity disclosure both to partners and other people in their lives. Being aware of the potential for being objectified due to their sexuality and how this affected how they were perceived by others is a burden that plurisexual women may endure. There is little research that explores the consequences of ubiquitous sexualised discourses for plurisexual women and future research needs to look at the experiences of plurisexual women, including the high rates of sexual victimisation they experience in this context to allow for a greater picture in how we can improve this aspect of plurisexual marginalisation.

The rise of sexuality counter-discourses or 'post-bisexual' discourses was evident in shaping how plurisexual women understand and experience their sexual identities. These discourses reject 'traditional' essentialist sexuality discourses, instead embracing sexual fluidity and non-normativity. Some plurisexual women viewed their believe in these counter-discourses as an inherent part of their self-identity, shaping their rebellion against heterosexuality and their political engagement with queer and non-normative identities including plurisexuality and polyamory. This link between sexual, political, social, and self-identity was a thread across this research; for many plurisexual women, these facets of their identity were inextricable from each other. Political ideologies, including feminism and political liberalism were seen as linked to many plurisexual women's queer attractions and identities. Future exploration of these intertwining identities is necessary for more insights into how they inform plurisexual women's sexual identities.

We can see that despite alienation from many queer networks, discourses that are linked to queer communities are taken up by plurisexual women and inform their identities. Past research has linked these counter-discourses taken up by queer people with Internet-based online communities (Oakley, 2016; Schudson & van Anders, 2019). It seems possible then that while *offline* community spaces

and gay-specific networks may alienate and ostracise plurisexual women, the Internet is used by plurisexual women to circumnavigate these barriers and foster new spaces to disrupt dominant sexuality discourses. Some research has noted that online spaces recreate offline marginalisation for plurisexual people (e.g., Crowley, 2010b; Maliepaard, 2017a), but increasingly, research has identified the importance of social networks for disrupting dominant discourses and creating community-led counter-discourses that better represent their sexual identity experiences (Oakley, 2016). Within this present research, the Internet was described as a way for enlightenment outside of the heterosexuality of offline environments by younger respondents. The importance of collective learning for plurisexual people cannot be understated. The work enacted – largely online – to understand their shared experiences and identities has been the result of important praxis. This movement, taking place on forums, social media sites, and micro-blogging sites, is only available to those who seek it out: people who are seeking other plurisexual people who share their experiences. The covertness of this movement to build (a) community(ies) contrasts it against the gay liberation movement’s overt fight for civil rights (see Chapter two). Both, however, rely on collective action and a goal to normalise their identities. Research of the importance of the Internet in shaping sexual identity discourses is necessary to develop this area of research further.

Research limitations, implications and future directions

This thesis was written during a shifting landscape of languaging around plurisexuality in both the academic and community spheres. This thesis, therefore, captures many aspects of this moment, such as how plurisexual women understand their sexuality in relation to the new discourse and new language. Further, this thesis explores the theoretical implications of how our new ‘post bisexual’ discourses help us understand plurisexuality moving forward. At an academic level, there are many potential usages of this work. One key implication is that this thesis has developed current understanding of the pansexual and bisexual divide. This can be used to help inform the writing of survey questions pertaining to sexual identity, such as questioning around dividing bisexual and pansexual into separate items. Further, this work could be used to develop the guidelines on how to

work with plurisexual individuals in a research context and how to ethically discuss their sexuality without perpetuating a division between people that identify as pansexual, people that identify as bisexual and the majority of plurisexual people that are an overlap between the two.

At a community level, this work can be used to help educate people about plurisexuality both within and outside of the rainbow communities. By providing a critical lens to misunderstandings around plurisexuality, findings from this work can assist in deconstructing monosexism, and drawing attention to how we can attend to plurisexual people's specific form of marginalisation. Finally, the research in this thesis can also be used to work with non-government agencies and on policy to provide plurisexual people with more tools for success to a greater extent than currently exists. This work could include examining the needs of plurisexual people at a sexual health, sexual education, and combating sexual harm level.

Future directions and limitations to the current project

There are many avenues of exploration off this research project that covered a breadth of topics pertaining to plurisexual women's lives and identities. Below is a description of what I see as the most pertinent areas of future examination that have been overlooked and a critical reflection of the limitations of this research project.

Previous research, whether due to the complexity of capturing gender diversity, limited sample size or upholding of the gender binary, has had little discussion of gender diverse and transgender partners of plurisexual people. Broadly, the area of plurisexual women's relationships has not been covered well in empirical – and particularly quantitative – research. However, the overlooking of the diversity of plurisexual people's attractions and romantic and sexual partners outside of (cisgender) men and women does a disservice to the diversity in attractions and relationships they experience. Particularly as a significant portion of plurisexual women have dated gender diverse and transgender people (a quarter of survey respondents have had gender diverse partners). In almost all research in the domain of gender and sexuality, the experiences of gender diverse and transgender people have

been underexamined or uncritically looked at. I put forward, therefore, that future research needs to examine both how having gender diverse and transgender partners relates to peoples plurisexual identities *and* the plurisexual identities of transgender and gender diverse people and plurisexual people. Little theory has arisen around plurisexual women's relationships aside from the consequences of hetero- and mononormativity in shaping their experiences. Research has noted that the vast majority of plurisexual women have (cis) men as their long-term partners. However, there is a lack of examination of the other partners plurisexual women have and how dating women, transgender and gender diverse people may shift perceptions of their sexual identity. Past research has noted that having transgender partners facilitated a personal exploration of sexual identities for LGBTQ people (Joslin-Roher & Wheeler, 2009). This questioning of their sexuality, however, were typically based monosexual queer individuals perceived inconsistency between their sexual identity and the gender of their partners (Joslin-Roher & Wheeler, 2009). For plurisexual people, who have no such inconsistency, the consequences are unknown.

In the present research project, there was a dearth of transgender and gender diverse participants – no interviewees and about 8% of survey respondents identified as transgender or gender diverse. This is likely because the advertising focused explicitly on recruiting women – while it was mentioned that anyone who identified as a woman (and they were able to define that for themselves) was welcome to participate, academia and science research has traditionally overlooked or marginalised these populations and not explicitly including them in the recruitment information may have led to these low numbers. Due to this, the research cannot make any conclusions about experiences of plurisexuality for non-cis women as it may not capture their unique experiences as holding highly marginalised gender identities. In the future, working *with* transgender and gender diverse plurisexual women to acknowledge their experiences and include more of their voices in the research is important. Quantitative research has suggested that there is only weak correlation between gender identity and sexuality (Jacobson & Joel, 2018). While gender and sexuality are unique constructs, to imply that there is no link between being gender diverse and

acknowledging the potential for attraction to multiple genders would be a disservice to plurisexual transgender and gender diverse people (who are likely overrepresented with plurisexual identities compared to cisgender communities) (James et al., 2016; Kuper et al., 2012). The overlap and diversion in experiences of plurisexuality between gender diverse, transgender and cisgender populations is a necessary next step in understanding more about how plurisexuality is experienced and to deconstruct the marginalisation of plurisexual identities.

Returning to future research directions, this research was one of the first to describe plurisexuality in Aotearoa. Much more research of the plurisexual experience in Aotearoa/New Zealand is necessary, particularly if we are to use this research to benefit community members. A couple areas that are important to examine is the experiences of plurisexual people in rural communities. Several interviews that were conducted in Christchurch/Ōtautahi highlighted the unique experiences of holding a plurisexual identity in a rural town. While the survey was open to people across Aotearoa, it was primarily people in more urban cities that responded. It is possible that 'post-bisexual' and counter-discourses of sexuality are taken up less in more rural areas which would likely shift the experiences of plurisexual people, resulting in different narratives than found in this study. Exploring the experiences of plurisexual people who also identify as takatāpui, and plurisexual Pasifika people would also be valuable. Particularly, understanding the intersections of these identities and how they inform sexual identities construction and experiences of marginalisation. Exploring the sexual identities of plurisexual people with non-Western constructs of sexuality is necessary to extract plurisexualities from its pathologised origins.

This research focused on the intersection of gender and sexuality for plurisexual women due to their unique gendered experiences of their sexual identity and sexualised marginalisation. However, the experiences of plurisexual men and their navigation of rigid hegemonic sexuality norms is equally important, and this needs its own examination. Further, much more research into women's

experience of objectification related to their plurisexuality is necessary. A relationship between patterns of sexual assault and objectification is particularly needed.

In all, much more research into plurisexual people is necessary, particularly research that heeds Barker et al.'s (2012) guidelines for researching bisexuality which highlight the considerations that go into creating research with plurisexual populations. While this research project begun this journey by seeking to explore in both depth and breadth plurisexual women's identities and experiences, only a fragment has been examined. Greater attention to the multiplicities of identities for plurisexual women and the complexities of plurisexual identities is needed.

Final thoughts

Research is largely unbeneficial without praxis to support it. My hope for this research is not that it accurately captures every aspect of plurisexual women's lives but that it guides future research that deconstructs the barriers to relief from the marginalisation that plurisexual people experience. I also hope that this research is able to inform work *outside* of academia to shift perceptions of plurisexuality and reveal the importance of supporting this community. This work highlights the importance of this area of research and underscores the impacts of current restrictive sexuality norms and discourses on plurisexual women's lives. The systemic hegemonic discourses that disregard, sexualise, and neglect plurisexuality within academia, psychological research, and our broader Anglo-Western social context operate both covertly and overtly to shape plurisexual women's identities, their experiences, and relationships. The macro and micro impact of sexuality discourses has been a theme throughout this thesis, and it is my hope that the weaving of these threads leads to tenable outcomes that benefit plurisexual women.

REFERENCES

- Acker, J., Barry, K., & Esseveld, J. (1983). Objectivity and truth: Problems in doing feminist research. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 6(4), 423-435.
[https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(83\)90035-3](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(83)90035-3)
- Aguirre-Sacasa, R. C. (2017). *Riverdale* [Television series]. United States: Warner Bros. Television.
- Alarie, M., & Gaudet, S. (2013). "I Don't Know If She Is Bisexual or If She Just Wants to Get Attention": Analyzing the Various Mechanisms Through Which Emerging Adults Invisibilize Bisexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 13(2), 191-214.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.780004>
- Allen, J. A., Allinson, H. E., Clark-Huckstep, A., Hill, B. J., Sanders, S. A., & Zhou, L. (2017). *The Kinsey Institute : The First Seventy Years*. Bloomington, IN, UNITED STATES: Indiana University Press. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=4915566>
- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice* Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Anderson, E., Scoats, R., & McCormack, M. (2015). Metropolitan Bisexual Men's Relationships: Evidence of a Cohort Effect. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 15(1), 21-39.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.994055>
- Angelides, S. (2001). *A History of Bisexuality*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago.
- Armstrong, E. A., & Crage, S. M. (2006). Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth. *American Sociological Review*, 71(5), 724-751.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100502>
- Armstrong, H. L., & Reissing, E. D. (2014). Attitudes Toward Casual Sex, Dating, and Committed Relationships With Bisexual Partners. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 14(2), 236-264.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.902784>
- Aspin, C., & Hutchings, J. (2007). Reclaiming the past to inform the future: Contemporary views of Maori sexuality. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 9(4), 415-427.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050701195119>
- Aspinall, P. J. (2002). Collective Terminology to Describe the Minority Ethnic Population: The Persistence of Confusion and Ambiguity in Usage. *Sociology*, 36(4), 803-816.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/003803850203600401>
- Attwood, F. (2011). Sex and the Citizens: Erotic Play and the New Leisure Culture. In P. Bramham & S. Wagg (Eds.), *The New Politics of Leisure and Pleasure* (pp. 82-96). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Averett, P., Moore, A., & Price, L. (2014). Virginity Definitions and Meaning Among the LGBT Community. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 26(3), 259-278.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2014.924802>
- Bailey, J. V., Farquhar, C., & Owen, C. (2004). Bacterial Vaginosis in Lesbians and Bisexual Women. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 31(11), 691-694.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.olq.0000143093.70899.68>
- Bailey, J. V., Farquhar, C., Owen, C., & Whittaker, D. (2003). Sexual behaviour of lesbians and bisexual women. *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, 79(2), 147.
- Baldwin, A., Schick, V. R., Smith, N. K., Dodge, B. M., Uriarte, J., & Dennis Fortenberry, J. (2019). Factors Associated with Contraceptive Use in Women Who Have Sex with Women and Men: An Exploratory Analysis. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1552903>
- Balsam, K. F., & Mohr, J. J. (2007). Adaptation to sexual orientation stigma: A comparison of bisexual and lesbian/gay adults. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54(3), 306-319.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.306>
- Balzarini, R. N., Dharma, C., Kohut, T., Holmes, B. M., Campbell, L., Lehmilller, J. J., & Harman, J. J. (2018). Demographic Comparison of American Individuals in Polyamorous and Monogamous

- Relationships. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1-14.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2018.1474333>
- Barker, M., & Langdridge, D. (2008). II. Bisexuality: Working with a Silenced Sexuality. *Feminism & Psychology*, 18(3), 389-394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353508092093>
- Barker, M., & Langdridge, D. (2010). Whatever happened to non-monogamies? Critical reflections on recent research and theory. *Sexualities*, 13(6), 748-772.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460710384645>
- Barker, M., Richards, C., & Bowes-Catton, H. (2009). "All the World is Queer Save Thee and ME...": Defining Queer and Bi at a Critical Sexology Seminar. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), 363-379.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710903316638>
- Barker, M., Yockney, J., Richards, C., Jones, R., Bowes-Catton, H., & Plowman, T. (2012). Guidelines for Researching and Writing About Bisexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 12(3), 376-392.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2012.702618>
- Baumeister, R. F. (2000). Gender differences in erotic plasticity: The female sex drive as socially flexible and responsive. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(3), 347-374.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.3.347>
- Bay-Cheng, L. Y. (2015). The Agency Line: A Neoliberal Metric for Appraising Young Women's Sexuality. *Sex Roles*, 73(7), 279-291. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0452-6>
- Beach, L., Bartelt, E., Dodge, B., Bostwick, W., Schick, V., Fu, T.-C., . . . Herbenick, D. (2019). Meta-Perceptions of Others' Attitudes Toward Bisexual Men and Women Among a Nationally Representative Probability Sample. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 48(1), 191-197. Beach2019.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1347-8>
- Beasley, C., Brook, H., & Holmes, M. (2012). *Heterosexuality in Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Beasley, C., Holmes, M., & Brook, H. (2015). Heterodoxy: Challenging orthodoxies about heterosexuality. *Sexualities*, 18(5-6), 681-697. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460714561714>
- Belmonte, K., & Holmes, T. R. (2016). Outside the LGBTQ "Safety Zone": Lesbian and Bisexual Women Negotiate Sexual Identity across Multiple Ecological Contexts. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 16(2), 233-269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1152932>
- Belous, C. K., & Bauman, M. L. (2016). What's in a Name? Exploring Pansexuality Online. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1224212>
- Beres, M. A., & Farvid, P. (2010). Sexual Ethics and Young Women's Accounts of Heterosexual Casual Sex. *Sexualities*, 13(3), 377-393. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460709363136>
- Bermea, A. M., van Eeden-Moorefield, B., & Khaw, L. (2018). A Systematic Review of Research on Intimate Partner Violence Among Bisexual Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 18(4), 399-424.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1482485>
- Betts, R. F., & Bly, L. (2012). *A History of Popular Culture : More of Everything, Faster and Brighter*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge. Retrieved from
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=1101322>
- Broadsheet* (1992). Bisexual Support Group. Wellington, New Zealand
- Blumstein, P. W., & Schwartz, P. (1977). Bisexuality: Some Social Psychological Issues. *Journal of Social Issues*, 33(2), 30-45. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1977.tb02004.x>
- Bostwick, W., Berger, B. M., & Hequembourg, A. (2019a). A Mixed-Method Inquiry of Bisexual Identity Centrality Among Racially and Ethnically Diverse Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1617545>
- Bostwick, W., Boyd, C. J., Hughes, T. L., West, B. T., & McCabe, S. E. (2014). Discrimination and mental health among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults in the United States. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84(1), 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0098851>
- Bostwick, W., & Hequembourg, A. (2014). 'Just a little hint': bisexual-specific microaggressions and their connection to epistemic injustices. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 16(5), 488-503.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.889754>

