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# Journal of Research in Gender Studies

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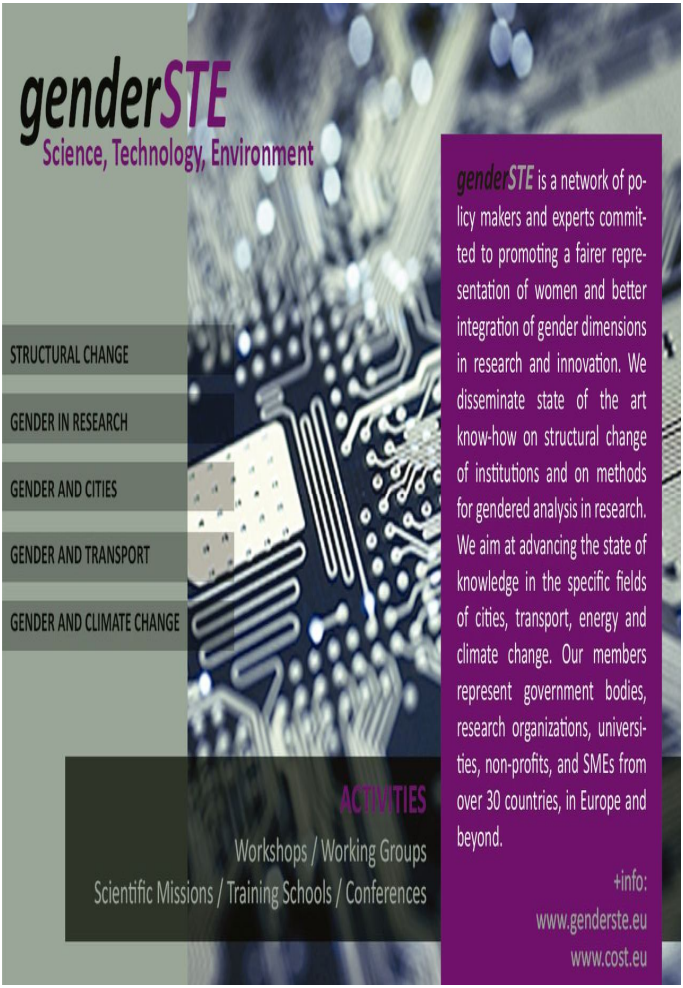
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# Brazilian and Portuguese Writers: Writing, Ideology, Gender

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Interinstitutional Research Project
Federal University of Ceará / New University of Lisbon

**Abstract:**

This research aims to investigate certain literary projects as resulting from tensions and conflicts portrayed in the works of Brazilian and Portuguese female writers, in light of pressures and choices dictated by the literary and artistic tradition, whose tracks lead us to the grand themes of the human condition.

Within an environment of coexistence between literature and writing, a few female writers began the production of their body of fiction work, among them the Portuguese Agustina Bessa-Luís (1922 -) and Maria Judite de Carvalho (1921-1998), as well as the Brazilian Clarice Lispector (1920-1977) and Rachel de Queiroz (1910-2003), by means of intense discussions with their "fellow travelers", books, other poets, creators of fiction, essayists, philosophers and critics, in the words of Goethe.

Through the different types of text they cultivate, these writers present curious and challenging discussions that run through a poetics of the female condition and a reflection of complex nature (Edgar Morin), towards a dialogue of ideas and postures regarding fundamental values of life in the twentieth century, and which are still considered in the current century.

For such a study of comparative nature – involving readings, experiences and relations of alterity and gender highlighted by the aforementioned writers -, we shall rely on the essential contributions provided by categories that will guide the research, such as *crisis* (Gilberto de Mello Kujawski), *literary system* (António Cândido), *comparatism* (Tânia Carvalhal, Sandra Nitrini), *context* (Dominique Maingueneau), *literary field* (Pierre Boudieu), *reading* (Paulo Freire), *unreading* (Harold Bloom), *existence* (Ortega y Gasset), *writing* (Roland Barthes), and *contemporaneity and liquidity* (Zygmunt Bauman).

In effect, this research rests upon a double purpose: first, to listen to the poetics of the corpus writers, through speeches and situations dramatized by their fictional characters or by virtue of

other forms of expression, such as those found in writing spacesgenerated from interviews, letters, confessions, etc., therefore imbued with an hermeneutical imprint.

Tied to the first one, the second purpose, didactic in its nature, is to stimulate a learning-educational discussion around some of the possible meanings of rediscovering life and ways of being in the world through literary reading, taking as principle ideas and projects belonging to the personal library spaces of writers, such as in-between places (Homi Bhabha, Silviano Santiago), places of intervallic dimension (João Alexandre Barbosa), symbolic places (readings) wherein the human condition is inscribed and recreated, as well as representations of social, political and ideological pressures concerning achievements and defeats of women in western world societies, from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century.

The writers quoted in this project have been studied according to the aforesaid purposes, both through classes, essays and articles and through lectures and conferences, and also within the activities developed by the Study Group.

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**The Spanish Society for Women's History (Asociación Española de Investigación de Historia de las Mujeres-AEIHM)** was founded in June 1991 as a development of the National Commission of the IFRWH (International Federation for Research in Women's History), federation of which it is now a member. For over twenty years, it has developed many activities in order to promote research, teaching and dissemination of women's and gender history, as well as the theoretical and methodological renewal of the historical discipline, through conferences and seminars, workshops, publications, awards, dissemination of its own and others' activities through website and mailing list and participation in collective actions. It has currently 300 members.

Its aims are to promote and spread women's and gender history through research, teaching at different academic levels, and outreaching to society at large. On an annual basis, and continuously since 1993, AEIHM has been held international conferences and seminars for discussion between national and foreign specialists in women's and gender history.

The last ones held are: Salamanca (2012): *XVI International Symposium AEIHM*. "Eating the Forbidden Fruit: Women, Science and Creation through History;" Madrid (2011): *IV International Seminar AEIHM*. "Foucault's Influences in Historiography. Powers, Bodies and Desires;" and Bilbao (2010): *XV International Symposium AEIHM*. "Women and History. Dialogues between Spain and Latin America."

To these regular meetings it should be added the co-organization of: Gender and Postcolonial Studies in Question (s). III European Meeting (Barcelona, June 2012), in collaboration with: Fédération de Recherche sur le Genre (RING), Institut Interuniversitati d'Estudis de Dones i Gènere; Grup de Recerca Consolidat Multiculturalisme i Gènere (Universitat de Barcelona).