- Bostwick, W., Hughes, T. L., Steffen, A., Veldhuis, C. B., & Wilsnack, S. C. (2019b). Depression and Victimization in a Community Sample of Bisexual and Lesbian Women: An Intersectional Approach. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 48(1), 131-141. Bostwick2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1247-y>
- Bowes-Catton, H., & Hayfield, N. (2015). Bisexuality. In C. Richards & M. J. Barker (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of the Psychology of Sexuality and Gender* Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bowleg, L. (2013). "Once You've Blended the Cake, You Can't Take the Parts Back to the Main Ingredients": Black Gay and Bisexual Men's Descriptions and Experiences of Intersectionality. *Sex Roles*, 68(11), 754-767. Bowleg2013. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0152-4>
- Boyer, C. R., & Galupo, M. P. (2015). 'Prove it!' same-sex performativity among sexual minority women and men. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 6(4), 357-368. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2015.1021372>
- Bradford, M. (2004). The Bisexual Experience. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 4(1-2), 7-23. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v04n01_02
- Brah, A., & Phoenix, A. (2004). Ain't I A Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 5(3), 75-86.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: a practical guide for beginners*. London, UK: SAGE Publications
- Breno, A. L., & Galupo, M. P. (2008). Bias Toward Bisexual Women and Men in a Marriage-Matching Task. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 7(3-4), 217-235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710802171308>
- Brewster, M. E., & Moradi, B. (2010). Perceived experiences of anti-bisexual prejudice: Instrument development and evaluation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 57(4), 451-468. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021116>
- Brewster, M. E., Moradi, B., DeBlaere, C., & Velez, B. L. (2013). Navigating the borderlands: The roles of minority stressors, bicultural self-efficacy, and cognitive flexibility in the mental health of bisexual individuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60(4), 543-556. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033224>
- Brod, H. (2007). They're Bi Shepherds, Not Gay Cowboys: The Misframing of Brokeback Mountain. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 14(2), 252-253. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106082650601400202>
- Brody, J. E. (1974, March 24). Bisexual Life-Style Appears to Be Spreading and Not Necessarily Among 'Swingers'. *The New York Times*, p. 57. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/03/24/archives/bisexual-lifestyle-appears-to-be-spreading-and-not-necessarily.html>
- Brooks, C. (1980, September). The State of Feminism. *Broadsheet*.
- Brooks, L. M., Inman, A. G., Klinger, R. S., Malouf, M. A., & Kaduvettoor, A. (2010). In Her Own Words: Ethnic-Minority Bisexual Women's Self-Reported Counseling Needs. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 10(3), 253-267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2010.500959>
- Brownfield, J. M., Brown, C., Jeevanba, S. B., & VanMattson, S. B. (2018). More than simply getting bi: An examination of coming out growth for bisexual individuals. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 5(2), 220-232. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000282>
- Bryant, W. M. (2000). Stereotyping Bisexual Men in Film. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1(2-3), 213-219. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v01n02_09
- Burke, S. E., Dovidio, J. F., LaFrance, M., Przedworski, J. M., Perry, S. P., Phelan, S. M., . . . van Ryn, M. (2017). Beyond generalized sexual prejudice: Need for closure predicts negative attitudes toward bisexual people relative to gay/lesbian people. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 71, 145-150. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.02.003>
- Burr, V. (2015). *Social Constructionism* (3rd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (2006). *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Florence, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=710077>
- Buxton, A. P. (2000). Writing Our Own Script: How bisexual men and their heterosexual wives maintain their marriages after disclosure. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1(2-3), 155-189. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v01n02_06
- Byron, P., Robards, B., Hanckel, B., Vivienne, S., & Churchill, B. (2019). "Hey, I'm Having These Experiences": Tumblr Use and Young People's Queer (Dis)connections (Vol. 13) [LGBT, social media, Tumblr, queer, young people, community, disconnection]. Retrieved from <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/9677>
- Callis, A. S. (2009). Playing with Butler and Foucault: Bisexuality and Queer Theory. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), 213-233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710903316513>
- Callis, A. S. (2013). The Black Sheep of the Pink Flock: Labels, Stigma, and Bisexual Identity. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 13(1), 82-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.755730>
- Callis, A. S. (2014). Bisexual, pansexual, queer: Non-binary identities and the sexual borderlands. *Sexualities*, 17(1-2), 63-80. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1363460713511094>
- Callis, A. S. (2016). Beyond bi: sexual fluidity, identity, and the post-bisexual revolution. In N. L. Fischer & S. Seidman (Eds.), *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies* (pp. 235-246). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Came, H. (1992). *Aspects of bisexual politics* (Masters Thesis). University of Canterbury.
- Cameron, R. (2009). A sequential mixed model research design: Design, analytical and display issues. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 3(2), 140-152. <https://doi.org/10.5172/mra.3.2.140>
- Canan, S. N., Jozkowski, K. N., Wiersma-Mosley, J. D., Bradley, M., & Blunt-Vinti, H. (2019). Differences in Lesbian, Bisexual, and Heterosexual Women's Experiences of Sexual Assault and Rape in a National U.S. Sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 0(0), 0886260519863725. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519863725>
- Carr, D. (1987). Freud and Sexual Ethics. *Philosophy*, 62(241), 361-373.
- Carr, S., & Spandler, H. (2019). Hidden from history? A brief modern history of the psychiatric treatment of lesbian and bisexual women in England. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 6(4), 289-290. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(19\)30059-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30059-8)
- Cass, V. C. (1979). Homosexual Identity Formation. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 4(3), 219-235. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v04n03_01
- Cass, V. C. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 20(2), 143-167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224498409551214>
- Cavazos-Rehg, P. A., Krauss, M. J., Spitznagel, E. L., Schootman, M., Bucholz, K. K., Peipert, J. F., . . . Bierut, L. J. (2009). Age of sexual debut among US adolescents. *Contraception*, 80(2), 158-162. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2009.02.014>
- Center, P. R. (2013). *A Survey of LGBT Americans: Attitudes, Experiences and Values in Changing Times*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Chapman, B. E., & Brannock, J. C. (1987). Proposed Model of Lesbian Identity Development. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 14(3-4), 69-80. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v14n03_05
- Charlton, B. M., Corliss, H. L., Missmer, S. A., Frazier, A. L., Rosario, M., Kahn, J. A., & Austin, S. B. (2011). Reproductive Health Screening Disparities and Sexual Orientation in a Cohort Study of U.S. Adolescent and Young Adult Females. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 49(5), 505-510. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.03.013>
- Chatel, A. (2018, April 28). What Does It Mean To Be Pansexual? We Asked An Expert & Here's What They Said. *Bustle*. Retrieved 23 September, 2019, from <https://www.bustle.com/p/what-does-it-mean-to-be-pansexual-we-asked-expert-heres-what-they-said-8227460>

- Chevrette, R. (2013). Outing Heteronormativity in Interpersonal and Family Communication: Feminist Applications of Queer Theory "Beyond the Sexy Streets". *Communication Theory*, 23(2), 170-190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12009>
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. W., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), 785-810. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669608>
- Christopher, F. S., & Sprecher, S. (2000). Sexuality in Marriage, Dating, and Other Relationships: A Decade Review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(4), 999-1017. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00999.x>
- Chun, K. Y. S., & Singh, A. A. (2010). The Bisexual Youth of Color Intersecting Identities Development Model: A Contextual Approach to Understanding Multiple Marginalization Experiences. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 10(4), 429-451. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2010.521059>
- Churchill, F. B. (2002). The Evolutionary Ethics of Alfred C. Kinsey. *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, 24(3/4), 391-411.
- Clarke, V., Ellis, S., Peel, E., & Riggs, D. (2010). *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Clarke, V., & Peel, E. (2007). From Lesbian and Gay Psychology to LGBTQ Psychologies: A Journey into the Unknown (or Unknowable)? In V. Clarke & E. Peel (Eds.), *Out in Psychology* (pp. 11-39). West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9780470713099.ch2>. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470713099.ch2>
- Cochran, S. D., & Mays, V. M. (2007). Physical Health Complaints Among Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexual and Homosexually Experienced Heterosexual Individuals: Results From the California Quality of Life Survey. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(11), 2048-2055. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2006.087254>
- Coleman, E. (1982). Bisexual and Gay Men in Heterosexual Marriage. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 7(2-3), 93-103. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v07n02_11
- Coleman, E. (1985). Bisexual Women in Marriages. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 11(1-2), 87-100. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v11n01_08
- Colledge, L., Hickson, F., Reid, D., & Weatherburn, P. (2015). Poorer mental health in UK bisexual women than lesbians: evidence from the UK 2007 Stonewall Women's Health Survey. *Journal of Public Health*, 37(3), 427-437. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdu105>
- Collins, D. C. (2003). *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* [Television Series]. United States: Bravo.
- Collins, D. C. (2018). *Queer Eye* [Television Series]. United States: Netflix.
- Collins, J. F. (2004). The Intersection of Race and Bisexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 4(1-2), 99-116. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v04n01_08
- Comeau, D. L. (2012). Label-First Sexual Identity Development: An In-Depth Case Study of Women Who Identify as Bisexual Before Having Sex With More Than One Gender. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 12(3), 321-346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2012.702611>
- Compton, D. L., & Bridges, T. (2019, 16 April 2019). *The Bisexual Boom*. Retrieved 17 April 2019, from https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2019/04/16/the-bisexual-boom/?fbclid=IwAR2ASpGC_JL8TB6tbgJlktVhvlNrYC6kVona9WESoOASQkcuLyNXPyWwhio
- Conley, T. D., Rubin, J. D., Matsick, J. L., Ziegler, A., & Moors, A. C. (2014). Proposer gender, pleasure, and danger in casual sex offers among bisexual women and men. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 55, 80-88. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2014.06.002>
- Copen, C. E., Chandra, A., & Febo-Vazquez, I. (2016). Sexual Behavior, Sexual Attraction, and Sexual Orientation Among Adults Aged 18-44 in the United States: Data From the 2011-2013 National Survey of Family Growth. *National health statistics reports*(88), 1-14.
- Corey, S. (2017). All Bi Myself: Analyzing Television's Presentation of Female Bisexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1305940>

- Cover, R. (2000). First Contact: Queer Theory, Sexual Identity, and "Mainstream" Film. *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 5(1), 71-89. Cover2000. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1010189618801>
- Cover, R. (2018a). *Emergent Identities : New Sexualities, Genders and Relationships in a Digital Era*. Milton, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=5516196>
- Cover, R. (2018b). Micro-Minorities: The Emergence of New Sexual Subjectivities, Categories, and Labels among Sexually Diverse Youth Online. In S. Talburt (Ed.), *Youth Sexualities* (Vol. 1). Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.
- Cowen, R. C., & Lipman, D. C. (2000). *Queer as Folk* [Television Series]. United States: Warner Brothers Television.
- Craig, S. L., & McInroy, L. (2014). You Can Form a Part of Yourself Online: The Influence of New Media on Identity Development and Coming Out for LGBTQ Youth. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 18(1), 95-109. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2013.777007>
- Craig, S. L., McInroy, L., McCready, L. T., & Alaggia, R. (2015). Media: A Catalyst for Resilience in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 12(3), 254-275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2015.1040193>
- Crawford, M., & Unger, R. (2004). *Women and gender: A feminist psychology, 4th ed.* New York, NY, US: McGraw-Hill.
- Crenshaw, K. (1990). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*(6), 1241-1300.
- Crofford, M. L. (2018). *"The Erasure Is Real" Experiences of Bisexual Identified Queer Women in Monogamous Relationships with Men* (PhD thesis). Widener University, ProQuest Dissertations.
- Crowley, M. S. (2010a). Defining themselves: LGBTQ youth online. In C. C. Bertram, M. S. Crowley, & S. G. Massey (Eds.), *Beyond progress and marginalization: LGBTQ youth in educational context* (pp. 250-278). New York: Peter Lang.
- Crowley, M. S. (2010b). Experiences of Young Bisexual Women in Lesbian/Bisexual Groups on MySpace. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 10(4), 388-403. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2010.521044>
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2008). Orientations to Social Constructionism: Relationally Responsive Social Constructionism and its Implications for Knowledge and Learning. *Management Learning*, 39(2), 123-139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507607087578>
- D'Augelli, A. R. (1994). Identity development and sexual orientation: Toward a model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual development. In *Human diversity: Perspectives on people in context*. (pp. 312-333). San Francisco, CA, US: Jossey-Bass.
- D'Augelli, A. R., & Grossman, A. H. (2001). Disclosure of Sexual Orientation, Victimization, and Mental Health Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Older Adults. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16(10), 1008-1027. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626001016010003>
- Daneback, K., Ross, M. W., & Månsson, S.-A. (2008). Bisexuality and Sexually Related Activities on the Internet. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 8(1-2), 115-129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710802142317>
- Darwin, C. (1859). *On the origin of species by means of natural selection, or, The preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*. London: J. Murray.
- Davila, J., Jabbour, J., Dyar, C., & Feinstein, B. A. (2019). Bi+ Visibility: Characteristics of Those Who Attempt to Make Their Bisexual+ Identity Visible and the Strategies They Use. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 48(1), 199-211. Davila2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1284-6>
- de Bruin, K., & Arndt, M. (2010). Attitudes Toward Bisexual Men and Women in a University Context: Relations with Race, Gender, Knowing a Bisexual Man or Woman and Sexual Orientation. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 10(3), 233-252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2010.500955>

- DeHaan, S., Kuper, L. E., Magee, J. C., Bigelow, L., & Mustanski, B. S. (2013). The Interplay between Online and Offline Explorations of Identity, Relationships, and Sex: A Mixed-Methods Study with LGBT Youth. *The Journal of Sex Research, 50*(5), 421-434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.661489>
- Dempsey, D., Hillier, L., & Harrison, L. Y. N. (2001). Gendered (s)explorations among same-sex attracted young people in Australia. *Journal of Adolescence, 24*(1), 67-81. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/jado.2000.0363>
- Dessel, A. B., Woodford, M. R., & Warren, N. (2011). Intergroup Dialogue Courses on Sexual Orientation: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Student Experiences and Outcomes. *Journal of Homosexuality, 58*(8), 1132-1150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.598420>
- Diamond, L. M. (1998). Development of Sexual Orientation Among Adolescent and Young Adult Women. *Developmental Psychology, 34*(5), 1085-1095.
- Diamond, L. M. (2000). Sexual Identity, Attractions, and Behavior Among Young Sexual-Minority Women Over a 2-Year Period *Developmental Psychology, 36*(2), 241-250.
- Diamond, L. M. (2003a). New Paradigms for Research on Heterosexual and Sexual-Minority Development. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 32*(4), 490-498. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15374424JCCP3204_1
- Diamond, L. M. (2003b). What does sexual orientation orient? A biobehavioral model distinguishing romantic love and sexual desire. *Psychological review, 110*(1), 173.
- Diamond, L. M. (2005). 'I'm Straight, but I Kissed a Girl': The Trouble with American Media Representations of Female-Female Sexuality. *Feminism & Psychology, 15*(1), 104-110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353505049712>
- Diamond, L. M. (2006a). The Intimate Same-Sex Relationships of Sexual Minorities In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of personal relationships*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=c05020a&AN=aut.b13695964&site=eds-live>
- Diamond, L. M. (2006b). What We Got Wrong About Sexual Identity Development: Unexpected Findings From a Longitudinal Study of Young Women. In *Sexual orientation and mental health: Examining identity and development in lesbian, gay, and bisexual people*. (pp. 73-94). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11261-004>
- Diamond, L. M. (2008). Female bisexuality from adolescence to adulthood: Results from a 10-year longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology, 44*(1), 5-14. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.44.1.5>
- Diamond, L. M., & Butterworth, M. (2008). Questioning Gender and Sexual Identity: Dynamic Links Over Time. *Sex Roles, 59*(5), 365-376. Diamond2008. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9425-3>
- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E. L., Kippen, S., & Liamputtong, P. (2007). Doing sensitive research: what challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research, 7*(3), 327-353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794107078515>
- Dickson, S. (2017). *Bisexual and Pansexual Responses: Building Rainbow communities free of partner and sexual violence*. Wellington, NZ: Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura: Outing Violence.
- Dictionary, M. (2020a). Tikanga. In *Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?keywords=tikanga>
- Dictionary, M. (2020b). Whakawhanaungatanga. In *Te Aka Online Māori Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=whakawhanaungatanga>
- Dictionary, O. E. (2018). Bisexuality. In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/19449?redirectedFrom=bisexuality#eid>. Retrieved March 3, 2020

- Dilley, J. A., Simmons, K. W., Boysun, M. J., Pizacani, B. A., & Stark, M. J. (2010). Demonstrating the Importance and Feasibility of Including Sexual Orientation in Public Health Surveys: Health Disparities in the Pacific Northwest. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(3), 460-467. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2007.130336>
- Dingle, C. (2016, 27 September). Biphobia In The Media: Remember, the 'b-word' is still quite a scary thing to say. *Curve Magazine*. Retrieved 23 September, 2019, from <http://www.curvemag.com/Lifestyle/Biphobia-In-The-Media-1299/>
- Dixon, J. K. (1984). The commencement of bisexual activity in swinging married women over age thirty. *The Journal of Sex Research, 20*(1), 71-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224498409551207>
- Doan Van, E. E., Mereish, E. H., Woulfe, J. M., & Katz-Wise, S. L. (2019). Perceived Discrimination, Coping Mechanisms, and Effects on Health in Bisexual and Other Non-Monosexual Adults. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 48*(1), 159-174. Doan Van2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1254-z>
- Dobinson, C., Macdonnell, J., Hampson, E., Clipsham, J., & Chow, K. (2005). Improving the Access and Quality of Public Health Services for Bisexuals. *Journal of Bisexuality, 5*(1), 39-77. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v05n01_05
- Dodge, B., Herbenick, D., Friedman, M. R., Schick, V., Fu, T.-C., Bostwick, W., . . . Sandfort, T. G. M. (2016). Attitudes toward Bisexual Men and Women among a Nationally Representative Probability Sample of Adults in the United States. *PLOS ONE, 11*(10), e0164430. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0164430>
- Downing, G. (2016). *Youth Online: Non-heterosexual Young People's Use of the Internet to Negotiate their Identities, Support Networks and Sociosexual Relations*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=4530604>
- Drobac, J. A. (1998). Oncale Opinion: A Pansexual Response, The. *McGeorge Law Review*(4), 1269-1292.
- Dworkin, A. S. (2000). Bisexual Histories in San Francisco in the 1970s and Early 1980s. *Journal of Bisexuality, 1*(1), 87-119. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v01n01_07
- Dworkin, S. H. (2002). Biracial, Bicultural, Bisexual: Bisexuality and Multiple Identities. *Journal of Bisexuality, 2*(4), 93-107. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v02n04_06
- Dyar, C., & Feinstein, B. A. (2018). 6 Binegativity: Attitudes Toward and Stereotypes About Bisexual Individuals [Dyar2018]. In D. J. Swan & S. Habibi (Eds.), *Bisexuality: Theories, Research, and Recommendations for the Invisible Sexuality* (pp. 95-111). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71535-3_6. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71535-3_6
- Dyar, C., Taggart, T. C., Rodriguez-Seijas, C., Thompson, R. G., Elliott, J. C., Hasin, D. S., & Eaton, N. R. (2019). Physical Health Disparities Across Dimensions of Sexual Orientation, Race/Ethnicity, and Sex: Evidence for Increased Risk Among Bisexual Adults. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 48*(1), 225-242. Dyar2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1169-8>
- Ebin, J. (2012). Why Bisexual Health? *Journal of Bisexuality, 12*(2), 168-177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2012.674854>
- Edley, N. (2001). Unravelling Social Constructionism. *Theory & Psychology, 11*(3), 433-441. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354301113008>
- Edser, S. J., & Shea, J. D. (2002). An Exploratory Investigation of Bisexual Men in Monogamous, Heterosexual Marriages. *Journal of Bisexuality, 2*(4), 5-43. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v02n04_02
- Ehlke, S. J., Stamates, A. L., Kelley, M. L., & Braiman, A. L. (2018). Bisexual Women's Reports of Descriptive Drinking Norms for Heterosexual, Bisexual, and Lesbian Women. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 0*(0). <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000312>