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# GENDER ROLE BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD ABORTION: A CROSS-NATIONAL EXPLORATION[1]

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ABSTRACT. In this exploratory study of mass opinion, the following question is addressed: Given the importance of gender role attitudes in elite-level discourse on abortion, why is the relationship between gender role egalitarianism and support for abortion so weak at the level of mass opinion. This relationship seems to be suppressed by two considerations: First, a lack of cognitive sophistication among some respondents makes the connection between gender role attitudes and abortion somewhat complex. Second, mass publics may experience cross-pressures, such as differences in labor force participation and religiosity, that mitigate against a simple connection between gender role egalitarianism and reproductive freedom (or vice versa). Limited support is found for both hypotheses. Data are taken from the 1999–2007 World Values Surveys.

Keywords: gender; role; belief; attitude; abortion; mass opinion

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The abortion controversy stands as one of the most contentious issues of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The question of whether, or under what circumstances, a woman should be permitted to terminate a pregnancy intentionally constitutes what Staggenborg (1994) has characterized as a "condensational symbol." The issue of abortion is controversial in a number of national and international settings, and entails considerations of the sanctity of human life, sexual morality, and the appropriate political role of religion, among others.

At the level of elite discourse, one important aspect of the abortion issue is the effect that reproductive freedom (or its absence) has on gender equality.

Proponents of legal abortion often argue that control over one's fertility is essential for full gender equality (see, for example, Luker, 1985; McDonagh, 1996, Feree, 2003; Colker, 1989). By contrast, limits on the availability of abortion are considered important in order to maintain the status and importance of traditional gender based divisions of labor (Luker, 1985). However, a number of empirical studies of public opinion have shown that attitudes toward egalitarian or traditional gender roles are weak, inconsistent, or insignificant predictors of abortion attitudes (Cook et al., 1992; Jelen, 2014; Lynxwiler and Gay, 1996; Stricker and Danigelis, 2002; Bolzendahl and Mays, 2004).

This set of findings is important, because there is ample reason to believe that public opinion on abortion may have an effect on public policy. Abortion is an "easy" issue (Carmines and Stimson, 1980) on which mass publics are likely to have coherent opinions (Converse and Markus, 1979). Indeed, Killian and Wilcox (2008) have shown that abortion is among those rare issues which, in the United States, can alter individual partisanship. Rossi and Triunto (2012) have shown that public opinion in Uruguay was related to the liberalization of that country's abortion laws, while Jelen and Bradley (2014) have shown that gender role attitudes tend to be weak predictors of abortion attitudes in nations whose abortion laws are highly restrictive.

The purpose of this exploratory analysis is to investigate the sources of this disjunction between elite-level discourse and mass opinion. Why should a central element of the discourse of scholars, journalists, and political activists appear to have such a peripheral impact on the attitudes of ordinary citizens?

This study will address two general hypotheses:

*$H_1$: The relationships between gender role attitudes and attitudes toward abortion will be reduced by a lack of cognitive sophistication on the part of some respondents.*

It has long been known (Converse, 1964; Zaller, 1992) that political affairs generally are less salient to ordinary citizens than to political elites, and that the level of factual knowledge, consistency, and sophistication exhibited by mass publics varies enormously. Put simply, the cognitive connection between gender role attitudes and support for or opposition to legal abortion may simply not be apparent to many people to whom the issue does not seem particularly important.

A second hypothesis suggests that the effect of gender attitudes on abortion opinion may be contingent on other considerations:

*$H_2$: The relationships between gender role attitudes and attitudes toward abortion will be reduced by respondent characteristics which produce cognitive cross-pressures.*

That is, even among respondents who see the relevance of access to abortion to female equality, support for legal abortion among gender role egalitarians may be mitigated or superseded by other variables. For example, Luker (1985) has shown that, among women who engage in overt political activity on the abortion issue, there is an important difference between full-time homemakers and women who participate in the paid labor force. Thus, a housewife who values gender equality may come to oppose abortion because of the status she attaches to her occupation. Similarly, many studies (see Jelen et al., 1994) have shown that, in the aggregate, women are more religious than men. Since religiosity is a well-known predictor of abortion attitudes (Adamczyk, 2013), personal religiosity may reduce the influence of attitudes toward the appropriate social roles of women on attitudes toward abortion.

The approach taken in this study is one of large-N, cross national comparison. This is not to suggest that variations in diverse national politics settings cannot, or do not, have an effect on either abortion attitudes or abortion policy. Indeed, in earlier work, I have shown that variations in abortion attitudes (including variations in the relationships between gender role attitudes and beliefs about abortion) are empirically related to national differences in abortion policy. Specifically, in settings in which gender role attitudes are not significantly related to abortion attitudes (Poland and El Salvador) abortion policy is substantially more restrictive than in nations in which these two sets of attitudes are empirically related (Mexico, Uruguay, and the Czech Republic; see Jelen and Bradley, 2014). However, even in countries in which abortion policies are relatively permissive, and in which abortion and gender role attitudes are significantly related (such as the Czech Republic and Uruguay), the effects of gender role attitudes on attitudes toward abortion is considerably weaker than the effects of other such variables, such as attitudes toward sexual morality or euthanasia. Moreover, the relationships between abortion attitudes and these attitudinal predictors are remarkably stable across religious traditions, and the effects of gender role attitudes are substantially weaker (Jelen, 2014). The main differences among abortion attitudes across diverse religious traditions appear to be based on different marginal distributions of predictor variables, and not on the relationships between abortion attitudes and beliefs about sexual morality, gender role traditionalism, or the sanctity of human life.

## Data and Method

Data for this study were taken from the World Values Study for 1999–2007.[2] The dependent variable is a 10 point scale, in which respondents are asked to place themselves on a continuum, on which 1 represents a belief that abortion is "never justified," and 10 indicates a stance in which abortion is

"always justified." This is a scale, on which respondents are ask to place themselves. No cues as to the meaning of intermediate responses were provided.

The most important independent variables are measures of gender role attitudes. To my knowledge, there is no consensus on the correct measurement of attitudes toward appropriate gender roles (or, more colloquially, "feminism"). The analyses presented here are based on four Likert items from the WVS:

*Spouse Income*: Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income (coding reversed).

*Working Mother*: A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work (coding reversed).

*University Gender*: A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl.

*Men Better Leaders*: On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.

These items would seem to exhibit a certain face validity, and all are coded so that low values indicate more "traditionalist" responses.

A factor analysis of these items reveals a two-factor solution, in which the "spouse income" and working mother" items load most heavily on one factor, and the "university gender" and "men better leaders" items have the strongest loading on the second factor. This two-factor solution is quite robust, and emerges when separate analyses are estimated for Roman Catholics Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and adherents of Eastern Orthodoxy (see Jelen, 2014).

**Table 1** Factor Analysis of Gender Role Attitude Items (Varimax Rotation)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Spouse Income | .425 | .679 |
| Working Mother | .492 | .600 |
| University Gender | .745 | -.375 |
| Men Better Leaders | .733 | -.415 |
| Eigenvalue | 1.515 | 1.134 |

*Spouse Income*: Both the husband and wife should contribute to household income (coding reversed).
*Working Mother*: A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work. (coding reversed)
*University Gender*: A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl.
*Men Better Leaders*: On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do.
All items are Likert scales

Source: World Values Survey, 1999–2007.