- Eisner, S. (2013). *Bi: Notes for a bisexual revolution*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.
- Eliason, M. J. (1996). Identity Formation for Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Persons. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 30(3), 31-58. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v30n03_03
- Eliason, M. J. (1997). The Prevalence and Nature of Biphobia in Heterosexual Undergraduate Students. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 26(3), 317-326. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024527032040>
- Elizabeth, A. (2013). Challenging the Binary: Sexual Identity That Is Not Duality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 13(3), 329-337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.813421>
- Ellis, H. (1885). Sexual Inversion in Women. *East Bridgewater*, 16(2).
- Esterberg, K. G. (2016). The bisexual menace revisited. In N. L. S. Fischer, Steven (Ed.), *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies* (3rd Edition ed., pp. 207-214). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.nz/books?hl=en&lr=&id=SEmTDAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA207&dq=kristin+esterberg+bisexual&ots=6FXFW5AMBi&sig=xpACRgf1RNvXwf6pQ5ebRV8wzas#v=onepage&q=kristin%20esterberg%20bisexual&f=false>
- Fahs, B. (2009). Compulsory Bisexuality?: The Challenges of Modern Sexual Fluidity. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), 431-449. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710903316661>
- Fahs, B. (2011). *Performing Sex*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Fahs, B., & Koerth, K. M. (2018). Female Bisexuality: Identity, Fluidity, and Cultural Expectations [Fahs2018]. In D. J. Swan & S. Habibi (Eds.), *Bisexuality: Theories, Research, and Recommendations for the Invisible Sexuality* (pp. 113-126). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71535-3_7. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71535-3_7
- Farvid, P. (2010). The Benefits of Ambiguity: Methodological Insights from Researching 'Heterosexual Casual Sex'. *Feminism & Psychology*, 20(2), 232-237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353509359136>
- Farvid, P. (2011). *The Social Construction of Heterosexual Casual Sex* (Doctoral thesis). The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand. Retrieved from <https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/6581>
- Farvid, P. (2012). *Examining contemporary heterosexual casual sex*. presented at the meeting of the Walking the talk: The 2012 collection of oral presentations from the AUT School of Public Health and Psychosocial Studies, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Farvid, P. (2014). "Oh it was good sex!": Heterosexual women's (counter)narratives of desire and pleasure in casual sex. In S. McKenzie-Mohr & M. Lefrance (Eds.), *Women voicing resistance: Discursive and narrative explorations* (pp. 121-140). New York: Routledge
- Farvid, P. (2015). Heterosexuality. In C. Richards & M. J. Barker (Eds.), *The Palgrave Book of the Psychology of Sexuality and Gender* (pp. 92-108). Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Farvid, P., & Braun, V. (2013). Casual sex as 'not a natural act' and other regimes of truth about heterosexuality. *Feminism & Psychology*, 23(3), 359-378. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353513480018>
- Farvid, P., & Braun, V. (2017). Unpacking the "Pleasures" and "Pains" of Heterosexual Casual Sex: Beyond Singular Understandings. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 54(1), 73-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2016.1143442>
- Feinstein, B. A., & Dyar, C. (2017). Bisexuality, Minority Stress, and Health. *Current Sexual Health Reports*, 9(1), 42-49. Feinstein2017. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11930-017-0096-3>
- Feinstein, B. A., Dyar, C., Bhatia, V., Latack, J. A., & Davila, J. (2016). Conservative Beliefs, Attitudes Toward Bisexuality, and Willingness to Engage in Romantic and Sexual Activities With a Bisexual Partner. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 45(6), 1535-1550. Feinstein2016. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-015-0642-x>
- Feinstein, B. A., Franco, M., Henderson, R., Collins, L. K., & Davari, J. (2019). A Qualitative Examination of Bisexual+ Identity Invalidation and Its Consequences for Wellbeing, Identity,

- and Relationships. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-22.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1671295>
- Ferguson, M. (2016, 30 June). Why OITNB Refuses to Say the Word 'Bisexual'. *Pride*. Retrieved September 18, 2019, from <http://www.pride.com/oitnb/2016/6/30/why-oitnb-refuses-say-word-bisexual>
- Fingerhut, A. W., & Abdou, C. M. (2017). The Role of Healthcare Stereotype Threat and Social Identity Threat in LGB Health Disparities. *Journal of Social Issues*, 73(3), 493-507.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12228>
- Flanders, C. E. (2015). Bisexual Health: A Daily Diary Analysis of Stress and Anxiety. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 37(6), 319-335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973533.2015.1079202>
- Flanders, C. E., Anderson, R. E., Tarasoff, L. A., & Robinson, M. (2019a). Bisexual Stigma, Sexual Violence, and Sexual Health among Bisexual and Other Plurisexual Women: A Cross-Sectional Survey Study. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2018.1563042>
- Flanders, C. E., LeBreton, M., & Robinson, M. (2018). Bisexual Women's Experience of Microaggressions and Microaffirmations: A Community-Based, Mixed-Methods Scale Development Project. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. Flanders2018.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-017-1135-x>
- Flanders, C. E., LeBreton, M. E., Robinson, M., Bian, J., & Caravaca-Morera, J. A. (2017a). Defining Bisexuality: Young Bisexual and Pansexual People's Voices. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 17(1), 39-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1227016>
- Flanders, C. E., Robinson, M., Legge, M. M., & Tarasoff, L. A. (2016). Negative identity experiences of bisexual and other non-monosexual people: A qualitative report. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 20(2), 152-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2015.1108257>
- Flanders, C. E., Ross, L. E., Dobinson, C., & Logie, C. H. (2017b). Sexual health among young bisexual women: a qualitative, community-based study. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 8(1-2), 104-117.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2017.1296486>
- Flanders, C. E., Shuler, S. A., Desnoyers, S. A., & VanKim, N. A. (2019b). Relationships Between Social Support, Identity, Anxiety, and Depression Among Young Bisexual People of Color. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 19(2), 253-275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1617543>
- Floyd, F. J., & Bakeman, R. (2006). Coming-Out Across the Life Course: Implications of Age and Historical Context. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 35(3), 287-296. Floyd2006.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-006-9022-x>
- Formby, E. (2011). Lesbian and bisexual women's human rights, sexual rights and sexual citizenship: negotiating sexual health in England. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 13(10), 1165-1179.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2011.610902>
- Foster, A. B., Eklund, A., Brewster, M. E., Walker, A. D., & Candon, E. (2018). Personal Agency Disavowed: Identity Construction in Asexual Women of Color. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000310>
- Fotopoulou, A. (2012). Intersectionality Queer Studies and Hybridity: Methodological Frameworks for Social Research. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(2), 19-32.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. 1). London, England: Penguin Books.
- Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., Kim, H.-J., Barkan, S. E., Muraco, A., & Hoy-Ellis, C. P. (2013). Health Disparities Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Older Adults: Results From a Population-Based Study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(10), 1802-1809.
<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.301110>
- Freud Loewenstein, S. (2000). On the diversity of love object orientations among women. In P. C. Rodriguez Rust (Ed.), *Bisexuality in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Freud, S. (1905/1920). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (A. A. Brill, Trans.). New York, NY: Global Grey Books.

- Friedman, M. R., Dodge, B., Schick, V., Herbenick, D., Hubach, R. D., Bowling, J., . . . Reece, M. (2014). From Bias to Bisexual Health Disparities: Attitudes Toward Bisexual Men and Women in the United States. *LGBT Health, 1*(4), 309-318. <https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2014.0005>
- Frost, D. M. (2011). Similarities and Differences in the Pursuit of Intimacy among Sexual Minority and Heterosexual Individuals: A Personal Projects Analysis. *Journal of Social Issues, 67*(2), 282-301. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01698.x>
- Funk, M. (2019). *The Book of Pride: LGBTQ Heroes Who Changed the World*. London: HarperOne.
- Galupo, M. P. (2018). 4 Plurisexual Identity Labels and the Marking of Bisexual Desire [Galupo2018]. In D. J. Swan & S. Habibi (Eds.), *Bisexuality: Theories, Research, and Recommendations for the Invisible Sexuality* (pp. 61-75). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71535-3_4. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71535-3_4
- Galupo, M. P., Davis, K. S., Gryniewicz, A. L., & Mitchell, R. C. (2014). Conceptualization of Sexual Orientation Identity Among Sexual Minorities: Patterns Across Sexual and Gender Identity. *Journal of Bisexuality, 14*(3-4), 433-456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.933466>
- Galupo, M. P., Lomash, E., & Mitchell, R. C. (2017). "All of My Lovers Fit Into This Scale": Sexual Minority Individuals' Responses to Two Novel Measures of Sexual Orientation. *Journal of Homosexuality, 64*(2), 145-165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2016.1174027>
- Galupo, M. P., Mitchell, R. C., & Davis, K. S. (2015). Sexual Minority Self-Identification: Multiple Identities and Complexity. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 2*(4), 355-364.
- Galupo, M. P., Ramirez, J. L., & Pulice-Farrow, L. (2016). "Regardless of Their Gender": Descriptions of Sexual Identity among Bisexual, Pansexual, and Queer Identified Individuals. *Journal of Bisexuality, 1*-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1228491>
- Galupo, M. P., Taylor, S. M., & Cole, D. (2019). "I Am Double The Bi": Positive Aspects of Being Both Bisexual and Biracial. *Journal of Bisexuality, 19*(2), 152-168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1619066>
- Garber, M. (2000). *Bisexuality & the Eroticism of Everyday Life*: Routledge.
- Garellick, A. S., Filip-Crawford, G., Varley, A. H., Nagoshi, C. T., Nagoshi, J. L., & Evans, R. (2017). Beyond the Binary: Exploring the Role of Ambiguity in Biphobia and Transphobia. *Journal of Bisexuality, 1*-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1319890>
- Garvey, J. C., Matsumura, J. L., Silvis, J. A., Kiemele, R., Eagan, H., & Chowdhury, P. (2018). Sexual Borderlands: Exploring Outness Among Bisexual, Pansexual, and Sexually Fluid Undergraduate Students. *Journal of College Student Development, 59*(6), 666-680.
- Gates, G. (2011). *How many people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender?* Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute. Retrieved from <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gates-How-Many-People-LGBT-Apr-2011.pdf>
- Gavey, N. (1989). Feminist Poststructuralism and Discourse Analysis: Contributions to Feminist Psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 13*(4), 459-475. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1989.tb01014.x>
- Gavey, N. (1992). Technologies and Effects of Heterosexual Coercion. *Feminism & Psychology, 2*(3), 325-351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353592023003>
- Gavey, N. (2018). *Just Sex? : The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape*. Milton, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=5572434>
- Gergen, K. J. (1985). The Social Constructivist Movement in Modern Psychology. *American Psychologist, 40*(3), 266-275. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.40.3.266>
- Gergen, K. J. (1990). Towards a postmodern psychology. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 18*(1), 23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873267.1990.9976874>

- Gergen, M. M. (2001). *Feminist reconstructions in psychology : narrative, gender, and performance* [Electronic document]: Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage, [2001]. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cats05020a&AN=aut.b18816113&site=eds-live>
- Ghabrial, M. A. (2019). "We can Shapeshift and Build Bridges": Bisexual Women and Gender Diverse People of Color on Invisibility and Embracing the Borderlands. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1617526>
- Gilson, E. (2011). Vulnerability, Ignorance, and Oppression. *Hypatia*, 26(2), 308-332. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01158.x>
- Gleason, N., Vencill, J. A., & Sprankle, E. (2019). Swipe Left on the Bi Guys: Examining Attitudes toward Dating and Being Sexual with Bisexual Individuals. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1563935>
- Glick, E. (2000). Sex Positive: Feminism, Queer Theory, and the Politics of Transgression. *Feminist Review*, 64(1), 19-45. Glick2000. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014177800338936>
- Goldberg, A. E., Allen, K. R., Ellawala, T., & Ross, L. E. (2017). Male-Partnered Bisexual Women's Perceptions of Disclosing Sexual Orientation to Family Across the Transition to Parenthood: Intensifying Heteronormativity or Queering Family? *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, n/a-n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12242>
- Goldberg, S. K., Reese, B. M., & Halpern, C. T. (2016). Teen Pregnancy Among Sexual Minority Women: Results From the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 59(4), 429-437. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2016.05.009>
- Goldhill, O. (2018, March 22). Omnisexual, gynosexual, demisexual: What's behind the surge in sexual identities? *Quartz*. Retrieved 16 March 2020 Retrieved from <https://qz.com/1230638/omnisexual-gynosexual-demisexual-whats-behind-the-surge-in-sexual-identities/>
- Gonel, A. H. (2013). Pansexual identification in online communities: Employing a collaborative queer method to study pansexuality. *Graduate Journal of Social Science*, 10(1), 36-59.
- Goodman, E. (2019, 6 June). Meet "The Mother of Pride," The Pioneering Bisexual Activist Brenda Howard. *Them*. Retrieved 17 July 2020 Retrieved from <https://www.them.us/story/brenda-howard>
- Gray, E. M. (2013). Coming out as a lesbian, gay or bisexual teacher: negotiating private and professional worlds *Sex Education*, 13(6), 702-714. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2013.807789>
- Greaves, L. M., Sibley, C. G., Fraser, G., & Barlow, F. K. (2019). Comparing Pansexual- and Bisexual-Identified Participants on Demographics, Psychological Well-Being, and Political Ideology in a New Zealand *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1568376>
- Greenwood, S., Perrin, A., & Duggan, M. (2016). *Social Media Update 2016*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
- Grossman, A. H. (2008). Conducting Research Among Older Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 20(1-2), 51-67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720802178924>
- Grov, C., Bimbi, D. S., Nanín, J. E., & Parsons, J. T. (2006). Race, ethnicity, gender, and generational factors associated with the coming-out process among gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals *The Journal of Sex Research*, 43(2), 115-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490609552306>
- Gusmano, B. (2018). Coming out Through an Intersectional Perspective: Narratives of Bisexuality and Polyamory in Italy. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 18(1), 15-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1416510>
- Gustavson, M. (2009). Bisexuals in Relationships: Uncoupling Intimacy from Gender Ontology. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(3-4), 407-429. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710903316653>

- Haag, A. M., & Chang, F. K. (1997). The Impact of Electronic Networking on the Lesbian and Gay Community. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 7(3), 83-94.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J041v07n03_07
- Habarth, J. M. (2015). Development of the heteronormative attitudes and beliefs scale. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 6(2), 166-188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2013.876444>
- Habarth, J. M., Wickham, R. E., Holmes, K. M., Sandoval, M., & Balsam, K. F. (2019). Heteronormativity and women's psychosocial functioning in heterosexual and same-sex couples. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2019.1578994>
- Haberman, J. V. (1914). A criticism of psychoanalysis. *The Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 9(4), 265-280. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0070291>
- Hall, D., & Pramaggiore, M. (1996). *RePresenting Bisexualities*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Hanckel, B., & Morris, A. (2014). Finding community and contesting heteronormativity: queer young people's engagement in an Australian online community. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(7), 872-886. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.878792>
- Harding, S. (1987). *Feminism & Methodology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Harding, S. (2004). *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Harper, A. J., & Swanson, R. (2019). Nonsequential Task Model of Bi/Pan/Polysexual Identity Development. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1608614>
- Hartman-Linck, J. E. (2014). Keeping Bisexuality Alive: Maintaining Bisexual Visibility in Monogamous Relationships. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 14(2), 177-193.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.903220>
- Hartman, J. E. (2006). Another Kind of "Chilly Climate". *Journal of Bisexuality*, 5(4), 61-76.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v05n04_06
- Hartman, J. E. (2011). Finding a Needle in a Haystack: Methods for Sampling in the Bisexual Community. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 11(1), 64-74.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2011.545306>
- Hartman, J. E. (2013). Creating a Bisexual Display: Making Bisexuality Visible *Journal of Bisexuality*, 13(1), 39-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.755727>
- Hauptert, M. L., Gesselman, A. N., Moors, A. C., Fisher, H. E., & Garcia, J. R. (2017). Prevalence of Experiences With Consensual Nonmonogamous Relationships: Findings From Two National Samples of Single Americans. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 43(5), 424-440.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2016.1178675>
- Hayfield, N., Campbell, C., & Reed, E. (2018). Misrecognition and managing marginalisation: Bisexual people's experiences of bisexuality and relationships. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2018.1470106>
- Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., & Halliwell, E. (2014). Bisexual women's understandings of social marginalisation: 'The heterosexuals don't understand us but nor do the lesbians'. *Feminism & Psychology*, 24(3), 352-372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353514539651>
- Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., Halliwell, E., & Malson, H. (2013). Visible lesbians and invisible bisexuals: Appearance and visual identities among bisexual women. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 40, 172-182. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.07.015>
- Hayfield, N., & Huxley, C. (2015). Insider and Outsider Perspectives: Reflections on Researcher Identities in Research with Lesbian and Bisexual Women. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12(2), 91-106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2014.918224>
- Haythornthwaite, C. (2005). Social networks and Internet connectivity effects. *Information, Communication & Society*, 8(2), 125-147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180500146185>
- Head, S., & Milton, M. (2014). Filling the Silence: Exploring the Bisexual Experience of Intimate Partner Abuse. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 14(2), 277-299.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.903218>

- Health, M. o. (2019). *New Zealand Health Survey 2017/18*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Health. Retrieved from <https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2017-18-annual-data-explorer>
- Heaphy, B., Weeks, J., & Donovan, C. (1998). 'That's Like my Life': Researching Stories of Non-heterosexual Relationships. *Sexualities*, 1(4), 453-470. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/136346098001004004>
- Heaphy, B., Yip, A. K. T., & Thompson, D. (2004). Ageing in a non-heterosexual context. *Ageing and Society*, 24(6), 881-902. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X03001600>
- Hegarty, P. (1997). Materializing the Hypothalamus: A Performative Account of the 'Gay Brain'. *Feminism & Psychology*, 7(3), 355-372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353597073009>
- Heldke, L. (1997). In Praise of Unreliability. *Hypatia*, 12(3), 174-182. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1997.tb00011.x>
- Heldman, C., & Wade, L. (2010). Hook-Up Culture: Setting a New Research Agenda. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 7(4), 323-333. Heldman2010. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-010-0024-z>
- Hempenstall, H. (2018, 14 December). Kristen Stewart – "I'm So Gay". *Who Australia*. Retrieved 23 September, 2019, from <https://www.who.com.au/is-kristen-stewart-gay-kristen-talks-about-her-sexuality>
- Henrickson, M. (2006). Kō wai ratou? Managing Multiple Identities in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual New Zealand Māori. *New Zealand Sociology*, 21(2), 247-269.
- Hequembourg, A. L., Blayney, J. A., Livingston, J. A., Bostwick, W., & Auerbach, S. (2019). A mixed methods investigation of sexual victimisation and coping among sexual minority compared to heterosexual women. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2019.1678193>
- Herek, G. M. (2002). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward bisexual men and women in the United States. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 39(4), 264-274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490209552150>
- Herek, G. M. (2009). Hate Crimes and Stigma-Related Experiences Among Sexual Minority Adults in the United States: Prevalence Estimates From a National Probability Sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(1), 54-74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260508316477>
- Heritage, M. f. C. a. (2017, 25 July). *Homosexual Law Reform Bill passed*. Retrieved 10 September 2019, from <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/homosexual-law-reform-bill-passes-its-third-reading>
- Hernandez, B. C., Schwenke, N. J., & Wilson, C. M. (2011). Spouses in mixed-orientation marriage: A 20-year review of empirical studies. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 37(3), 307-318. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2010.00202.x>
- Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). Qualitative Approaches to Mixed Methods Practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 455-468. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1077800410364611>
- Hill Collins, P., & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Hillier, L., & Harrison, L. (2007). Building Realities Less Limited Than Their Own: Young People Practising Same-Sex Attraction on the Internet. *Sexualities*, 10(1), 82-100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460707072956>
- Hillier, L., Mitchell, K. J., & Ybarra, M. L. (2012). The Internet As a Safety Net: Findings From a Series of Online Focus Groups With LGB and Non-LGB Young People in the United States. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 9(3), 225-246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2012.684642>
- Hoang, M., Holloway, J., & Mendoza, R. H. (2011). An Empirical Study into the Relationship between Bisexual Identity Congruence, Internalized Biphobia and Infidelity among Bisexual Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 11(1), 23-38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2011.545285>
- Hobaica, S., & Kwon, P. (2017). "This Is How You Hetero:": Sexual Minorities in Heteronormative Sex Education. *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 12(4), 423-450. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15546128.2017.1399491>
- Hochschild, A. R. (2003). *The managed heart : commercialization of human feeling*. California: University of California Press.

- Hollway, W. (1984). Women's power in heterosexual sex. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 7(1), 63-68. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(84\)90085-2](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(84)90085-2)
- Horowitz, A. D., & Bedford, E. (2017). Graded Structure in Sexual Definitions: Categorizations of Having "Had Sex" and Virginity Loss Among Homosexual and Heterosexual Men and Women. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 46(6), 1653-1665. Horowitz2017. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-016-0905-1>
- Houro, A. (2019, 28 June). *Pride Month: 8 inspiring LGBTQI politicians*. Retrieved 3 September 2020, from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/06/pride-month-8-inspiring-lgbtqi-politicians/>
- Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>
- Hudson, M. L., & Russell, K. (2009). The Treaty of Waitangi and Research Ethics in Aotearoa. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 6(1), 61-68. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-008-9127-0>
- Human Rights Act 1993, s 21.
- Ingraham, C. (2005). *Thinking Straight: The Power, the Promise, and the Paradox of Heterosexuality*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Institute, G. M. (2018). *Where We Are on TV 2018-2019*. California: GLAAD.
- Institute, G. M. (2019). *Where We Are on TV 2019-2020*. California: GLAAD.
- Israel, T., & Mohr, J. J. (2004). Attitudes Toward Bisexual Women and Men. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 4(1-2), 117-134. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v04n01_09
- Jackson, S. (1999). *Heterosexuality in Question*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Jackson, S. (2018). Young feminists, feminism and digital media. *Feminism & Psychology*, 28(1), 32-49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517716952>
- Jacobi, M. P. (1895). Case of Absent Uterus: With Considerations on the Significance of Hermaphroditism. *The American Journal of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children*, 32(4).
- Jacobson, R., & Joel, D. (2018). Self-Reported Gender Identity and Sexuality in an Online Sample of Cisgender, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse Individuals: An Exploratory Study. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2018.1523998>
- James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anadi, M. a. (2016). *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality. Retrieved from <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>
- Jankowiak, W., & Escasa-Dorne, M. (2015). Bisexual and Straight Females' Preferences Voiced on an Adult Sex Dating Site: A Research Report. *Current Anthropology*, 57(1), 104-112. <https://doi.org/10.1086/684644>
- Jen, S. (2019). Ambivalence in Labels, Freedom in Lives: Older Women's Discursive Constructions of Their Bisexual Identities. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1647908>
- Johnson, H. J. (2016). Bisexuality, Mental Health, and Media Representation. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 16(3), 378-396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1168335>
- Johnston, T. R. (2016). Bisexual Aging and Cultural Competency Training: Responses to Five Common Misconceptions. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 16(1), 99-111. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1046629>
- Joslin-Roher, E., & Wheeler, D. P. (2009). Partners in Transition: The Transition Experience of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Identified Partners of Transgender Men. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 21(1), 30-48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720802494743>
- Kaestle, C. E. (2019). Sexual Orientation Trajectories Based on Sexual Attractions, Partners, and Identity: A Longitudinal Investigation From Adolescence Through Young Adulthood Using a U.S. Representative Sample. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1577351>

- Katz-Wise, S. L., & Hyde, J. S. (2015). Sexual Fluidity and Related Attitudes and Beliefs Among Young Adults with a Same-Gender Orientation. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44(5), 1459-1470. Katz-Wise2015. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0420-1>
- Katz-Wise, S. L., Reisner, S. L., Hughto, J. W., & Keo-Meier, C. L. (2016). Differences in Sexual Orientation Diversity and Sexual Fluidity in Attractions Among Gender Minority Adults in Massachusetts. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53(1), 74-84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2014.1003028>
- Katz-Wise, S. L., Stamoulis, C., Allison, C. M., & Hyde, J. S. (2019). Attitudes Toward Bisexuality and Other Beliefs and Attitudes Related to Sexual Fluidity in Attractions among Heterosexual and Sexual Minority Young Adults. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1583150>
- Kelley, M. L., Ehlike, S. J., Braitman, A. L., & Stamates, A. L. (2019). Testing a Model of Binegativity, Drinking-to-Cope Motives, Alcohol Use, and Sexual Coercion Among Self-Identified Bisexual Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1481482>
- Kelly, J. (2014, 19 September). Sigmund Freud: The phrases you use without realising it. *BBC News Magazine*. Retrieved 7 February 2020 Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29251040>
- Kenneady, D. A., & Oswalt, S. B. (2014). Is Cass's Model of Homosexual Identity Formation Relevant to Today's Society? *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 9(2), 229-246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15546128.2014.900465>
- Kerekere, E. (2015). *Takatāpui: Part of the Whānau*. Auckland: Tīwhanawhana Trust
- Kerekere, E. (2017). *Part of The Whānau: The Emergence of Takatāpui Identity, He Whāriki Takatāpui* (PhD thesis). Victoria University of Wellington.
- Kerr, D. L., Ding, K., & Thompson, A. J. (2013a). A Comparison of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Heterosexual Female College Undergraduate Students on Selected Reproductive Health Screenings and Sexual Behaviors. *Women's Health Issues*, 23(6), e347-e355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.whi.2013.09.003>
- Kerr, D. L., Santurri, L., & Peters, P. (2013b). A Comparison of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Heterosexual College Undergraduate Women on Selected Mental Health Issues. *Journal of American College Health*, 61(4), 185-194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2013.787619>
- Kerrigan, S. (2018, 5 July). 27 Most Successful LGBT+ Entrepreneurs, Executives and Opinion Leaders. *Interesting Engineering*. Retrieved 3 September 2020 Retrieved from <https://interestingengineering.com/27-most-successful-lgbt-entrepreneurs-executives-and-opinion-leaders>
- Kinsey, A., Pomeroy, W., & Martin, A. (1953). *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Kinsey, A., Pomeroy, W., & Martin, C. (1948). *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Kitzinger, C. (1991). Feminism, Psychology and the Paradox of Power. *Feminism & Psychology*, 1(1), 111-129.
- Kitzinger, C. (1996). The token lesbian chapter. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Feminist Social Psychologies* (pp. 119-144). Bristol, PA: Open University Press.
- Kitzinger, C. (2014). Heteronormativity in Action: Reproducing the Heterosexual Nuclear Family in After-hours Medical Calls. *Social Problems*, 52(4), 477-498. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2005.52.4.477>
- Klein, F. (1978). *The Bisexual Option*. New York, NY: Haworth Press.
- Klein, F., Sepekoff, B., & Wolf, T. J. (1985). Sexual Orientation: A multivariable dynamic process. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 11(1-2), 35-49. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v11n01_04
- Klesse, C. (2005). Bisexual Women, Non-Monogamy and Differentialist Anti-Promiscuity Discourses. *Sexualities*, 8(4), 445-464. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1363460705056620>

- Klesse, C. (2011). Shady Characters, Untrustworthy Partners, and Promiscuous Sluts: Creating Bisexual Intimacies in the Face of Heteronormativity and Biphobia. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 11(2-3), 227-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2011.571987>
- Knous, H. M. (2006). The Coming Out Experience for Bisexuals: Identity Formation and Stigma Management. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 5(4), 37-59. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v05n04_05
- Kohan, J. C. (2013). *Orange is the New Black* [Television Series]. United States: Netflix.
- Kruml, S. M., & Geddes, D. (2000). Exploring the Dimensions of Emotional Labor: The Heart of Hochschild's Work. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 14(1), 8-49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318900141002>
- Kuper, L. E., Nussbaum, R., & Mustanski, B. (2012). Exploring the Diversity of Gender and Sexual Orientation Identities in an Online Sample of Transgender Individuals. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 49(2-3), 244-254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2011.596954>
- LAGANZ. (2019). *Lesbian and Gay Archives of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://www.laganz.org.nz/>
- Lahti, A. (2015). Similar and equal relationships? Negotiating bisexuality in an enduring relationship. *Feminism & Psychology*, 25(4), 431-448. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353515574786>
- Lahti, A. (2017). Too much? Excessive sexual experiences in bisexual women's life stories. *Subjectivity*. Lahti2017. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41286-017-0042-x>
- Lahti, A. (2018). Bisexual desires for more than one gender as a challenge to normative relationship ideals. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2018.1441896>
- Lannutti, P. J., & Denes, A. (2012). A Kiss Is Just a Kiss?: Comparing Perceptions Related to Female-Female and Female-Male Kissing in a College Social Situation. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 12(1), 49-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2012.645716>
- Lapointe, A. A. (2017). "It's not Pans, It's People": Student and Teacher Perspectives on Bisexuality and Pansexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 17(1), 88-107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1196157>
- Laurie, A. (2001). *Lesbian studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand* New York, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Lee, A. (Director), Ossana, D. (Producer & writer), & Schamus, J. (Producer). (2005). *Brokeback Mountain* [Motion picture]. United States: Focus Features.
- Lee, I.-C., & Crawford, M. (2007). Lesbians and Bisexual Women in the Eyes of Scientific Psychology. *Feminism & Psychology*, 17(1), 109-127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353507073096>
- Lenius, S. (2001). Bisexuals and BDSM. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1(4), 69-78. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v01n04_06
- Li, T., Dobinson, C., Scheim, A. I., & Ross, L. E. (2013). Unique Issues Bisexual People Face in Intimate Relationships: A Descriptive Exploration of Lived Experience. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health*, 17(1), 21-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2012.723607>
- Littleton, H., Tabernik, H., Canales, E. J., & Backstrom, T. (2009). Risky Situation or Harmless Fun? A Qualitative Examination of College Women's Bad Hook-up and Rape Scripts. *Sex Roles*, 60(11), 793-804. Littleton2009. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-009-9586-8>
- Logie, C. H. (2015). (Where) do queer women belong? Theorizing intersectional and compulsory heterosexism in HIV research. *Critical Public Health*, 25(5), 527-538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09581596.2014.938612>
- Loi, B., Lea, T., & Howard, J. (2017). Substance Use, Mental Health, and Service Access among Bisexual Adults in Australia. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1401501>
- Lowry, R., Dunville, R., Robin, L., & Kann, L. (2017). Early Sexual Debut and Associated Risk Behaviors Among Sexual Minority Youth. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 52(3), 379-384. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2016.10.008>
- Lucassen, M. F. G., Merry, S. N., Robinson, E. M., Denny, S., Clark, T., Ameratunga, S., . . . Rossen, F. V. (2011). Sexual attraction, depression, self-harm, suicidality and help-seeking behaviour in

- New Zealand secondary school students. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 45(5), 376-383. <https://doi.org/10.3109/00048674.2011.559635>
- Lund, E. M., Thomas, K. B., Sias, C. M., & Bradley, A. R. (2016). Examining Concordant and Discordant Sexual and Romantic Attraction in American Adults: Implications for Counselors. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 10(4), 211-226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2016.1233840>
- Lynch, I., & Maree, D. J. (2013). Negotiating heteronormativity: Exploring South African bisexual women's constructions of marriage and family. *Feminism & Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353513480019>
- MacDowall, L. (2009). Historicising Contemporary Bisexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(1), 3-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710802659989>
- Macey, P., Morris, N., Hamlin, O., & Cravens, J. (2017). Bi-Invisibility: A Phenomenological Exploration of Same-Sex Casual Encounters. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1296801>
- Maliepaard, E. (2017a). Bisexual Safe Space(s) on the Internet: Analysis of an Online Forum for Bisexuals. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, n/a-n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12248>
- Maliepaard, E. (2017b). Bisexuality in the Netherlands: Connecting Bisexual Passing, Communities, and Identities. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 17(3), 325-348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1342214>
- Maliepaard, E. (2018). Disclosing Bisexuality or Coming Out? Two Different Realities for Bisexual People in The Netherlands. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1452816>
- Marcus, N. C. (2018). The Global Problem of Bisexual Erasure in Litigation and Jurisprudence. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 18(1), 67-85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1384423>
- Mark, K., Rosenkrantz, D., & Kerner, I. (2014). "Bi"ing into monogamy: Attitudes toward monogamy in a sample of bisexual-identified adults. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 1(3), 263-269. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000051>
- Masters, N. T., Casey, E., Wells, E. A., & Morrison, D. M. (2013). Sexual Scripts among Young Heterosexually Active Men and Women: Continuity and Change. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 50(5), 409-420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.661102>
- Mathers, L. A. B., Sumerau, J. E., & Cragun, R. T. (2018). The Limits of Homonormativity: Constructions of Bisexual and Transgender People in the Post-gay Era. *Sociological Perspectives*, 0(0), 0731121417753370. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121417753370>
- Matsick, J. L., & Rubin, J. D. (2018). Bisexual prejudice among lesbian and gay people: Examining the roles of gender and perceived sexual orientation. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 5(2), 143-155. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000283>
- McAllum, M.-A. (2014). "Bisexuality Is Just Semantics...": Young Bisexual Women's Experiences in New Zealand Secondary Schools. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 14(1), 75-93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2014.872467>
- McCall, L. (2005). The Complexity of Intersectionality. *Signs*, 30(3), 1771-1800.
- McCarn, S. R., & Fassinger, R. E. (1996). Revisioning Sexual Minority Identity Formation: A New Model of Lesbian Identity and its Implications for Counseling and Research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 24(3), 508-534. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000096243011>
- McClelland, S. I., Rubin, J. D., & Bauermeister, J. A. (2016). Adapting to Injustice: Young Bisexual Women's Interpretations of Microaggressions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 40(4), 532-550. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684316664514>
- McConnell, A. A., & Messman-Moore, T. L. (2018). Hazardous Drinking, Antibisexual Prejudice, and Sexual Revictimization Among Bisexual Women: A Moderated Mediation Model. *psychology of Violence*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000211>