Based on these results, two indices of gender role attitudes were computed: A measure of attitudes toward "public" gender roles was measured by taking the mean of the "university gender" and "men better leaders" items (gamma = .507), while a measure of "private" gender role attitudes was computed by calculating the mean of the "working mother" and "spouse income" Likert items (gamma = .332). On their face, these two measures would seem to tap aspects of expectations of appropriate gender roles in the public spheres of business and industry, and comparable expectations about the optimal role of females in family settings, respectively. For purposes of comparison, a combined gender role index was based on the mean of all four items (Cronbach's alpha = .448).

While these indices would seem to have a certain face validity, these results indicate that the four gender role items exhibit limited construct validity. Whether the four gender role items included in the WVS are considered as a unidimensional scale, or as two relatively independent measures, the items are empirically related, but do not form particular neat scales. These somewhat messy results may indicate poor measurement quality from a methodological standpoint, or, more substantively, may reflect weakly organized mass attitudes.

As hypothesized, the analysis includes two sets of conditional variables, which may affect the relationships between measures of attitudes toward appropriate gender roles and abortion. One set of such variables deals with the level of cognitive sophistication or crystallization of gender role attitudes. For some respondents, gender role expectations may be highly salient and central to individual belief systems, while others might regard such matters as highly peripheral to their more immediate concerns (Zaller, 1992). The first of these is the simply the respondent's level of formal education. The second is a measure of constraint among the four gender role items, which is calculated by computing the standard deviation of these items, after recoding each Likert scale to a common direction. The sample is divided into thirds, with "high constraint" respondents coded as those in the lowest third of the distribution of the standard deviation variable, "medium" respondents as those in the middle third of the distribution, and "low" constraint respondents defined as respondents in the upper third of the standard deviation scale.

The second hypothesis posits the possibility of psychological cross-pressures as inhibitors of cognitive connections between attitudes about gender roles and abortion. Although it is possible to conceive of an indefinite number of such variables, two are considered here: Personal religiosity (operationalized as frequency of private prayer)[3] and female labor force participation. The latter variable is operationalized by a dummy variable, in which respondents can self-identify as "housewives." Self-identified home-

makers are contrasted with respondents who participate in the paid labor force (either full or part time) or are retired. Several analysts have suggested that there are important differences between homemakers and women who are part of the paid labor force (see especially Cook et al., 1992; Luker, 1985).

For purposes of comparison, the effects of attitudes toward sexual morality and the sanctity of human life are also considered. The sexual morality measure is the mean of two 10 point scales (1 = never justified; 10 = always justified) for homosexuality and prostitution (gamma = .738).[4] The assumption here is that these items tap a more general attitude toward sexual activity outside of marriage (Jelen and Bradley, 2014; Jelen, 2014; Cook et al., 1992; Tuman et al., 2014). "Respect for life" is operationalized as attitudes toward euthanasia, again measured on a 10 point scale. While this measure is controversial, some analysts have argued that attitude toward euthanasis represents a more general respect for the sanctity of human life (see especially Cook et al., 1992; Jelen and Bradley, 2014; Bolzendahl and Mays, 2004).

## Results

To what extent are attitudes toward appropriate gender roles related to mass attitudes on abortion? A preliminary set of findings is presented in Table 2, which simply reports the zero-order product moment correlations between responses to the abortion scale and other predictor variables.

**Table 2** Bivariate Correlations of Selected Variables with Abortion Attitudes

| | Abortion scale |
|---|---|
| Sexual Morality Index | .623*** |
| Euthanasia justified | .550*** |
| Men Better Leaders | .214*** |
| University Gender | .150** |
| Public gender roles index[a] | .211*** |
| Working Mother | .095*** |
| Spouse Income | .008* |
| Private gender roles index[b] | .068*** |
| Combined gender roles index[c] | .194*** |

[a] Mean value of Men Better Leaders and University Gender items: Gamma = .507
[b] Mean value of Working Mother and Spouse income items: Gamma = .332
[c] Mean value of all four gender role items: Alpha = .448

*significant at .05
**significant at .01
***significant at .001
Source: World Values Survey, 1999–2007.

Of primary interest are the correlations between the gender role attitudes and the abortion scale. This table contains all three gender role indices, as well as the individual items which comprise the gender role scales. As these data show, all measures of gender role attitudes are statistically significant, and have the expected sign. Given the large N in the WVS, the level of statistical significance is not surprising. Perhaps surprisingly (at least to me), the "public" gender role scale, and its component Likert items, are slightly stronger predictors of abortion opinion than are the corresponding "private" gender role scale and the items on which this scale is based.

Consistent with the results of studies of opinion in the United States, the relationships between these variables and abortion attitudes are, at best, of moderate magnitude. To provide a sense of the relatively low magnitude of these relationships, all of the correlations between measures of gender role attitudes and abortion attitudes are much weaker than the relationships between the abortion scale and the measures of sexual morality attitudes and attitudes toward euthanasia. The pattern of these relationships is not altered appreciably when multivariate models of abortion attitudes are included (Tuman et al., 2014; Jelen and Bradley, 2014; Jelen, 2014).

$H_1$ suggests that these weak relationships may be attributable to a lack of cognitive sophistication on the part of some respondents. That is, it is possible (indeed likely) that many respondents simply do not perceive a connection between egalitarian attitudes about the appropriate political, economic, or familial roles of women and support for legal abortion. This possibility is addressed in Table 3, which contains separate correlations between public and private gender role scales and the abortion measure for differing levels of attitudinal consistency across the individual gender role items.[5] Following Converse (1964), high levels of attitudinal consistency are considered evidence of relatively high levels of belief sophistication.

**Table 3** Correlation of Public and Private Gender Role Indices with Abortion Scale, by Gender Role Constraint

| | *High constraint* | *Medium Constraint* | *Low Constraint* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public gender roles | .205*** | .174*** | .136*** |
| Private gender roles | .128*** | .121** | -.002 |

**significant at .01
***significant at .001

Source: World Values Survey, 1999–2007.

The results presented in Table 3 suggest that $H_1$ is confirmed, but to a very limited extent. Both the public and private gender role scales exhibit stronger correlations for respondents with higher levels of constraint. However, both

the absolute magnitudes of the relationships, as well as the differences between respondents at differing levels of attitudinal consistency, are quite small. Substantively, this pattern suggests that, even among many respondents who are consistent gender role "egalitarians" or "traditionalists," the cognitive connection between gender role attitudes and beliefs about the acceptability of legal abortion are elusive.