- McCormack, M. (2014). Innovative sampling and participant recruitment in sexuality research. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31(4), 475-481.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407514522889>
- McKeown, S., & Dixon, J. (2017). The "contact hypothesis": Critical reflections and future directions. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11(1), e12295.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12295>
- McLean, K. (2004). Negotiating (Non)Monogamy. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 4(1-2), 83-97.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v04n01_07
- McLean, K. (2007). Hiding in the closet? *Journal of Sociology*, 43(2), 151-166.
<https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1440783307076893>
- McLean, K. (2008a). Inside, Outside, Nowhere: Bisexual Men and Women in the Gay and Lesbian Community. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 8(1-2), 63-80.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710802143174>
- McLean, K. (2008b). SILENCES AND STEREOTYPES: THE IMPACT OF (MIS) CONSTRUCTIONS OF BISEXUALITY ON AUSTRALIAN BISEXUAL MEN AND WOMEN. *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review*, 4(3), 158-165.
- McQuoid, J., Thrul, J., Ozer, E., Ramo, D., & Ling, P. M. (2019). Tobacco use in the sexual borderlands: The smoking contexts and practices of bisexual young adults. *Health & Place*.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2018.12.010>
- Mereish, E. H., Katz-Wise, S. L., & Woulfe, J. (2016). We're Here and We're Queer: Sexual Orientation and Sexual Fluidity Differences Between Bisexual and Queer Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2016.1217448>
- Mereish, E. H., Katz-Wise, S. L., & Woulfe, J. (2017). Bisexual-Specific Minority Stressors, Psychological Distress, and Suicidality in Bisexual Individuals: the Mediating Role of Loneliness. *Prevention Science*, 1-10.
- Merriam-Webster. Bisexual. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bisexuality>. Retrieved March 3, 2020
- Messinger, A. M. (2010). Invisible Victims: Same-Sex IPV in the National Violence Against Women Survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(11), 2228-2243.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510383023>
- Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674-697. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Meyer, M. (2019). The Impact of Social Media on Non-Monosexuals' Responses to Discrimination: A Co-Cultural Approach. *Social Media + Society*, 5(1), 2056305119826120.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119826120>
- Miller, s. (2016). Glossary of Terms: Defining a Common Queer Language In s. Miller (Ed.), *Teaching, Affirming, and Recognizing Trans* and Gender Creative Youth*
- Miller, T. C. (2014). Forced Out of the "flannel closet": The Coming-Out-Gay Imperative. In M. Parke (Ed.), *Queer in the Choir Room: Essays on Gender and Sexuality in Glee*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company.
- Millett, K. (1970). *Sexual Politics*. Columbia University Press: New York, NY.
- Mitchell, R. C., Davis, K. S., & Galupo, M. P. (2015). Comparing perceived experiences of prejudice among self-identified plurisexual individuals. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 6(3), 245-257.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2014.940372>
- Mohr, J., & Fassinger, R. (2000). Measuring dimensions of lesbian and gay male experience. *Measurement and evaluation in counseling and development*, 33(2), 66-66.
- Mohr, J. J., & Rochlen, A. B. (1999). Measuring attitudes regarding bisexuality in lesbian, gay male, and heterosexual populations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 46(3), 353-369.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.46.3.353>

- Mojtaba, V., Hannele, T., & Terese, B. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 15(3), 398-405. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/nhs.12048>
- Monro, S. (2015). *Bisexuality: identities, politics and theories*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Monto, M. A., & Carey, A. G. (2014). A New Standard of Sexual Behavior? Are Claims Associated With the “Hookup Culture” Supported by General Social Survey Data? *The Journal of Sex Research*, 51(6), 605-615. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2014.906031>
- Morandini, J. S., Blaszczyński, A., & Dar-Nimrod, I. (2017). Who Adopts Queer and Pansexual Sexual Identities? *The Journal of Sex Research*, 54(7), 911-922. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2016.1249332>
- Morgan, E. M., & Thompson, E. M. (2006). Young Women's Sexual Experiences Within Same-Sex Friendships. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 6(3), 7-34. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v06n03_02
- Moss, A. R. (2012). Alternative Families, Alternative Lives: Married Women Doing Bisexuality. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 8(5), 405-427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428X.2012.729946>
- Mulick, P. S., & Wright, L. W. (2002). Examining the Existence of Biphobia in the Heterosexual and Homosexual Populations. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 2(4), 45-64. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v02n04_03
- Muñoz-Laboy, M. (2019). Ethnic and Racial Specificity, or Not, in Bisexuality Research: A Practical Commentary. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 48(1), 317-325. Muñoz-Laboy2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1318-0>
- Munt, S. R., Bassett, E. H., & O'Riordan, K. (2002). Virtually Belonging: Risk, Connectivity, and Coming Out On-Line. *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 7(2), 125-137. Munt2002. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1015893016167>
- Murphy, R. C., Falchuk, B. C., & Brennan, I. C. (2009). *Glee* [Television Series]. United States: 20th Century Fox Television.
- Murphy, T. F. (1984). Freud Reconsidered: Bisexuality, Homosexuality, and Moral Judgement. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 9(2-3), 65-77. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v09n02_04
- Nadal, K. L., Issa, M.-A., Leon, J., Meterko, V., Wideman, M., & Wong, Y. (2011). Sexual Orientation Microaggressions: “Death by a Thousand Cuts” for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 8(3), 234-259. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2011.584204>
- Nadal, K. L., Whitman, C. N., Davis, L. S., Erazo, T., & Davidoff, K. C. (2016). Microaggressions Toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Genderqueer People: A Review of the Literature. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 53(4-5), 488-508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2016.1142495>
- Noël, M. J. (2006). Progressive Polyamory: Considering Issues of Diversity. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 602-620. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1363460706070003>
- Oakley, A. (1972). *Sex, Gender and Society*. England, UK: New Society.
- Oakley, A. (2016). Disturbing Hegemonic Discourse: Nonbinary Gender and Sexual Orientation Labeling on Tumblr. *Social Media + Society*, 2(3), 2056305116664217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116664217>
- Obradors-Campos, M. (2011). Deconstructing Biphobia. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 11(2-3), 207-226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2011.571986>
- Ochs, R. (n.d.). *Selected Quotes By Robyn Ochs*. Retrieved March 4, 2020, from <https://robynocho.com/quotes/>
- Paasonen, S., & Spišák, S. (2018). Malleable identities, leaky taxonomies: The matter of sexual flexibility. *Sexualities*, 0(0), 1363460718779798. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460718779798>
- Paik, A. (2010). “Hookups,” dating, and relationship quality: Does the type of sexual involvement matter? *Social Science Research*, 39(5), 739-753. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.03.011>

- Parker, H. N. (2011). Towards a definition of popular culture. *History and Theory*, 50(2), 147-170. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2011.00574.x>
- Parker, K., Graf, N., & Igielnik, R. (2019). *Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues*: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/>
- Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009). Perceived Discrimination and Health: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(4), 531-554. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016059>
- Paul, E. L., & Hayes, K. A. (2002). The Casualties of 'Casual' Sex: A Qualitative Exploration of the Phenomenology of College Students' Hookups. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 19(5), 639-661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407502195006>
- Pennington, S. (2009). Bisexuals "Doing Gender" in Romantic Relationships. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9(1), 33-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710802660029>
- PEP Consolidated Psychoanalytic Glossary. (2016). [Periodical Electronic document]: Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing. Retrieved from <http://www.pep-web.org.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/document.php?id=zbk.069.0001s#yp0013291805380>
- Peswani, L. (2019, June 11). Pansexuality meaning and definition - What is pansexual? *Cosmopolitan*.
- Pitt, R. N. (2007). Downlow Mountain? De/Stigmatizing Bisexuality through Pitying and Pejorative Discourses in Media. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 14(2), 254-258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106082650601400203>
- Plessis, D. (1996). Blatantly bisexual. In D. Hall & M. Pramaggiore (Eds.), *RePresenting bisexualities: Subjects and cultures of fluid desire* (pp. 19-54). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Plumm, K. M., Potter, S., & Terrance, C. A. (2015). Perceptions of Bias-Motivated Assault Against Bisexual Individuals. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 15(2), 248-267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1022275>
- Pompili, M., Lester, D., Forte, A., Seretti, M. E., Erbutto, D., Lamis, D. A., . . . Girardi, P. (2014). Bisexuality and Suicide: A Systematic Review of the Current Literature. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 11(8), 1903-1913. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/jsm.12581>
- Pond, T. (2016). *"I do like girls, I promise!": The Experiences of Bisexual Women Who Use Tinder in New Zealand* (Honours Dissertation). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, NZ.
- Pond, T., & Farvid, P. (2017). "I do like girls, I promise!": Young bisexual women's experiences of using Tinder. *Psychology of Sexualities Review*, 8(2).
- Popova, M. (2018). Inactionable/Unspeakable: Bisexuality in the Workplace. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 18(1), 54-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1383334>
- Porzolt, V. (1986). Letters - Being Bisexual. *Broadsheet*.
- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and Social Psychology*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Power, J., McNair, R., & Carr, S. (2009). Absent sexual scripts: lesbian and bisexual women's knowledge, attitudes and action regarding safer sex and sexual health information. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 11(1), 67-81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050802541674>
- Preciado, M. A., & Johnson, K. L. (2014). Perceived Consequences of Hypothetical Identity-Inconsistent Sexual Experiences: Effects of Perceiver's Sex and Sexual Identity. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 43(3), 505-518. Preciado2014. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-013-0113-1>
- Prell, E., & Traeen, B. (2018). Minority Stress and Mental Health Among Bisexual and Lesbian Women in Norway. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1518180>
- Psutka, R., Connor, J., Cousins, K., & Kypri, K. (2012). Sexual health, risks, and experiences of New Zealand university students: findings from a national cross-sectional study *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, 125(1361).
- Qin, D. (2004). Toward a Critical Feminist Perspective of Culture and Self. *Feminism & Psychology*, 14(2), 297-312. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353504042183>
- Rabinow, P. (2010). *Michel Foucault: The Foucault Reader*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

- Race, K. (2015). Biomedical discourses and sexuality. In *The International Encyclopedia of Human Sexuality*: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781118896877.wbiehs050>.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118896877.wbiehs050>
- Rankine, J. (2001). The Great, Late Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Discrimination Survey. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 5(1-2), 133-142. https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v05n01_09
- Reinhardt, R. U. (2011). Bisexual Women in Heterosexual Relationships: A Study of Psychological and Sociological Patterns: A Reflective Paper. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 11(4), 439-447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2011.620472>
- Renn, K. A. (2007). LGBT Student Leaders and Queer Activists: Identities of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Identified College Student Leaders and Activists. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(3), 311-330. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2007.0029>
- Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5(4), 631-660. <https://doi.org/10.1086/493756>
- Richter, N. (2011). Ambiguous Bisexuality: The Case of A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila (Vol. 11, pp. 120).
- Richters, J., Prestage, G., Schneider, K., & Clayton, S. (2010). Do women use dental dams? Safer sex practices of lesbians and other women who have sex with women. *Sexual Health*, 7(2), 165-169. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1071/SH09072>
- Riggle, E. D. B., Rostosky, S. S., & Horne, S. (2010). Does It Matter Where You Live? Nondiscrimination Laws and the Experiences of LGB Residents. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 7(3), 168-175. Riggle2010. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-010-0016-z>
- Ritchie, R. (2016, July 3). Think Bisexual People Have Straight Passing Privilege? Here's Why You're Mistaken. *Everyday Feminism*. Retrieved 7 February 2020 Retrieved from <https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/07/straight-passing-privilege-harmful/>
- Roberts, T. S., Horne, S. G., & Hoyt, W. T. (2015). Between a Gay and a Straight Place: Bisexual Individuals' Experiences with Monosexism. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 15(4), 554-569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1111183>
- Rodríguez Rust, P. C. (2000). Bisexuality: A Contemporary Paradox for Women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(2), 205-221. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00161>
- Rosario, M., Schrimshaw, E. W., Hunter, J., & Levy-Warren, A. (2009). The Coming-Out Process of Young Lesbian and Bisexual Women: Are There Butch/Femme Differences in Sexual Identity Development? *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 38(1), 34-49. Rosario2009. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-007-9221-0>
- Ross, L. E., Salway, T., Tarasoff, L. A., MacKay, J. M., Hawkins, B. W., & Fehr, C. P. (2017). Prevalence of Depression and Anxiety Among Bisexual People Compared to Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Individuals: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1387755>
- Rubin, G. (1975). The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex. In R. R. Reiter (Ed.), *Toward an anthropology of women* (pp. 157-210). New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
- Rust, P. (1993a). "COMING OUT" IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM: Sexual Identity Formation among Lesbian and Bisexual Women. *Gender & Society*, 7(1), 50-77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124393007001004>
- Rust, P. (2000a). *Bisexuality in the United States*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Rust, P. (2000b). Two Many and Not Enough. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1(1), 31-68. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v01n01_04
- Rust, P. C. (1993b). Neutralizing the political threat of the marginal woman: Lesbians' beliefs about bisexual women. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 30(3), 214-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499309551705>

- Ruth, R., & Santacruz, E. (2017). *LGBT Psychology and Mental Health: Emerging Research and Advances*. Santa Barbara, UNITED STATES: ABC-CLIO, LLC. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=5105882>
- Sabbage, L. (1989, July/August). The Word Is Out - Bisexuality. *Broadsheet*(170), 16-18.
- Salim, S., Robinson, M., & Flanders, C. E. (2019). Bisexual women's experiences of microaggressions and microaffirmations and their relation to mental health. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 6(3), 336-346. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000329>
- Salway, T., Ross, L. E., Fehr, C. P., Burley, J., Asadi, S., Hawkins, B., & Tarasoff, L. A. (2019). A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Disparities in the Prevalence of Suicide Ideation and Attempt Among Bisexual Populations. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 48(1), 89-111. Salway2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1150-6>
- San Filippo, M. (2013). *The B Word: Bisexuality in contemporary film and television*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Sanders, S. (2020). *Sexual orientation, UK: 2018*. UK: Office for National Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/latest>
- Sarno, E., & Wright, A. J. (2013). Homonegative Microaggressions and Identity in Bisexual Men and Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 13(1), 63-81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2013.756677>
- Sarno, E. L., Newcomb, M. E., Feinstein, B. A., & Mustanski, B. (2020). Bisexual Men's Experiences with Discrimination, Internalized Binegativity, and Identity Affirmation: Differences by Partner Gender. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49(5), 1783-1798. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-020-01712-z>
- Satu, E., & Helvi, K. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107-115. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x>
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (2005). *The New Gay Teenager*. Cambridge, UNITED STATES: Harvard University Press. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=3300069>
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (2014). An Exploratory Study of the Categorical Versus Spectrum Nature of Sexual Orientation. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 51(4), 446-453. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2013.871691>
- Scales Rostosky, S., Riggle, E. D. B., Pascale-Hague, D., & McCants, L. E. (2010). The positive aspects of a bisexual self-identification. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1(2), 131-144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2010.484595>
- Scheer, J. R., McConocha, E., Behari, K., & Pachankis, J. E. (2019). Sexual violence as a mediator of sexual orientation disparities in alcohol use, suicidality, and sexual-risk behaviour among female youth. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2019.1690031>
- Schimanski, I. D., & Treharne, G. J. (2018). "Extra marginalisation within the community": queer individuals' perspectives on suicidality, discrimination and gay pride events. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2018.1524394>
- Schudson, Z., & van Anders, S. (2019). 'You have to coin new things': sexual and gender identity discourses in asexual, queer, and/or trans young people's networked counterpublics. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2019.1653957>
- Seabrook, R. C., McMahon, S., Duquaine, B. C., Johnson, L., & DeSilva, A. (2018). Sexual Assault Victimization and Perceptions of University Climate Among Bisexual Women. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2018.1485070>
- Seidler, V. J. (1987). Reason, desire, and male sexuality. In P. Caplan (Ed.), *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Seidman, S. (2015). *The social construction of sexuality* (3rd Edition ed.). New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

- Sell, R. L. (1997). Defining and Measuring Sexual Orientation: A Review. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 26(6), 643-658. Sell1997. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1024528427013>
- Sender, K. (2003). Sex Sells: Sex, Taste, and Class in Commercial Gay and Lesbian Media. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 9(3), 331-365
- Sigurvinsdottir, R., & Ullman, S. E. (2016). Sexual Assault in Bisexual and Heterosexual Women Survivors. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 16(2), 163-180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1136254>
- Simon, W., & Gagnon, J. H. (1984). Sexual Scripts. *Society*, 22(1), 53-60.
- Smith, H. F. (2002). On Psychic Bisexuality. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 71(3), 549-558. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2002.tb00525.x>
- Souto Pereira, S., Becker, S., & Gardiner, G. (2016). Sensitive sexualities: dichotomised discourse in the erasure of bisexuality. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2016.1255245>
- Spalding, L. R., & Peplau, L. A. (1997). The Unfaithful Lover. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21(4), 611-625. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00134.x>
- Spittlehouse, J. K., Boden, J. M., & Horwood, L. J. (2019). Sexual orientation and mental health over the life course in a birth cohort. *Psychological Medicine*, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291719001284>
- Steele, C. M., Spencer, S. J., & Aronson, J. (2002). Contending with group image: The psychology of stereotype and social identity threat. In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 34, pp. 379-440): Academic Press. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0065260102800090>. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(02\)80009-0](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(02)80009-0)
- Steele, L. S., Ross, L. E., Dobinson, C., Veldhuizen, S., & Timmouth, J. M. (2009). Women's Sexual Orientation and Health: Results from a Canadian Population-Based Survey. *Women & Health*, 49(5), 353-367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03630240903238685>
- Stone, N., Hatherall, B., Ingham, R., & McEachran, J. (2006). Oral Sex and Condom Use Among Young People In the United Kingdom. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 38(1), 6-12. <https://doi.org/10.1363/3800606>
- Swan, D. J., & Habibi, S. (2015). Heterosexuals Do It with Feeling: Heterocentrism in Heterosexual College Students' Perceptions of Female Bisexuality and Heterosexuality. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 15(3), 304-318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1035823>
- Swartz, S. B. (2018, September 21). 3 Things TV Gets Wrong About Bisexuality — and 3 It's Started Getting Right. *Shondaland*. Retrieved September 23, 2019, from <https://www.shondaland.com/live/a23307324/bisexuality-on-tv/>
- Szulc, L., & Dhoest, A. (2013). The internet and sexual identity formation: Comparing Internet use before and after coming out. *Communications*, 38(4), 347-365. <https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2013-0021>
- Taggart, T. C., Rodriguez-Seijas, C., Dyar, C., Elliott, J. C., Thompson, R. G., Hasin, D. S., & Eaton, N. R. (2019). Sexual orientation and sex-related substance use: The unexplored role of bisexuality. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 115, 55-63. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2018.12.012>
- Taylor, A. C., Rappleyea, D. L., Fang, X., & Cannon, D. (2013). Emerging Adults' Perceptions of Acceptable Behaviors Prior to Forming a Committed, Dating Relationship. *Journal of Adult Development*, 20(4), 173-184. Taylor2013. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-013-9169-3>
- Taylor, J., Power, J., & Smith, E. (2020). Experiences of Bisexual Identity, Attraction, and Behavior and Their Relationship With Mental Health Findings From the Who I Am Study. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.3928/02793695-20191211-01>
- Te Awekōtuku, N., Tamihana, S., Glamuzina, J., & Laurie, A. (2018). *Lesbian organising*. Retrieved 10 September, 2019, from <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/women-together/theme/lesbian>