The effects of education as an alternative measure of sophistication, and those associated with possible sources of cross-pressures, are considered in Table 4. $H_2$ suggests that respondents with egalitarian gender role attitudes may hold relatively restrictive attitudes about abortion, due to the effects of cross-pressures, such as economic status or religiosity, and this hypothesis is addressed in Table 4.

This table presents the results of three Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models. The first simply contains estimates of the effects of the private and public gender role scales on abortion attitudes. The second is a traditional OLS model, in which the effects of education, homemaker status, and religiosity are "controlled," while the third contains interaction terms between the gender role scales and each exogenous variable. All three models contain controls for respondent religious affiliation.[6] The standardized regression coefficients (beta) are also included, in order to provide a clearer sense of the (limited) magnitude of the relationships involved.

**Table 4** Regression Models of Abortion Attitudes (OLS)

| | *Model 1* | | *Model 2* | | *Model 3* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | b | beta | b | beta | b | beta |
| Private | .085*** | .022 | .095*** | .024 | -.001 | -.003 |
| Public | .399*** | .131 | .252*** | .082 | -.192* | -.063 |
| Homemaker | --- | --- | .174*** | .028 | -.381* | -.061 |
| Homemaker* private | --- | --- | --- | --- | .151** | .102 |
| Homemaker*public | --- | --- | --- | --- | .085 | .029 |
| Education | --- | --- | .129*** | .118 | .182*** | .157 |
| Education*private | --- | --- | --- | --- | -.047 | -.148 |
| Education*public | --- | --- | --- | --- | .034 | .106 |
| Prayer | --- | --- | .250*** | .208 | -.035 | -.046 |
| Prayer*private | --- | --- | --- | --- | .012 | .034 |
| Prayer*public | --- | --- | --- | --- | .093*** | .247 |
| E. Orthodox | .848*** | .076 | .717*** | .080 | .742*** | .081 |
| Hindu | -.146 | -.009 | .061 | .004 | .060 | .004 |
| Protestant | -.335*** | -.044 | -.348*** | -.046 | -.340*** | -.045 |
| Buddhist | .573*** | .035 | .250** | .016 | .281** | .018 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Muslim | -1.063*** | -.191 | -.602*** | -.100 | -.663*** | -.105 |
| Constant | 1.759*** | | .374*** | | 1.894*** | |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | .082 | | .126 | | .172 | |
| N | 61175 | | 30047 | | 30047 | |

**significant at .01
**significant at .001

Source: World Values Survey, 1999–2007.

Not surprisingly, Model 1 simply reiterates the results of the bivariate analyses reported earlier. Both gender role scales are significantly, if weakly, related to abortion attitudes, and again, counterintuitively, the "public" index is a stronger predictor of abortion attitudes than is the private gender role scale. Model 2 shows that these patterns are essentially unchanged by controlling for homemaker status, education, and religiosity, although the magnitude of the coefficient associated with attitudes toward public gender roles is reduced somewhat by the imposition of multivariate controls.

By contrast, the inclusion of interactive terms, as presented in Model 3, has a substantial effect on the estimates of the consequences of gender role attitudes on responses to the abortion scale. The estimation of these more complex models reduces the effect of the private gender role index to statistical insignificance. Further, while the effects of the public index are significant, the sign of the coefficient is reversed. While it is difficult to offer a substantive explanation for this result, the standardized coefficient suggests that this relationship is quite weak.

The effects of education on abortion attitudes are simply additive, and are increased somewhat by the inclusion of the interactive terms in Model 3. That is, more educated respondents are more likely to regard abortion as justified than their less educated counterparts, and this relationship does not appear to mediate the effects of either gender role index.

By contrast, the effects of the interaction term between homemaker status and the private gender roles index are statistically significant. While the effects of the simple homemaker variable are significant in Model 3, the sign is reversed, although, again, the magnitude of this relationship is quite weak. Finally, the effects of religiosity appear to enhance the effects of the public gender roles index on attitudes toward abortion. These results offer some limited support for $H_2$, although the effects of cross-pressures are (again) quite moderate and complex. Gender role attitudes appear to be at least potentially multidimensional, and alternative dimensions of gender role egalitarianism/traditionalism are affected by different cross-pressures.[7]

## Discussion

This study is motivated by a deceptively simple puzzle, namely, why is the empirical connection between attitudes toward appropriate gender roles and approval or disapproval of abortion so weak at the level of mass opinion, when the connection between these two values seems so compelling in elite-level discourse? The results of this study have perhaps contributed to a partial resolution of this problem.

Readers who value parsimony in explanations of social or political phenomena will be disappointed by the results of this study. The study is based on two hypotheses, relating the weak relationships which pose the problem to two general sources: A lack of cognitive sophistication, and the existence of cross-pressures. Both general hypotheses, and the more specific tests based on these expectations, have received limited support. The relationship between gender role attitudes and beliefs about abortion are (slightly) stronger for respondents who exhibit relatively high levels of internal attitudinal consistency, and more education respondents are significantly (albeit moderately) more likely to report "pro-choice" perspectives on abortion. Similarly, the effects of egalitarian gender role attitudes are limited among female respondents who do not participate in the paid labor force, and among highly religious persons. Support for the latter hypothesis is limited by the fact that different cross-pressures interact with different aspects of gender role attitudes.

Of course, this research is quite preliminary and exploratory. The measures of cognitive sophistication are fairly imprecise, and there are clearly many more variables which could reinforce the effects of egalitarian gender role attitudes (or limit the effects of such attitudes). Nevertheless, the results presented here suggest that there may not exist a simple, parsimonious explanation for the weak relationship between attitudes toward abortion and beliefs about the appropriate public and private roles of women. Identifying respondents for whom abortion is indeed a "woman's issue" involving gender equality may involve specifying a number of different variables on which the relationship between abortion and conceptions of women's proper social roles is contingent. "Itemizing the deductions" is a tedious, and perhaps unsatisfying task, but one which may be necessary to understand the elusive limitations of this aspect of the abortion controversy.

## NOTES

1. A version of this paper was presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society for Political Psychology, Rome, Italy, July 7, 2014.

2. Waves 4 and 5.

3. Elsewhere (Jelen, 2014) I have shown that frequency of prayer is generally a stronger predictor of abortion attitudes across diverse religious traditions than either frequency of attendance at religious services or subjective religiosity.

4. In separate analyses of different religious tradition, the gamma coefficient between these two variables ranges from .893 for Muslims to .610 for Roman Catholic respondents.

5. I am indebted to David Sears for this suggestion.

6. Roman Catholicism, as the tradition at the aggregate median of abortion attitudes, is the comparison category.

7. The effects of education seem somewhat sensitive to variations in model specification. By contrast, the models relating interactions between gender role attitudes, religiosity, and homemaker status are quite robust, and are quite similar whether the effects of different sets of independent variables (including interactions) are considered separately or in conjunction with one another.

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# SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND POVERTY IN THE UK: A REVIEW AND TOP-LINE FINDINGS FROM THE UK HOUSEHOLD LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT. Is there a link between sexuality and poverty in the UK? If so, has this relationship changed over time? This review synthesizes British and international literature while adding top-line findings from the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) to address these questions. It focuses not only on aggregate poverty rates but also on poverty drivers related to household structure, homelessness, health, education, employment and household wealth. The literature and top-line data analyses reveal gay and bisexual men experience greater material disadvantage compared heterosexual men while bisexual women experience greater material disadvantage compared to heterosexual women. Though the international literature sometimes finds material disadvantage for lesbians, the UKHLS data reveal little evidence that lesbians are materially disadvantaged relative to heterosexual women, although any British lesbian material disadvantage may be related to their status as women rather than their sexuality.

Keywords: sexual orientation; poverty; education; aging and retirement; health inequality; earnings inequality; UK Household Longitudinal Study

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## Introduction

For decades the British equalities agenda has focused on redressing gender, race and ethnic inequalities, leading to a large and influential body of academic and policy relevant research. Recently, researchers have begun to critically examine the social and economic impacts of age, disability and

religious beliefs. However, despite sexual orientation being included in all major UK equalities legislation since 2001, policy-relevant quantitative analyses of inequalities due to sexual orientation remain relatively scarce (Allen and Demo 1995; Aspinal and Minton 2008; Betts 2008; Mitchell, Howarth, Kotecha, and Creegan 2009). A cursory glance at the literature reveals very little work on sexuality and poverty in the UK. Poverty occurs when a person's material resources are not sufficient to meet minimum needs, including social participation. Poverty is an inability to make choices and experience opportunities, in violation of human dignity. It means a lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society (Gordon 2005). So, what evidence is there of a link between specific sexual orientations and poverty in the UK? If there is a link in Britain, how and why has this changed over time? This review addresses these questions.

Poverty, or material disadvantage, faced by sexual minorities is likely to be a function of stigma, harassment and discrimination related to sexuality (Arend 2005; Badgett 2001). Heteronormativity is a cultural regime preferencing heterosexual relationships and sexuality over all other forms of sexual expression (Plummer 2001). Homophobia is a negative or fearful attitude about homosexuals or homosexuality, while bi-phobia and trans-phobia refer to similarly negative views (Ayala, Bingham, Kim, Wheeler, and Millett 2012; Gibbs 1997). Attitudinal research finds acceptance of sexual minorities in the UK is increasing. In 1987, 75 percent of people thought homosexuality was always or mostly wrong, while by 2008 only 32 percent held this position (Cowan 2007; Ward and Carvel 2008). This remarkable shift in public attitudes implies strong generational differences in lived experience among lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) communities. However it is not clear whether subjective experiences and material conditions have improved at all.

The present review collates existing literature concerning sexuality and poverty. Described are the ways sexuality may influence processes linked to poverty around health, education, housing and employment. This review also presents statistics concerning income based relative poverty and sexuality from the UK Household Longitudinal Study: *Understanding Society* (UKHLS), a nationally representative panel survey of 40,000 households begun in 2009 (University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research, and National Centre for Social Research 2012). This is perhaps the only UK population study with sufficient numbers of LGB people to conduct robust statistical poverty analyses with relevant comparison groups.

The 2011–12 wave of the UKHLS obtained a measure of respondent's sexual identity via a self-completion question of all adult respondents aged 16+. These data, along with all income measures, were released in November 2013.

Table 1 shows a total of 2.3 percent of the sample self-identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Approximately 4.3 percent of 16–24 year olds self-identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, while 0.7 percent of over 65+ self-identify this way.

**Table 1** UK Sexual Identity by Age, UKHLS Data.
Base: 40,610 UK adults aged 16+ (weighted)

| | Heterosexual or Straight | Gay or Lesbian | Bisexual | Other | Prefer not to Say |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16–24 | 91.6% | 1.8% | 2.6% | 1.3% | 2.8% |
| 25–34 | 93.5% | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.1% | 2.4% |
| 35–44 | 94.1% | 1.9% | 0.8% | 0.8% | 2.4% |
| 45–54 | 94.0% | 1.6% | 0.8% | 1.0% | 2.6% |
| 55–64 | 95.0% | 0.8% | 0.5% | 0.8% | 2.9% |
| 65+ | 93.4% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 1.4% | 4.5% |
| **Total** | **93.7%** | **1.3%** | **1.0%** | **1.1%** | **3.0%** |

Note: 44 "Don't know" responses were recoded to "other" while 42 "Refuse" responses were recoded to "Prefer not to say".

## Poverty Incidence by Sexual Orientation

An Irish Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) report represents the earliest consideration of links between sexuality and poverty (Robson and Byrne 1995). Investigators defined poverty for individuals as being unemployed or having an income of less than 70 percent of average income plus lacking at least one "primary item" for affordability reasons though "primary items" were never defined in the report. Studying a lesbian and gay community sample in Dublin and Cork, researchers found approximately 20.8 percent at risk for poverty. Based on European Community Household Panel Survey data for Ireland in 1994, the European Commission (2010) calculated just less than 20 percent of the total Irish population risked poverty. Comparing these separate analyses, we might conclude that the poverty risk faced by gays and lesbians in Dublin and Cork was no different from the general Irish population.

In 1999, the Glasgow Women's Library commissioned a study mirroring the Irish CPA report with a community sample of lesbians and gays in Glasgow (John and Patrick 1999). The authors report on receipt of means tested state benefits and on the 1999 Households Below Average Income (HBAI) "poverty line" of £71 per week for a single person. Approximately 20 percent of the sample was in receipt of means tested state benefits, while 28 percent reported incomes below the HBAI cut-off. Scottish trend data for individuals in poverty in all of Scotland for 1998/99 suggested exactly 20 percent of the Scottish individual population experienced relative poverty before housing costs (60 percent of same year median income), with exactly

19 percent of individuals experiencing absolute poverty (60 percent of inflation adjusted median income) (Kaye 2007). Although poverty rates in Glasgow may or may not be higher than Scottish national averages, one might conclude that Glaswegian sexual minorities were more likely in 1999 to experience poverty than others in Scotland generally.

More recently, Albelda et al. (2009) examine poverty in three different US data sets that allowed comparisons across sexuality groups. Poverty was defined according to the "Federal Poverty Line" (FPL), or the annually inflated amount of income a family requires to meet food expenses. Since the FPL does not incorporate housing, transport, health or other basic costs, households were defined as "poor" if their net income was lower than 200 percent of the FPL. Using the Public Use Microdata Sample of the 2000 US Census (2000 PUMS), the authors only could examine couples identified as same-sex or opposite sex based on relationship information. Approximately 5.4 percent of heterosexual couples, 6.9 percent of lesbian couples and 4.0 percent of gay male couples met the poverty threshold. Once controls for age, family size, disability status, region and other matters were controlled, the poverty rate for lesbian couples was approximately 2.9 points higher than heterosexual couples, and poverty rates for gay male couples were approximately 1 point higher. Reliant on other US data, the authors suggest these rates were conservative estimates since single person households were excluded from the sample.