- Tenbarge, K. (2019, 29 June). Lady Gaga said she may not be 'considered a part of' the LGBTQ community even though she likes 'girls sometimes' and it started a conversation about bisexual exclusion. *Insider*. Retrieved June 29, 2019, from <https://www.insider.com/lady-gagas-stonewall-speech-touched-on-bisexual-exclusion-2019-6>
- Them. (2018). InQueery: The Past and Popular Usage of the Term "Pansexual". *Them* Retrieved 27 September, 2019, from <https://www.them.us/story/inqueery-pansexual>
- Thompson, E. M. (2006). Girl Friend or Girlfriend? *Journal of Bisexuality*, 6(3), 47-67. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v06n03_04
- Thompson, E. M., & Morgan, E. M. (2008). "Mostly straight" young women: Variations in sexual behavior and identity development. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(1), 15-21. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.44.1.15>
- Tiefer, L. (2004). *Sex is not a natural act* (2nd Edition ed.). Colorado: Westview Press.
- Toft, A., & Yip, A. K. T. (2017). Intimacy negotiated: The management of relationships and the construction of personal communities in the lives of bisexual women and men. *Sexualities*, 0(0), 1363460716679793. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1363460716679793>
- Tornello, S. L., Riskind, R. G., & Patterson, C. J. (2014). Sexual Orientation and Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Adolescent Young Women in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 54(2), 160-168. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.08.018>
- Turley, E., & Fisher, J. (2018). Tweeting back while shouting back: Social media and feminist activism. *Feminism & Psychology*, 28(1), 128-132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517715875>
- Turner, G. (2015). 'A REAL LESBIAN WOULDN'T TOUCH A BISEXUAL WITH A BARGEPOLE'. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 12(2), 139-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2014.974634>
- Ulrichs, K.-H. (1864). *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe*
- Ussher, J. M. (2011). *The madness of women: Myth and experience*. New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Van De Wiele, C., & Tong, S. T. (2014). *Breaking boundaries: the uses and gratifications of grindr*. presented at the meeting of the Proceedings of the 2014 ACM International Joint Conference on Pervasive and Ubiquitous Computing, Seattle, Washington. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2632048.2636070>
- Verhoeven, P. D., & Marshall, A. P. (1992). *Basic Instinct* [Motion Picture]. United States: TriStar Pictures.
- von Krafft-Ebing, R. (1892). *Psychopathia sexualis: With especial reference to contrary sexual instinct: A medico-legal study*. F.A. Davis Co.: London.
- Walters, M., Chen, J., & Breiding, M. (2013). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation* Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Wandrei, K. E. (2018). 'Sleeping with the enemy': Non-monogamy and 1970s lesbian-feminists. *Sexualities*, 22(4), 489-506. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460717750074>
- Wandrey, R. L., Mosack, K. E., & Moore, E. M. (2015). Coming Out to Family and Friends as Bisexually Identified Young Adult Women: A Discussion of Homophobia, Biphobia, and Heteronormativity. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 15(2), 204-229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1018657>
- Watson, L. B., Morgan, S. K., & Craney, R. (2018a). Bisexual women's discrimination and mental health outcomes: The roles of resilience and collective action. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 5(2), 182-193. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000272>
- Watson, R. J., Shahin, Y. M., & Arbeit, M. R. (2018b). Hookup initiation and emotional outcomes differ across LGB young men and women. *Sexualities*, 0(0), 1363460718774528. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460718774528>
- Weeks, J. (2010). *Sexuality* (3rd Edition ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Weeks, J. (2012). *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulations of Sexuality Since 1800* (3rd Edition ed.). Oxon: Routledge.
- Weinberg, M. S., Williams, C. J., & Pryor, D. W. (1994). *Dual Attraction: Understanding Bisexuality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Weinrich, J. D., & Klein, F. (2002). Bi-Gay, Bi-Straight, and Bi-Bi. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 2(4), 109-139. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v02n04_07
- Welzer-Lang, D. (2008). Speaking Out Loud About Bisexuality: Biphobia in the Gay and Lesbian Community. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 8(1-2), 81-95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710802142259>
- Westerfelhaus, R., & Lacroix, C. (2006). Seeing "Straight" through Queer Eye: Exposing the Strategic Rhetoric of Heteronormativity in a Mediated Ritual of Gay Rebellion. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 23(5), 426-444. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393180601046196>
- Wharton, A. S. (2009). The Sociology of Emotional Labor. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35(1), 147-165. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115944>
- White, J. D. (2001). Bisexuals Who Kill. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 2(1), 39-54. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v02n01_04
- Wigginton, B., & Lafrance, M. N. (2019). Learning critical feminist research: A brief introduction to feminist epistemologies and methodologies. *Feminism & Psychology*, 0(0), 0959353519866058. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353519866058>
- Wilder, A. (1874). The Primeval Race Double Sexed. *The Phenological Journal and Science of Health*, 59(1).
- Wilkinson, M. (2019). 'Bisexual oysters': A diachronic corpus-based critical discourse analysis of bisexual representation in The Times between 1957 and 2017. *Discourse & Communication*, 0(0), 1750481318817624. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481318817624>
- Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing Qualitative Research In Psychology* (3rd ed.). Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=1220260>
- Willimon, B. C. (2013). *House of Cards* [Television Series]. United States: Netflix.
- Witten, T. M. (2016). Aging and Transgender Bisexuals: Exploring the Intersection of Age, Bisexual Sexual Identity, and Transgender Identity. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 16(1), 58-80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2015.1025939>
- Wood, P. B., & Bartkowski, J. P. (2004). Attribution Style and Public Policy Attitudes Toward Gay Rights*. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(1), 58-74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0038-4941.2004.08501005.x>
- Woodford, M. R., Howell, M. L., Silverschanz, P., & Yu, L. (2012). "That's So Gay!": Examining the Covariates of Hearing This Expression Among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual College Students. *Journal of American College Health*, 60(6), 429-434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2012.673519>
- Worthen, M. G. F. (2017). Rape Myth Acceptance Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Mostly Heterosexual College Students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 0(0), 0886260517733282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517733282>
- Wu, A. K., Marks, M. J., Young, T. M., & Beasley, M. A. (2019). Predictors of Bisexual Individuals' Dating Decisions. *Sexuality & Culture*. Wu2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-019-09651-1>
- Yau, N. (2019). *Shifts in How Couples Meet, Online Takes the Top*. Retrieved 26 February 2020, from <https://flowingdata.com/2019/03/15/shifts-in-how-couples-meet-online-takes-the-top-spot/>
- Yescavage, K., & Alexander, J. (2003). BI FILM-VIDEO WORLD. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 3(2), 109-127. https://doi.org/10.1300/J159v03n02_07

- Yockey, R. A., King, K. A., & Vidourek, R. A. (2019). Let It Snow: Psychosocial Factors and Previous Substance Abuse Associated With Cocaine Use Among Bisexual Adults. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2019.1673870>
- Yoshino, K. (2000). The Epistemic Contract of Bisexual Erasure. *Stanford Law Review*, 52(2), 353-461. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229482>
- Yost, M. R., & Thomas, G. D. (2012). Gender and Binegativity: Men's and Women's Attitudes Toward Male and Female Bisexuals. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41(3), 691-702. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-011-9767-8>
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality and Feminist Politics. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), 193-209. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1350506806065752>
- Zealand, S. N. (2015, 23 June 2015). *Education and training in New Zealand*. Retrieved 7 November 2018, from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/education-and-training-in-new-zealand>
- Zealand, S. N. (2018, 3 May 2018). *Marriage and divorce falling out of favour*. Retrieved 22 February 2019, from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/marriage-and-divorce-falling-out-of-favour>
- Zinik, G. (1985). Identity Conflict or Adaptive Flexibility? *Journal of Homosexuality*, 11(1-2), 7-20. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v11n01_02

GLOSSARY

Bisexual is a sexual identity that is defined as (sexual and/or romantic) attraction to multiple genders.

Cisgender is a term used to describe people whose gender matches their sex assigned at birth.

Gender diverse people is an umbrella term for the broad range of gender identities that do not fit within the binary man/male and woman/female gender identities.

Monosexual is an umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities that are defined by their attraction to one gender (e.g., heterosexuality, homosexuality).

Omnisexual is often described as a synonym for pansexual. It is a sexual identity that is defined by attraction to people regardless of their gender.

Pansexual is a sexual identity that is defined as (sexual and/or romantic) attraction to people regardless of their gender.

Plurisexual is an umbrella term that encompasses sexual identities that are defined by their attraction (or potential for attraction) to multiple genders (e.g., bisexual, pansexual).

Polysexual is a sexual identity that is often defines as attraction to more than one gender.

Pomosexual (stemming from “post-modern” sexual) is categorised as a sexual identity for plurisexual attracted people who do not feel that other sexual identities do not fit their attractions.

Queer is a sexual identity that is defined by sexual or romantic attraction that is not limited to people of a particular gender. It is also an umbrella term for non-heterosexual identities.

Rainbow community/ies is a term that is used instead of the acronym LGBTQ to broadly encompass queer, gender diverse, and transgender identities.

Takatāpui is a term used to describe Māori rainbow people and can be used to describe both gender diversity and non-heterosexuality.

Transgender is a term used to denote people whose gender does not align with their sex assigned at birth.

APPENDISES

Appendix A: Recruitment posters

Interview poster



RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED:

WOMEN WHO ARE ATTRACTED TO MULTIPLE GENDERS

- Do you identify as a woman who is attracted to people of more than one gender?
- Are you aged 20 or over?
- Do you live in Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch?

If so, I would like to invite you to take part in an individual confidential interview for my PhD project, about your experiences of relationships, sex, and dating.

For more information, please email me:

tara.pond@aut.ac.nz

Project supervisor: Dr Pani Farvid, pani.farvid@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 999 ext 7326

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8/3/18, AUTEK Reference number 18/37





SURVEY PARTICIPANTS NEEDED:

WOMEN WHO ARE ATTRACTED TO MULTIPLE GENDERS

- Do you identify as a woman who is attracted to people of more than one gender?
- Are you aged 20 or over?
- Do you live in New Zealand?

If you fit the above criteria and want to participate in a survey about women who are attracted to multiple genders lives and experiences:

**For more information and
to fill out the survey go to:**

bit.ly/bistudynz

Contact information: Tara Pond: tara.pond@aut.ac.nz

Project supervisor: Dr Pani Farvid, pani.farvid@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 999 ext 7326

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 8/3/18, AUTEK Reference number 18/37



Appendix B: Interview Participant Information Sheet

The logo for AUT (Auckland University of Technology) is displayed in white text on a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

23 November 2017

Project Title

The intimate lives of women who identify as being attracted to multiple genders

An Invitation

Kia ora, you are invited to take part in my research project that I will be doing as part of my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD in Psychology) qualification. My name is Tara Pond, and I am a 24 year old Pākehā bisexual-identified woman. I intend to look at women who identify as being attracted to multiple genders' relationships, sex, and dating experiences. As this is a mostly non-existent area of research, I wish to examine this area of women's lives in a way that will benefit our community. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary, and you are able to withdraw at any stage prior to the end of the interview. If you are not comfortable with face-to-face interviews, I will be conducting online surveys on the same topic at a later stage, so please let me know if you would prefer that method and I can let you know when I start conducting the online surveys.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research will allow us to understand more about non-heterosexual women's experiences of their intimate lives, including relationships, dating, and sex. It would offer you a chance to discuss a topic that is not often discussed and share your experiences which would help shape research knowledge in this area. It would extend academic knowledge about women's intimate relationships and lives in a way that could contribute to provisions of psychological and health services for LGBTQ+ women. This research would also be a part of my thesis to gain a PhD qualification. The results may also be discussed at conferences and in publications.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited to participate because you have responded to an advertisement or heard about my research through word of mouth and contacted me about my research. You were also identified because you fit the criteria for this research as you identify as a woman, identify as attracted to more than one gender, are aged 20 or above, and live in New Zealand in either Auckland, Wellington, or Christchurch. If you are a friend or student of myself or my supervisors (Dr Pani Farvid and Dr Paula Collens) you do not qualify for the interviews. You can, however, still participate in the interviews. Please let me know if this is the case.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You have one week after reading this form to decide whether you would like to be interviewed. If so, please email me and let me know and we can arrange a time for the interview. Before the interview begins, you will need to complete a consent form to agree that you will participate in this research project.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed, and allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

This research will involve you meeting with me, either at one of the AUT campuses if you live in Auckland or at one of the city library meeting rooms if you live in Wellington or Christchurch, at a prearranged time that suits you. You will be interviewed – the interview will be more like an informal chat than a job interview – about topics related to my research, including your experiences of dating, relationships, sex, and your sexual identity. The interview will be audio recorded. The interview will be transcribed and the data will be analysed for use in my thesis. The data will also be used as a basis for an online survey for other women, which will be distributed later in the year. My research may also be discussed at conferences and turned into a journal paper and/or a book.

What are the discomforts and risks?

I do not anticipate any risks to you. Your identity will be confidential, you can choose your own pseudonym and all identifying information will be changed or deleted. There is a possibility that topics surrounding your sexuality, relationships, sex, and dating life can cause some discomfort and/or embarrassment. If you are uncomfortable, you can let me know and we can change the topic we are discussing. You can let me know if there are any questions that you do not want to answer. A list of free support services will be given to you at the end of the interview, as a precaution, which you are free to contact if any issues come up that you would like to talk to someone about.

What are the benefits?

You would benefit by sharing your story and experiences and talk in-depth and reflect on a part of your life. Your interview would help contribute to research that could provide more help and support to LGBTQ+ women in future.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your identity and information is entirely confidential, accessible only to myself and my supervisors (Drs Pani Farvid and Paula Collens). All interview material will be confidential, anyone who works on transcribing the interviews will need to sign a confidentiality agreement. A pseudonym will be given to you, or you can choose one yourself. Any identifying information you mention in interviews will be changed or deleted in written transcripts.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The cost of traveling to the interview location. I will try to conduct the interview in a suitable and accessible location for you. One to two hours of your time will be needed to conduct the interview.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have one week to decide whether you would like to participate in this research, you can notify me at any time during that week period if you would like to or would not like to participate. If I have not heard back from you after a week, I will send you an email.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like a copy of a summary of the research findings, you may indicate this on the consent form and it will be emailed to you at the conclusion of my research project.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Pani Farvid, pani.farvid@aut.ac.nz, ph: 09 921 9999 ext 7326.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference.

You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Tara Pond - by email: tara.pond@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Pani Farvid – by email: pani.farvid@aut.ac.nz, by phone: 09 921 9999 ext 7326

Appendix C: Interview Consent Form

The logo for AUT (Auckland University of Technology) is displayed in white text on a black rectangular background.

TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKĀU RAU

Consent Form

*Project title: **The Intimate Lives of Women Who Identify as Attracted to Multiple Genders***

*Project Supervisors: **Dr Pani Farvid and Dr Paula Collens***

*Researcher: **Tara Pond***

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23 November 2017.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that the interview will also be audio-recorded and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature _____

Participant's name: _____ Date : _____

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Indicative areas for discussion

General Questions

- Name, age, sexual identity, current relationship status, ethnicity, where from, what they do

Sexuality

- How do you identify?
- Define terms
- Have you always identified with that sexuality?
- Discuss how you came to understand your sexual identity
- How do you prefer to define yourself? Is it the same in every context?
- Have you discussed your sexuality with your friends/family?
- Has your understanding of your sexuality shifted over time?
- What are your thoughts on bisexuality? Do you think the sexual identity is misrepresented?
- How did your ethnicity impact your understanding of your sexual identity?

Relationships

- Talk about your past relationships: how many, how long for, what was the gender, how did you meet
- Have you had relationships with people of different genders? Why/why not?
- Relations before/after coming out/identifying as X – any difference?
- Telling your partners about your sexuality – when, how long into your relationship, how did it go, how did it impact your relationship?
- How did your sexuality change/impact/affect your (romantic) relationships?
- Have all your relationships been monogamous? Would you consider having polyamorous relationships? Do you think your sexuality impacts this decision?
- Do you prefer relationships with a certain gender? Prefer sex with a certain gender?
- Do you have different types of relationships with different genders?
- Have you ever had a negative experience related to your sexuality and your romantic/sexual partners? (biphobia, homophobia etc)
- What is having sex like for the first time/any time with people of different genders? (Discuss this experience)
- How do you maintain your sexual identity while in a relationship? Do you feel like it is less visible when in a relationship? Why/ Why not? How?

Dating

- Have you dated outside of relationships?
- Where do you meet people (online/offline)?
- Ever used dating apps/ websites to find partners? Why? What was that like?
- Does your dating behaviours differ depending on the gender of the people you date?
- Do you seek to date people of certain genders?
- Is it harder to find partners of same gender to you?
- What was the sexual identities of people you have dated/been in a relationship with? Did this impact on how they view you and your sexual identity?

Non-committed Sex

- Have you even had one off or non-committed sex? Why/why not? How often?
- How would you define this?

Appendix E: Demographic Form for Interviewees

'Women who identify as attracted to multiple genders intimate lives' demographic sheet

AGE: _____

SEXUAL/ROMANTIC IDENTITY: _____

ETHNICITY: _____

BIRTH CITY: _____

CURRENT CITY: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

HIGHEST LEVEL OF STUDY COMPLETED: _____

HOW MANY SEXUAL PARTNERS HAVE YOU HAD? (please circle)

0 1-2 3-5 5-8 8-15 16-25 26+

OR state the number: _____

HOW MANY ROMANTIC PARTNERS HAVE YOU HAD (please circle):

0 1-2 3-4 5-7 8-10 10+

OR state the number: _____

Appendix F: Key Nodes for Survey Construction

Parent nodes	Child nodes	Parent nodes	Child nodes
Biphobia	General/miscellaneous	Relationships	Finding partners
	'Gay's don't get it'		Gender
	Homophobia		Partner's sexuality
	Invisibility		Relationships with men
	'Straight people don't get it'		Relationships with women
Bisexuality	'Not sure where I fit in'	Sex	Education
	Straight passing		First time
	Women's bisexuality		Gender
Casual sex	Casual sex experiences		STI's and prophylactics
	Opinions on casual sex	Technology	Dating applications
Coming out	Family		
	Non-event		
	Not coming out		
Ethnicity and culture			
Identity discovery	Attraction to women		
	Different identity labels		
	Miscellaneous		
Invisibility	Assumed sexual orientation		
	Maintaining visibility		
Media representation	Bad representation		
Non-monogamy	Discussing non-monogamy		
	Non-monogamy and sexuality		
Pansexuality	'bi vs pan'		
Politics	Queer politics		

Appendix G: Survey Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

11/8/2018

Qualtrics Survey Software

WELCOME

Kia ora, thank you for your interest in my survey on women who are attracted to multiple genders for my PhD research at AUT University. Please read the information carefully and then continue to the next page if you are still interested in participating.

Survey Details and Information

You are invited to take part in my research project that I will be doing as part of my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD in Psychology) qualification at AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand. My name is Tara Pond, and I am a 24 year old pākehā bisexual-identified woman. I intend to look at women who identify as being attracted to more than one gender's, sex and dating behaviours. As this is a mostly non-existent area of research, I wish to examine this area of women's lives in a way that will benefit our community. In order to participate in this research you must fit the following criteria:

- Be twenty years or older;
- Identify as a woman;
- Be attracted to multiple genders;
- Currently live in New Zealand.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research will allow us to understand more about women's experiences of their intimate lives, including relationships, dating, and sex. It would offer you a chance to share your experiences, which would help shape research knowledge in this area. It would extend academic knowledge about women's intimate relationships and lives in a way that could contribute to provisions of psychological and health services for LGBTQ+ women. This research would also be a part of my thesis to gain a PhD qualification.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

By continuing to the survey and submitting your answers after filling it out, you have consented to being a part of this research project. Your participation in this research is

voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. If you do not submit your survey answers, your data will not be collected.

What will happen in this research?

In this research you will continue to the next page where you will be asked a series of questions and a space will be provided for you to complete your answers. These questions and answers will allow me to gather data about women who are attracted to multiple genders experiences and thoughts about their sexuality, relationships, dating, and sex. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Once you have finished filling out the survey, you can submit your answers. All the data will be collected by me and analysed.

What are the discomforts and risks?

I do not anticipate any risks to you. There is a possibility that topics surrounding your sexuality, relationships, sex and dating life can cause some discomfort and/or embarrassment. You can skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering. You don't need to worry about me knowing who is answering the questions as your identity is entirely anonymous.

What are the benefits?

Your answers will help contribute to research that could provide more help and support to LGBTQ+ women in future.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your identity is anonymous and not known to myself or my supervisors. Any identifying information you may include in your answers will be changed or deleted from the data during analysis.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have until the survey is closed to consider this invitation. By continuing to the survey, you have consented to this invitation.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Due to the large numbers of people filling out the survey, I will not be able to send results to people individually. I will make the results available for New Zealand LGBTQ+ groups

to access.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Pani Farvid, pani.farvid@aut.ac.nz, ph: 09 921 9999 ext 7326. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTECH, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

You are able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Tara Pond - by email: tara.pond@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Pani Farvid – by email: pani.farvid@aut.ac.nz, by phone: 09 921 9999 ext 7326

If you are still interested in participating, please continue to the next page.

If you would like to participate in this survey, you must agree to the following:

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project;
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way;
- I fit the criteria of participation in this research;
- I agree to take part in this survey

Appendix H: Summary Tables of Interest

Demographics						
Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Born in Aotearoa	Were you born in Aotearoa?'	Yes	80.2	797		
		No	19.5	194		
		TOTAL		991	3	0.3
Country born	Where outside NZ were you born?'	United Kingdom	34.5	68		
		Australia	13.7	27		
		North America	16.8	33		
		Africa	9.1	18		
		Asia	8.6	17		
		Europe	6.1	12		
		South America	1.5	3		
		Oceania	1.5	3		
		TOTAL		183	14	1.4
Region	What part of NZ do you live in?'	Northland	1.1	11		
		Auckland	27.6	274		
		Waikato	5.4	54		
		BOP	2.2	22		
		Gisborne	0.1	1		
		Hawke's Bay	0.8	8		
		Taranaki	0.6	6		
		Manawatu-Wanganui	3	30		
		Wellington	30.7	305		
		Nelson	0.8	8		
		Marlborough	0.6	6		
		West Coast	0.3	3		
		Canterbury	17	169		
		Otago	8.4	83		
		Southland	0.7	7		
		TOTAL		992	2	0.2
Ethnicity	What is your ethnicity(ies)?'	European/Pākehā	93.8	932		
		Māori	12.5	124		
		Asian	3.7	37		
		Pacifika	2.5	25		
		Middle Eastern	0.2	2		
		African	0.2	2		
		Other (Unspecified)	0.2	2		
		Latinx	0.5	5		
		Not Clear	2.9	29		
		Indigenous	0.1	1		
		Jewish	0.2	2		
		TOTAL		992	2	0.2

Education level	Highest level of education completed	Some of high school	2.9	29		
		Completed high school	15.6	155		
		Tertiary certificate/Graduate diploma	19.1	189		
		Bachelor's degree	33	327		
		Postgraduate degree/diploma	27.2	270		
		Doctoral degree	2.2	22		
		TOTAL		992	2	0.2

*denominator for percentages includes missing

Mental Health						
Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Mental health	Have you ever been given a mental health diagnosis by a medical professional?'	Yes	59.4	589		
		No	40.6	403		
		TOTAL		992	2	0.2
	Diagnosis	Depressive disorder	74.2	434		
		Anxiety disorders	69.9	409		
		Personality disorders	6.2	36		
		Body-related disorders	5.8	34		
		Mood disorders	6.3	37		
		Addiction disorders	0.7	4		
		Psychosis	1.2	7		
		ADHD	3.9	23		
		ASD	1	6		
		TOTAL		580	5	0.86

*denominator for percentages includes missing

Sexual Identity						
Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Sexual identity terms	Sexual identity terms (multiple choice)	Bisexual	82.4	819		
		Pansexual	47.3	470		
		Polysexual	5.8	58		
		Omnisexual	4.1	41		
		Gay	15.2	151		
		Queer	46.8	465		
		Lesbian	12.3	122		
		Straight	4.4	44		
		Asexual spectrum	8.1	80		
		Other	5.	50		

	Androsexual	0.1	1		
	Fluid	0.2	2		
	Plurisexual	0.1	1		
	Sapphic	0.1	1		
	Questioning	0.7	7		
	"Bicurious"	0.1	1		
	Heteroflexible	0.4	4		
	No label	1.4	14		
	"Not straight"	0.4	4		
	Homoflexible	0.1	1		
	Takatāpui	0.9	9		
	Sapiosexual	0.3	3		
	No preference	0.2	2		
	TOTAL		994	0	
Sexual identity preference	Bisexual	47.6	472		
	Pansexual	17	168		
	Polysexual	0.3	3		
	Omnisexual	0.4	4		
	Gay	2.6	26		
	Queer	19.4	192		
	Lesbian	3.6	36		
	Straight	4	40		
	Asexual spectrum	1.3	13		
	Takatāpui	0.7	7		
	No label	1.8	18		
	Not straight	0.4	4		
	Homoflexible	0.1	1		
	No preference	0.1	1		
	Unsure	0.2	2		
	Heteroflexible	0.4	4		
	TOTAL		991	3	0.3
Sexual identity most used	Bisexual	55.1	545		
	Pansexual	10.1	100		
	Polysexual	0.2	2		
	Omnisexual	0.1	1		
	Gay	4	40		
	Queer	12.8	127		
	Lesbian	5.1	50		
	Straight	7.7	76		
	Asexual spectrum	1.3	13		
	Takatāpui	0.5	5		
	No label	1.8	18		
	Not straight	0.4	4		
	Unsure	0.1	1		
	Heteroflexible	0.3	3		
	Other	0.5	5		

		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
Sexual identity opinions	“My sexual identity is an important part of who I am”	Strongly disagree	1.5	15		
		Somewhat disagree	3.5	35		
		Neutral	13.9	137		
		Somewhat agree	38.8	383		
		Strongly agree	42.2	417		
		TOTAL		987	7	0.7
	“I sometimes question my sexual identity”	Strongly disagree	24	237		
		Somewhat disagree	14.7	145		
		Neutral	11.1	110		
		Somewhat agree	34.8	344		
		Strongly agree	15.4	152		
		TOTAL		998	6	0.6
	“I feel proud of my sexual identity”	Strongly disagree	1.1	11		
		Somewhat disagree	6.3	61		
		Neutral	22.7	221		
		Somewhat agree	29.7	289		
		Strongly agree	40.2	391		
		TOTAL		994	21	2.1
	“How did you feel about your sexual identity when you first identified with it?”	Extremely negative	6.9	68		
		Somewhat negative	26.1	258		
		Neutral	27.4	271		
		Somewhat positive	29.1	288		
		Extremely positive	10.6	105		
		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
	“How do you feel about your sexual identity currently?”	Extremely negative	0.2	2		
		Somewhat negative	3.4	34		
		Neutral	15.1	149		
		Somewhat positive	36.6	362		
		Extremely positive	44.7	443		
		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
	“I don’t like to use labels to define my sexual identity”	Strongly disagree	10	99		
		Somewhat disagree	24	238		

		Neutral	17.7	175		
		Somewhat agree	27.8	275		
		Strongly agree	20.5	203		
		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
Cultural background and sexual identity	“My ethnicity/cultural background/religion affects how I view my sexual identity”	Strongly disagree	20.6	196		
		Somewhat disagree	12.8	122		
		Neutral	18.6	177		
		Somewhat agree	32.2	307		
		Strongly agree	15.8	151		
		TOTAL		953	41	4.1
Political ideology and sexual identity	“My sexual identity is impacted by and impacts my political ideologies and identities”	Strongly disagree	7.7	75		
		Somewhat disagree	7.4	72		
		Neutral	9.8	95		
		Somewhat agree	37.5	365		
		Strongly agree	37.7	367		
		TOTAL		974	20	2
Opinions on sexual identity terms	“I think bisexual is an inclusive term”	Strongly disagree	24.3	232		
		Somewhat disagree	35.7	340		
		Neutral	15.8	151		
		Somewhat agree	20.7	197		
		Strongly agree	3.5	33		
		TOTAL		953	41	4.1
	“I think bisexual is a binary term”	Strongly disagree	12.6	114		
		Somewhat disagree	34.5	313		
		Neutral	16.6	150		
		Somewhat agree	18	163		
		Strongly agree	18.3	166		
		TOTAL		906	88	8.9
	“I think bisexual is a transphobic term”	Strongly disagree	1.3	13		
		Somewhat disagree	11.9	118		
		Neutral	10.4	103		
		Somewhat agree	21.6	215		
		Strongly agree	46.3	460		

	TOTAL		909	85	8.6
"I think pansexual is an inclusive term"	Strongly disagree	1.5	14		
	Somewhat disagree	2.4	22		
	Neutral	9.3	87		
	Somewhat agree	34.3	321		
	Strongly agree	52.6	492		
	TOTAL		936	58	5.7
"I think pansexual is a binary term"	Strongly disagree	54.5	474		
	Somewhat disagree	22.9	199		
	Neutral	16.8	146		
	Somewhat agree	4	35		
	Strongly agree	1.7	15		
	TOTAL		869	125	12.2
"I think pansexual is a transphobic term"	Strongly disagree	73.4	649		
	Somewhat disagree	17.8	157		
	Neutral	6.2	55		
	Somewhat agree	2	18		
	Strongly agree	0.6	5		
	TOTAL		884	110	10.8

*denominator for percentages includes missing

		Attraction		n	%
Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	missing data
Attraction stability	"My sexual attraction to people of different genders is stable across time"	Strongly disagree	15	145	
		Somewhat disagree	33.6	325	
		Neutral	5.2	50	
		Somewhat agree	29.8	288	
		Strongly agree	16.4	158	
		TOTAL		966	28
	"My romantic attraction to people of different genders is stable across time"	Strongly disagree	13.3	129	
		Somewhat disagree	31.9	309	
		Neutral	6.2	60	
		Somewhat agree	31.1	301	
		Strongly agree	17.5	170	
		TOTAL		969	25
Attraction to different genders	"I am attracted to all genders equally"	Strongly disagree	22.6	218	
		Somewhat disagree	42.7	412	

Neutral	6.1	59		
Somewhat agree	17	164		
Strongly agree	11.5	111		
TOTAL		964	30	3

*denominator for percentages includes missing

Sexual identity disclosure

Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Importance of Sexual Identity Disclosure	"I believe that disclosing my sexual identity to people who are close to me is important"	Strongly disagree	4.2	42		
		Somewhat disagree	19.5	193		
		Neutral	17	168		
		Somewhat agree	37.7	373		
		Strongly agree	21.5	213		
		TOTAL		989	5	0.5
Sexual identity disclosure	"I have explicitly disclosed my sexual identity to my family"	Yes completely	20.9	207		
		Some of my family	37.1	367		
		Not explicitly	21.1	209		
		No	20.9	207		
		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
Reasons for not disclosing to family		Easier not to mention	58	116		
		Felt unsafe	13.3	28		
		Didn't want others to know	16.1	34		
		No one else's business I would be viewed differently	32.7	69		
		39.3	83			
		Don't see family	1.4	3		
		Family wouldn't understand	5.7	12		
		Still questioning/not ready	3.3	7		
		Avoid biphobia	9	19		
		Culture/religion	4.7	10		
		Don't feel comfortable	3.3	7		
		In heterosexual RS	6.2	13		
		Never came up	2.8	6		
		Don't like idea of coming out	1.4	3		
		TOTAL		211	0	0
		"In some situations, I have decided not to disclose my sexual identity"		Yes	92.2	913
No	7.8			77		
TOTAL				990	4	0.4
Reasons for not disclosing		Easier not to mention	69.7	639		
		Felt unsafe	33.9	311		
		Don't want others to know	23.2	213		
		Don't think it's important	43.6	400		

I would be viewed differently	49.5	454		
Don't want to be sexualised	43.6	400		
Not relevant	1.7	16		
Avoid homophobia/biphobia	1.9	17		
Work Setting	2.6	24		
Don't want to/not sure how to come out	1.1	10		
Didn't want to explain/justify	2	18		
Avoid people's reactions	1.3	12		
In a heterosexual relationship	1.2	11		
Awkward to mention	0.9	8		
People don't understand	1.1	10		
Religion/culture	1.1	10		
TOTAL		917	0	0

*denominator for percentages includes missing

Community

Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Relationship with LGBTQ+ community	"I feel connected to the LGBTQ+ community"	Strongly disagree	11.7	113		
		Somewhat disagree	26.6	257		
		Neutral	16	154		
		Somewhat agree	34.9	337		
		Strongly agree	10.8	104		
		TOTAL		965	29	2.9
			"I have felt unwelcome at an LGBTQ space/event because of my sexual identity"	Strongly disagree	24.8	204
Somewhat disagree	19.4			159		
Neutral	14			115		
Somewhat agree	27.5			226		
Strongly agree	14.3			117		
TOTAL				821	173	17.4
	"I feel like I have less of a community than people of other sexual identities"			Strongly disagree	9.4	89
		Somewhat disagree	12.4	117		
		Neutral	11.3	107		

		Somewhat agree	42.4	401		
		Strongly agree	24.4	231		
		TOTAL		945	49	4.9
	"I feel isolated from the LGBTQ+ community because of my sexual identity"	Strongly disagree	18.8	171		
		Somewhat disagree	20.5	186		
		Neutral	16.9	154		
		Somewhat agree	34.7	315		
		Strongly agree	9.1	83		
		TOTAL		909	85	8.6