Prokos and Keene (2010) examined only households with dependent children in the 2000 PUMS and found poverty rates for gay and lesbian families with dependent children to be twice heterosexual married families with dependent children (12 percent each of gay couples and lesbian couples vs 6 percent of heterosexual married couples). Controlling for age, education, employment status, work hours, citizenship, region, and urbanicity, lesbian families with children were significantly more likely to be poor than gay families with children.

In the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), Albelda et al. (2009) were able to calculate the number of individuals in poor households though the data set was limited to 18–44 year olds. They found self-identified bisexual women and lesbians were significantly more likely to experience poverty compared to heterosexual women (24 percent vs 19 percent), but there was no difference in poverty rates between bisexual, gay and heterosexual men.

In the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), Albelda et al. (2009) found that poverty may be locally specific. The CHIS suggested no difference in poverty rates for women. Compared to the NSFG, gay or bisexual men in CHIS were significantly less likely to experience poverty (7 percent of

gay or bisexual men vs 12 percent of heterosexual men). It would seem that sexual orientation and poverty links may be regionally specific in the US.

Data from UKHLS provides a more up-to-date snapshot of poverty by sexual orientation in Britain. Table 2 provides poverty statistics by sexuality for adults in the UKHLS data, while Table 3 and Table 4 show results for men and women separately. Poverty is defined on household equivalized income before housing costs using both 50 and 60 percent of median household income as thresholds. Table 2 shows gays and lesbians somewhat more likely to be poor according to both measures, while bisexuals are somewhat more likely to be poor at only the 60 percent threshold. However, none of these differences are statistically significant.

Some differences across groups in other material well-being indicators are worth noting. Bisexuals are significantly more likely to be behind paying council tax, and behind with either some or all household bills. Bisexuals are more likely to be in receipt of income support. Subjectively, gays, lesbians and bisexuals are all optimistic financially as they are significantly more likely to expect to be better off in a year's time compared to heterosexuals.

Considering results for men shown in Table 3, gay men and bisexual men are somewhat more likely to be in poverty according to routine definitions, however these figures are not statistically significant. In terms of meeting household needs, gay and bisexual men are also more likely to report being behind with rent or mortgage, council tax, and some or all household bills, though only the result for bisexual men concerning all household bills is statistically significant. Gay and bisexual men are significantly more likely to receive certain state benefits. Gay men are significantly more likely to receive income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit compared to heterosexual men. Bisexual men are significantly more likely to receive income support. These results imply gay men and bisexual men do in fact face some material disadvantage. Were it not for state income transfers, gay men in particular might be worse off in poverty terms than heterosexual men.

Results in Table 4 show the experience of lesbians and bisexual women. Lesbians are as likely to be in poverty as heterosexual women. Bisexual women are more likely to be in poverty using the 60 percent of median income threshold although this finding is not statistically significant. According to most other measures, lesbians seem to be no different or somewhat materially advantaged compared to heterosexual women. In particular, they are more likely to report *not* being behind with rent or mortgage payments, or council tax payments. While they are significantly more likely to receive job seeker's allowance, this may not be particularly unusual if lesbians are more likely to be in work compared to heterosexual women (see the

discussion of Labor supply below). And, findings for subjective financial expectations suggest significant material optimism among lesbians.

**Table 2** Key Poverty Statistics by Sexual Orientation. UKHLS Data.
Base: 40,610 adults aged 16+ (unweighted)

| | **Hetero-sexual or Straight** | **Gay or Lesbian** | **Bisexual** | **Other** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poverty (Equiv HH Income <50% of Median) | 6.9% | 8.2% | 7.8% | ***12.9%*** |
| Poverty (Equiv HH Income <60% of Median) | 12.8% | 13.6% | 16.1% | ***22.6%*** |
| Household behind with rent or mortgage | 11.3% | 8.9% | 14.2% | ***21.9%*** |
| Household behind with paying council tax | 7.0% | 5.1% | ***12.0%*** | ***12.9%*** |
| *Household up-to-date with bills?* | | | | |
| up-to-date | 94.7% | 94.7% | ***87.7%*** | ***88.4%*** |
| behind with some | 4.7% | 4.9% | ***10.1%*** | ***10.4%*** |
| behind with all | 0.6% | 0.4% | ***2.2%*** | 1.2% |
| *Receives state benefits:* | | | | |
| Income Support | 3.5% | 4.8% | ***6.2%*** | ***10.9%*** |
| Job Seeker's Allowance | 2.5% | 3.6% | 3.7% | ***4.7%*** |
| Housing Benefit | 8.8% | 9.9% | 10.8% | ***17.5%*** |
| Any Disability Benefit | 9.2% | 10.9% | 8.4% | ***13.7%*** |
| Council Tax Benefit | 10.6% | 10.5% | 10.3% | ***19.6%*** |
| *Any of the above* | 18.4% | 18.9% | 19.5% | ***32.1%*** |
| Any Other State Benefit | 34.7% | ***19.3%*** | ***28.6%*** | 36.3% |
| *How do you think you will be financially next year?:* | | | | |
| better off | 24.3% | ***28.8%*** | ***34.9%*** | 27.2% |
| worse off than you are now | 20.4% | 20.3% | 19.9% | ***16.4%*** |
| about the same | 55.4% | 51.0% | ***45.2%*** | 56.5% |
| No. Consumer Durables missing (max 13) | 2.86 | 2.96 | ***3.27*** | ***3.54*** |
| Access to the Internet | 97.1% | 98.0% | ***94.4%*** | ***94.1%*** |
| *Broadband connection* | 97.8% | 97.7% | 96.3% | 96.2% |
| Observations | 38,008 | 476 | 406 | 424 |

Notes: Figures shown in ***bold italic*** are significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from all heterosexuals. Note that significance tests are for absolute differences.

**Table 3** Key Poverty Statistics by Sexual Orientation for Men. UKHLS Data. Base: 16,703 adult men aged 16+ (unweighted)

| | **Hetero-sexual or Straight** | **Gay** | **Bisexual** | **Other** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poverty (Equiv HH Income < 50% of Median) | 6.7% | 8.1% | 7.6% | 9.6% |
| Poverty (Equiv HH Income < 60% of Median) | 12.0% | 13.4% | 15.8% | ***18.6%*** |
| Household behind with rent or mortgage | 10.9% | 12.3% | 14.2% | ***25.6%*** |
| Household behind with paying council tax | 6.9% | 7.3% | 9.4% | ***15.8%*** |
| *Household up-to-date with bills?* | | | | |
| up-to-date | 95.1% | 94.5% | 91.9% | ***86.0%*** |
| behind with some | 4.3% | 4.8% | 5.8% | ***12.9%*** |
| behind with all | 0.6% | 0.7% | ***2.3%*** | 1.2% |
| *Receives state benefits:* | | | | |
| Income Support | 2.2% | ***4.7%*** | ***5.8%*** | ***7.6%*** |
| Job Seeker's Allowance | 3.4% | 2.9% | 4.1% | ***8.1%*** |
| Housing Benefit | 6.7% | ***11.3%*** | 7.5% | ***13.4%*** |
| Any Disability Benefit | 8.4% | 10.9% | 7.5% | ***15.7%*** |
| Council Tax Benefit | 8.1% | ***12.0%*** | 8.1% | ***14.5%*** |
| *Any of the above* | 15.9% | 18.9% | 18.5% | ***32.0%*** |
| Any Other State Benefit | 30.6% | ***21.8%*** | 31.2% | 33.1% |
| *How do you think you will be financially next year?:* | | | | |
| better off | 26.6% | 27.3% | 32.3% | 28.4% |
| worse off than you are now | 20.8% | 21.4% | 21.0% | 16.6% |
| about the same | 52.6% | 51.3% | 46.7% | 55.0% |
| No. Consumer Durables missing (max 13) | 2.84 | 3.03 | 3.07 | ***3.44*** |
| Access to the internet | 97.1% | 98.8% | 95.7% | 95.1% |
| *Broadband connection* | 98.0% | 98.0% | 97.5% | 96.3% |
| Observations | 16,703 | 275 | 173 | 172 |

Notes: Figures shown in ***bold italic*** are significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from heterosexual men. Note that significance tests are for absolute differences.

**Table 4** Key Poverty Statistics by Sexual Orientation for Women. UKHLS Data. Base: 22,735 adult women aged 16+ (unweighted)

| | Hetero-sexual or Straight | Lesbian | Bisexual | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poverty (Equiv HH Income < 50% of Median) | 7.0% | 8.2% | 7.9% | ***15.4%*** |
| Poverty (Equiv HH Income < 60% of Median) | 13.4% | 13.7% | 16.3% | ***25.6%*** |
| Household behind with rent or mortgage | 11.7% | ***4.4%*** | 14.3% | ***19.3%*** |
| Household behind with paying council tax | 7.0% | ***2.1%*** | ***13.9%*** | ***10.9%*** |
| *Household up-to-date with bills?* | | | | |
| up-to-date | 94.3% | 95.0% | ***84.5%*** | ***90.0%*** |
| behind with some | 5.0% | 5.0% | ***13.4%*** | ***8.8%*** |
| behind with all | 0.7% | 0.0% | ***2.2%*** | 1.2% |
| *Receives state benefits:* | | | | |
| Income Support | 4.4% | 5.0% | 6.4% | ***13.1%*** |
| Job Seeker's Allowance | 1.8% | ***4.5%*** | 3.4% | 2.4% |
| Housing Benefit | 10.5% | 8.0% | 13.3% | ***20.2%*** |
| Any Disability Benefit | 9.9% | 11.0% | 9.0% | 12.3% |
| Council Tax Benefit | 12.6% | 8.5% | 12.0% | ***23.0%*** |
| *Any of the above* | 20.4% | 18.9% | 20.2% | ***32.1%*** |
| Any Other State Benefit | 38.0% | ***15.9%*** | ***26.6%*** | 38.5% |
| *How do you think you will be financially next year?:* | | | | |
| better off | 22.4% | ***30.8%*** | ***36.8%*** | 26.3% |
| worse off than you are now | 20.0% | 18.7% | 19.1% | 16.2% |
| about the same | 57.6% | ***50.5%*** | ***44.2%*** | 57.5% |
| No. Consumer Durables missing (max 13) | 2.87 | 2.86 | ***3.42*** | ***3.61*** |
| access to the internet | 97.1% | 96.9% | ***93.4%*** | ***93.3%*** |
| broadband connection | 97.6% | 97.3% | ***95.4%*** | 96.2% |
| Observations | 21,305 | 201 | 233 | 252 |

Notes: Figures shown in ***bold italic*** are significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from heterosexual women. Note that significance tests are for absolute differences.

Results for bisexual women imply greater material disadvantage. Bisexual women are significantly more likely to report being behind with council tax payments and to be behind in paying some or all household bills. Bisexual women are more likely in some instances to receive state benefits though none of these differences are statistically significant. Interestingly, bisexual women are significantly more likely to lack certain consumer durables – color TVs, video or DVD players, tumble driers, and land-line telephones –

and are significantly less likely to have the Internet or broadband compared to heterosexual women. Nevertheless, bisexual women are subjectively more optimistic financially. Significantly more expect to be better off in a year's time compared to heterosexual women.

Data presented in these tables should be interpreted with some caution as sexuality is measured using self-identification. Though many respondents use the category "other" to describe their sexuality, UKHLS data do not report what this category actually means. Those who select "other" could include people self-identifying as transsexual, transgender, asexual, polysexual, pansexual, queer, non-sexual. It could also include people who simply do not have words to describe their sexuality or even might not ever choose to do so. More problematic is if the willingness to disclose a minority sexual identity were related to socio-economic status. If lower socioeconomic groups are less likely to self-identify as LGB, then these figures could be biased estimates of LGB poverty. A rough glance at the ascriptive characteristics of the "Other" category suggests ethnicity related disclosure. Compared to white British, mixed race respondents are 2.1 times more likely to select the "Other" category, Asians are 3.1 times more likely, blacks are 2.2 times and Arabs are 5.5 times more likely. Similarly, Asians are 4.4 times more likely to select "Prefer not to say" compared to white British, blacks are 2.7 times more likely and Arabs are 2.2 times more likely. Compared to heterosexuals, the "Other" group is significantly more likely to experience poverty regardless of the measure: using 50 percent of median income 12.1 percent experience poverty; using 60 percent of median income 22.9 percent experience poverty. This group is significantly more likely to be behind with rent or mortgage payments, and with council tax. They are over three times more likely to receive income support, two times more likely to receive housing benefit, significantly more likely to receive disability benefit and council tax benefit. These findings are paralleled in Table 3 and Table 4 showing sex specific poverty statistics.

While American research implies greater material disadvantage for gay and lesbian couples, as well as children living in same-sex families, UK data would seem to highlight a degree of material disadvantage for gay and bisexual men and bisexual women. I next consider various mechanisms that might give rise to these outcomes. Specifically, I consider processes related to household structure, health, education, employment and wealth accumulation.