*denominator for percentages includes missing

Experiences of binegativity

Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Heterosexual privilege	"I feel that I benefit from straight passing privilege"	Strongly disagree	8.5	81		
		Somewhat disagree	7.4	70		
		Neutral	6.8	65		
		Somewhat agree	29.6	281		
		Strongly agree	47.6	452		
		TOTAL			949	45
Assuming sexual identity	"I don't like it when people assume I am straight"	Strongly disagree	3.5	34		
		Somewhat disagree	8.8	87		
		Neutral	16.6	164		
		Somewhat agree	35.5	350		
		Strongly agree	35.5	350		
		TOTAL			985	9
	"I don't like it when people assume I am gay"	Strongly disagree	18.5	177		
		Somewhat disagree	24.1	231		
		Neutral	25.7	246		
		Somewhat agree	19.9	191		
		Strongly agree	11.8	113		
		TOTAL			958	36
	"I would rather people assume I am gay rather than assume I am straight"	Strongly disagree	9.8	92		

		Somewhat disagree	17.7	166		
		Neutral	30.9	289		
		Somewhat agree	23.2	217		
		Strongly agree	18.4	172		
		TOTAL		936	58	5.8
Others perceptions of sexual identity	Sexual identity misunderstood by straight men	Strongly disagree	0.9	9		
		Somewhat disagree	3.2	31		
		Neutral	7.9	76		
		Somewhat agree	35.5	341		
		Strongly agree	52.4	503		
		TOTAL		960	34	3.4
	Sexual identity misunderstood by straight women	Strongly disagree	2.2	21		
		Somewhat disagree	10.7	102		
		Neutral	16.6	158		
		Somewhat agree	45.3	431		
		Strongly agree	25.2	240		
		TOTAL		952	42	4.2
	Sexual identity misunderstood by gay men	Strongly disagree	5.9	48		
		Somewhat disagree	14.5	119		
		Neutral	33.5	275		
		Somewhat agree	29.4	241		
		Strongly agree	16.7	137		
		TOTAL		820	174	17.5
	Sexual identity misunderstood by lesbians	Strongly disagree	4.9	43		
		Somewhat disagree	15.1	133		
		Neutral	25.7	227		
		Somewhat agree	36.6	323		
		Strongly agree	17.8	157		
		TOTAL		883	111	11.2
	Sexual identity seen negatively by straight men	Strongly disagree	13.1	118		
		Somewhat disagree	29.8	269		
		Neutral	19.8	179		

		Somewhat agree	25.3	228		
		Strongly agree	12	108		
		TOTAL		902	92	9.3
	Sexual identity seen negatively by straight women	Strongly disagree	4.5	41		
		Somewhat disagree	24.5	224		
		Neutral	24.5	224		
		Somewhat agree	36.4	333		
		Strongly agree	10.2	93		
		TOTAL		915	79	7.9
	Sexual identity seen negatively by gay men	Strongly disagree	7.6	62		
		Somewhat disagree	23.6	192		
		Neutral	40.7	331		
		Somewhat agree	21.4	174		
		Strongly agree	6.6	54		
		TOTAL		813	181	18.2
	Sexual identity seen negatively by lesbians	Strongly disagree	6.1	54		
		Somewhat disagree	15.3	136		
		Neutral	24.6	218		
		Somewhat agree	38.9	345		
		Strongly agree	15	133		
		TOTAL		886	108	10.9
Sexualisation of sexual identity	"I feel more sexualised by society because of my sexual identity"	Strongly disagree	2.5	23		
		Somewhat disagree	5.8	54		
		Neutral	11.7	110		
		Somewhat agree	43.3	406		
		Strongly agree	36.8	345		
		TOTAL		938	56	5.6
	"I feel more sexualised by people I know because of my sexual identity"	Strongly disagree	11.7	108		
		Somewhat disagree	19.7	182		
		Neutral	22.4	207		
		Somewhat agree	31.5	291		
		Strongly agree	14.8	137		

		TOTAL	925	69	6.9
	"I feel more sexualised by partners because of my sexual identity"	Strongly disagree	11	101	
		Somewhat disagree	14.1	129	
		Neutral	19.3	177	
		Somewhat agree	38.4	352	
		Strongly agree	17.1	157	
		TOTAL		916	78
Family disapproval	"My family doesn't understand my sexual identity"	Strongly disagree	6.6	60	
		Somewhat disagree	11.1	100	
		Neutral	12.5	113	
		Somewhat agree	36.8	333	
		Strongly agree	33	298	
		TOTAL		904	90
	"My family doesn't accept my sexual identity"	Strongly disagree	25.3	221	
		Somewhat disagree	22.5	196	
		Neutral	17.6	154	
		Somewhat agree	20.6	180	
		Strongly agree	14	122	
		TOTAL		873	121
Homophobia	"I have experienced homophobia when with a female partner"	Yes	53.3	425	
		No	40.6	324	
		Unsure	6.1	49	
		TOTAL		798	196
Bi-negativity	"I have experienced negativity from a gay person because of my sexual identity"	Yes	48.4	414	
		No	51.6	442	
		TOTAL		856	138

*denominator for percentages includes missing

Media

Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Media portrayals	"Mainstream media sexualises women who are attracted to multiple genders"	Strongly disagree	0.9	9		
		Somewhat disagree	2.2	21		
		Neutral	5.6	5		
		Somewhat agree	35.6	339		

		Strongly agree	55.7	531		
		TOTAL		953	41	4.1
	"Not enough discussion of people attracted to multiple genders in mainstream media"	Strongly disagree	1.1	11		
		Somewhat disagree	2.9	28		
		Neutral	7.2	71		
		Somewhat agree	32.9	323		
		Strongly agree	55.9	549		
		TOTAL		982	12	1.2
Media representation	"I am happy with the amount of representation in mainstream media"	Strongly disagree	49.3	481		
		Somewhat disagree	33.9	331		
		Neutral	11.1	108		
		Somewhat agree	4.7	46		
		Strongly agree	0.9	9		
		TOTAL		975	19	1.9
	"I am happy with the way people who are attracted to multiple genders are represented in mainstream media"	Strongly disagree	42.9	416		
		Somewhat disagree	40.2	390		
		Neutral	11.3	110		
		Somewhat agree	5.2	50		
		Strongly agree	0.4	4		
		TOTAL		970	24	2.4

*denominator for percentages includes missing

Domain	Variable	Relationships			n missing data	% missing data
		Category	%*	n		
Relationships overview	Relationship status	Single	32.6	323		
		Monogamous relationship	51.6	511		
		Nonmonogamous relationship	15.8	157		
		TOTAL		991	3	0.3
	Gender of partners	Cis woman	22.1	148		
		Transgender woman	2.8	19		
		Cis man	73.6	494		
		Transgender man	1.9	13		
		Gender diverse	8.2	55		
		Takatāpui	0.2	1		
	TOTAL		671	4	0.4	

	"Have you ever been married?"	No	74.4	737		
		Yes (currently)	18.3	181		
		Yes (divorced)	7	69		
		Yes (widowed)	0.3	3		
		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
	"Do you have children"	Yes	25.6	253		
		No	74.4	737		
		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
Past partners	Past partners genders	Cis woman	65.6	652		
		Transgender woman	7.4	74		
		Cis man	89.8	893		
		Transgender man	8.3	82		
		Gender diverse	24.2	241		
		Takatāpui	0.1	1		
		TOTAL		994	0	0
	Past women/non-binary partners' sexual identity	Straight	21.8	161		
		Gay	58.1	430		
		Bisexual	59.7	442		
		Pansexual	21.9	162		
		Queer	29.1	215		
		Asexual	6	44		
		Takatāpui	0.1	1		
		Questioning	1.2	9		
		Not Straight	0.1	1		
		No Label	0.7	5		
		Fluid	0.1	1		
		TOTAL		740	**	**
	Past men partners' sexual identity	Straight	95.9	883		
		Gay	1.6	15		
		Bisexual	33.9	312		
		Pansexual	7.4	68		
		Queer	7.9	73		
		Asexual	2.7	25		
		Other (not specified)	2.2	20		
		TOTAL		921	**	**
Non-monogamy	"I have been in a non-monogamous relationship"	Yes	40.7	404		
		No	59.3	588		
		TOTAL		992	2	0.2
	"I prefer non-monogamous relationships"	Strongly disagree	14.5	56		
		Somewhat disagree	14.5	56		
		Neutral	24	93		
		Somewhat agree	23.3	90		
		Strongly agree	23.8	92		
		TOTAL		387	19	1.9
		Prefer men	22	181		

Relationship preferences	Gender preference of relationship partners	Prefer women	26.6	219		
		Prefer genderfluid/nonbinary people	3.3	27		
		No preference	48.2	397		
		TOTAL		824	170	17.1
		<hr/>				
	"Do you have a preference for dating people the same sexual identity as yourself?"	Yes	7.3	66		
		No but need to be LGBTQ+	24.3	219		
		I prefer people who aren't the same	1.6	14		
		I prefer straight people	1.4	13		
		No preference	65.4	591		
		TOTAL		903	91	9.2
		<hr/>				
	"The gender of partner is important when deciding to be in a relationship"	Strongly disagree	37.7	364		
		Somewhat disagree	20.9	202		
		Neutral	16.2	156		
		Somewhat agree	18.7	180		
		Strongly agree	6.5	63		
		TOTAL		965	29	2.9
		<hr/>				
Binegativity in relationships	"I have broken up with someone because of how they viewed my sexual identity"	Yes	16.1	141		
		No	79.8	701		
		Unsure	4.1	36		
		TOTAL		878	116	11.7
<hr/>						
Sexual identity invisibility	"My sexual identity is less visible when in a relationship with a man"	Strongly disagree	0.4	3		
		Somewhat disagree	1.8	15		
		Neutral	2.6	22		
		Somewhat agree	20.1	171		
		Strongly agree	75.2	639		
		TOTAL		850	53	5.9
<hr/>						
	"My sexual identity is less visible when in a relationship with a woman/gender neutral person"	Strongly disagree	24.3	126		
		Somewhat disagree	28.8	149		
		Neutral	15.3	79		
		Somewhat agree	21.6	112		
		Strongly agree	10	52		
		TOTAL		518	184	26.2
<hr/>						
	"My sexual identity is less visible when in a polyamorous relationship"	Strongly disagree	25.2	79		
		Somewhat disagree	37.7	118		
		Neutral	24.6	77		
		Somewhat agree	8.6	27		
		Strongly agree	3.8	12		
		TOTAL		313	91	22.5
<hr/>						
Online dating	Yes	61.9	613			

"I have used online dating"	No	37.1	368		
	Unsure	1	10		
	TOTAL		991	3	0.3
Main us of online dating	Sex with women/non-binary people	6.5	44		
	Sex with men	4.9	33		
	Sex with people of any gender	13	88		
	Women/non-binary people to date	20.5	139		
	Men to date	6.9	47		
	Dating with people of any gender	36.6	248		
	Friends	8.1	55		
	Other (not specified)	3.1	21		
	TOTAL		678	316	31.8
"Online dating is a good way to find dating or sex partners"	Strongly disagree	10	58		
	Somewhat disagree	18.7	109		
	Neutral	15.1	88		
	Somewhat agree	41.9	244		
	Strongly agree	14.3	83		
TOTAL		582	31	5.1	
"Online dating is the easiest way to find men to date"	Strongly disagree	18.1	100		
	Somewhat disagree	19.7	109		
	Neutral	14.1	78		
	Somewhat agree	31.8	176		
	Strongly agree	16.4	91		
TOTAL		554	59	9.6	
"Online dating is the easiest way to find women or gender-neutral people to date"	Strongly disagree	11.6	64		
	Somewhat disagree	20.5	113		
	Neutral	13.2	73		
	Somewhat agree	37.7	208		
	Strongly agree	17	94		
TOTAL		552	61	10	

*denominator for percentages includes missing ** missing data statistics was unavailable for this question

Domain	Variable	Category	Sex		n missing data	% missing data
			%*	n		
Sex experiences overview	Experienced consensual sex	Yes	93.1	924		
		No	6.9	68		
		TOTAL		992	2	0.2
Gender of first sex partner		Cis woman	16.7	154		
		Transgender woman	0.3	3		

		Cis man	81	746		
		Transgender man	0.5	5		
		Genderqueer/genderfluid	1.2	11		
		Other	0.2	2		
		TOTAL		921	5	0.5
<hr/>						
	Gender of all sexual partners	Cis women	74.8	690		
		Transgender women	8.3	77		
		Cis men	90.7	837		
		Transgender men	7.7	71		
		Other/Gender diverse	14.7	136		
		TOTAL		923	**	**
<hr/>						
Casual sex	Had casual sex	Yes	77.5	768		
		No	22.5	223		
		TOTAL		991	3	0.3
<hr/>						
	Gender of casual sex partners	Cis women	65.2	500		
		Transgender women	4.4	34		
		Cis men	94	721		
		Transgender men	4	31		
		Other (unspecified)	2	15		
		NB	3	23		
		Unsure	0.1	1		
		TOTAL		767	**	**
<hr/>						
	Reasons for having casual sex	Wanted to have sex	89.6	688		
		Drunk/high	55.1	423		
		Feeling sad or lonely	40.1	308		
		Wanted to get back at someone	10.6	81		
		Wanted to test sexuality	27.9	214		
		Friends were doing it	9.6	74		
		Didn't know it was going to be one off	27.7	213		
		Wanted to feel desired	0.8	6		
		Swinging	0.3	2		
		Enjoyment	1.3	10		
		Pressured	0.9	7		
		Prefer casual sex to relationships	0.3	2		
		Partner wanted to	0.5	4		
		Exchange of services	1.6	12		

		Mental health	0.3	2		
		To lose virginity	0.4	3		
		Liked the person	0.8	6		
		Friendship	0.3	2		
		TOTAL		768	**	**
Sexual health	Discussing sexual health issues with new partner	Every time	35.3	312		
		Only with men	5.2	46		
		Only with women	0.5	4		
		Sometimes	44.1	390		
		No	15	113		
		TOTAL		885	109	11
	Use of safe sex method when having oral sex with a female	Yes	6.8	48		
		No	92.5	654		
		Unsure	0.7	5		
		TOTAL		707	287	28.9
	"How often do you use safe sex methods when having oral sex with a female"	Only once	18	9		
		Occasionally	34	17		
		Sometimes	26	13		
		Regularly	12	6		
		Always	10	5		
		TOTAL		50	7	0.7
	Use of safe sex method when having oral sex with a male	Yes	43.2	374		
		No	56.1	486		
		Unsure	0.7	6		
		TOTAL		866	128	12.9
	"How often do you use safe sex methods when having oral sex with a male"	Only once	20.9	79		
		Occasionally	29.6	112		
		Sometimes	22.2	84		
		Regularly	15.1	57		
		Always	12.2	46		
		TOTAL		378	9	0.9
	"It is important to be conscious of STIs when having sex with a female"	Strongly disagree	0	0		
		Somewhat disagree	3	29		
		Neutral	4.8	46		
		Somewhat agree	29.6	282		
		Strongly agree	62.6	597		
		TOTAL		954	40	4

"It is important to be conscious of STIs when having sex with a female"		Strongly disagree	0.1	1		
		Somewhat disagree	0.1	1		
		Neutral	0.8	8		
		Somewhat agree	8.4	83		
		Strongly agree	90.6	893		
		TOTAL		986	8	
Sex Education	Where they learnt about having sex with females	Talking to friends	45.4	448		
		Talking to family	4.2	41		
		School sex ed	6.9	68		
		Porn	46.7	461		
		TV/films	45.7	451		
		Books/fanfiction	56.3	556		
		Informational articles	41.4	409		
		Informational videos	16.2	160		
		By having sex	64.1	633		
		Don't know how to	4.9	48		
		Women's magazines	0.2	2		
		Don't remember	0.3	3		
		Talking to other women	0.6	6		
		Self-pleasure	0.6	6		
		Internet blogs/sites	1.1	11		
		Educational Workshop	0.2	2		
		Sex work	0.1	1		
		TOTAL		987	7	
Where they learnt about having sex with males		Talking to friends	72	711		
		Talking to family	31.9	315		
		School sex ed	72.8	719		
		Porn	48.6	480		
		TV/films	66.3	655		
		Books/fanfiction	61.7	610		
		Informational articles	34.8	344		
		Informational videos	15.6	154		
		By having sex	78.2	773		
		Don't know how to	1.7	17		
		Women's magazines	0.7	7		
		Textbook	0.1	1		
		Entrenched in culture	0.2	2		

Don't remember	0.2	2		
Child/sexual abuse	0.4	4		
TOTAL		988	6	0.6

*denominator for percentages includes missing ** missing data statistics was unavailable for this question

Sexual Assault

Domain	Variable	Category	%*	n	n missing data	% missing data
Sexual assault	Been sexually assaulted	Yes	60.2	596		
		No	31.9	316		
		Unsure	7.9	78		
		TOTAL		990	4	0.4
	Gender of assailant	Man	97.3	643		
		Woman	10.2	67		
		Unknown	0.9	6		
		TOTAL		660	**	**
	"Have you engaged in sexual practices that you did not want to"	Yes	69.2	677		
		No	25.2	247		
		Unsure	5.6	55		
		TOTAL		979	15	1.5
	Pressured into sex by a man	Yes	70.7	693		
		No	25.6	251		
		Unsure	3.7	36		
		TOTAL		980	14	1.4
	Pressured into sex by a woman	Yes	14	137		
		No	84.2	825		
		Unsure	1.8	18		
		TOTAL		980	14	1.4

*denominator for percentages includes missing ** missing data statistics was unavailable for this question