## Family & Housing

Family and household composition is related to poverty. Households with dependents either as children, long-term sick or disabled, or retirees will have greater material needs and could have fewer people available to generate

income for the household (Albelda, Badgett, Schneebaum, and Gates 2009). Little is known about the distribution of sexual minorities across family types or household structures in the UK. Here, I consider the problem of homelessness as well as the links between household composition and material disadvantage, particularly for LGB adults aged 50+.

## Youth Homelessness

Research suggests that LGB youth have a particularly high risk of confronting homelessness as a consequence of their sexuality (Coker, Austin, and Schuster 2010; Cull, Platzer, and Balloch 2006; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2001; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2002; Gattis 2009; Zerger, Strehlow, and Gundlapalli 2008). Homelessness can arise for voluntary or involuntary reasons. Almost 11 percent of self-identified LGB Londoners aged 16–21 in 1984 reported being thrown out of the family home as a consequence of their sexual orientation (Trenchard and Warren 1984). "Coming-out" to family members and developing an LGB identity can be traumatic. Breakdown of familial social relationships as a consequence is often hypothesized to precipitate a housing crisis (Blasius 1994; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2001; Willoughby, Malik, and Lindahl 2006).

American research suggest LGB youth comprise between 15 and 36 percent of homeless youth – a far larger proportion than general population estimates might suggest (Fournier, Austin, Samples, Goodenow, Wylie, and Corliss 2009; Freeman and Hamilton 2008; Gangamma, Slesnick, Toviessi, and Serovich 2008; Leslie, Stein, and Rotheram-Borus 2002; Noell and Ochs 2001; Van Leeuwen, Boyle, Salomonsen-Sautel, Baker, Garcia, Hoffman, and Hopfer 2006). A large literature considers American LGB homelessness, focusing both on its causes and consequences. Homeless LGB youth are more likely than homeless heterosexual youth to report running away to avoid experiences of sexual abuse or physical abuse (Rew, Whittaker, Taylor-Seehafer, and Smith 2005). Sexual identity disclosure problems resulted in either choosing to leave the family home or being forced to do so (Rew, Whittaker, Taylor-Seehafer, and Smith 2005; Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, Tyler, and Johnson 2004). Comparing homeless to non-homeless self-identified LGB youth in New York City, Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter (2012) found homelessness more likely if initiation of same-sex sexual behavior was at an earlier age, although family member disclosure of sexual identity was not predictive of homelessness. Alcohol and illegal drug use started earlier for homeless relative to non-homeless LGB youth suggesting that mental health problem externalization related to sexual identity may trigger family problems rather than sexual identity disclosure itself. They

also found homeless LGB youth more likely to be sexually abused than non-homeless LGB youth, further suggesting sexuality itself may not be a homelessness mechanism.

In the UK, population estimates have never been made or attempted therefore it is impossible to gauge the link between sexuality and British homelessness. However, a community based assessment of self-identified LGB youth in Reading from the late 1990s suggested as many as 13 percent of LGB young people were or had experienced homelessness (Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2002; O'Connor and Molloy 2001). Anecdotal reports from homelessness service providers through the 1990s asserted that LGB youth were becoming a larger share of the homeless population (Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2001; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2002).

Risk factors and outcomes associated with homelessness among LGB people in the UK have never been quantified. Qualitative studies of UK LGB homelessness through the late 1990s and early 2000s found that the LGB homeless shared characteristics of the homeless generally: most were male; a large portion came directly from local authority care; physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse was not uncommon; drug dependence was likely, as were other health problems; many experienced interrupted schooling; many had a history of self-harm and prostitution (Cull, Platzer, and Balloch 2006; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2002; O'Connor and Molloy 2001).

Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford (2002) and Cull, Platzer, and Balloch (2006) both report that sexual identity development triggered homelessness for less than half of their respondents. However, O'Connor and Molloy (2001) found that the link between sexuality and homelessness to be indirect – mirroring American research. Homelessness among UK LGB young people seemed to be linked to drug and alcohol abuse, early onset of sexual risk taking, and physical or sexual abuse in the family home. Some homeless youth left rural communities because of perceived homophobia to live "on the streets" in London, Manchester or Brighton where there was a sizeable LGBT community (Cull, Platzer, and Balloch 2006; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2002).

LGB experiences in homeless shelters and with other homelessness services was however a striking concern. Harassment and victimization from other shelter guests was common (O'Connor and Molloy 2001). Many respondents reported feeling safer sleeping rough because this avoided homophobic harassment from other shelter residents. Safety was a particular problem for transexual and transgendered homeless youth.

Many reported negative experiences with local authority homelessness applications where their needs as LGB were not taken seriously. At issue was not having a local connection, particularly when homelessness resulted from fleeing the family home to be near a larger, more visible, LGB com-

munity. All UK studies into LGB homelessness highlighted the need for more reliable recording of client sexuality by service providers (Cull, Platzer, and Balloch 2006; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2001; Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2002; O'Connor and Molloy 2001).

### Household Structures

A second issue related to housing and family life is the experience of LGB elderly. Most research focuses on issues related to social support, health and caring with results suggesting LGB elders experience profound isolation and loneliness. Living alone is linked to problems with obtaining social care, social participation, and general social support.

Access to social support services can be particularly problematic for elderly LGB people in the UK. As Heaphy et al. (2004) explain:

> [M]ainstream and local communities tend to encourage and enforce a 'heterosexual panorama' through legal, social and everyday sanctions against public displays of 'homosexuality'. Indeed … many [LGB over 50s] were keenly aware of the risks of being open about their sexuality (e.g. abuse and violence). Such risks could … put considerable pressure on them to remain 'closeted' in all manner of community interactions. This, in turn, negatively affected the quality of their relationships in the local communities and of the local supports that they could access at times of crisis. (p. 892)

In the US, Gates (2010) calculates that approximately 83 percent of LGB people over the age of 55 are unwilling to disclose their sexual identity. Furthermore, American LGB elders are significantly less likely to access medical care compared to non-LGB elders (Gardner, de Vries, and Mockus 2013). Qualitative research suggests this to be the case in the UK as well (Fenge and Jones 2012). As Table 1 indicates, over 65s in the UKHLS are significantly more likely to "prefer not to say" when asked about sexuality. This "invisibility" means LGB elders may risk exclusion at all levels of social policy affecting their lives (Heaphy and Yip 2006; Smith and Calvert 2001).

Many British LGB elders came of age in a cultural context that defined their sexuality as pathological. Social and legal sanctions worked against disclosure and positive identity formation when these generations were in their late teens and early 20s. The over 50s may feel social pressure to conceal their identities and to engage socially with others with a degree of comportment that signals that they are not gay or lesbian. Of concern is "respectability"; one qualitative research respondent remarked it was inappropriate to "shove it down people's throats" (Heaphy, Yip, and Thompson 2004).

Many lesbian and gay elders felt being open about their sexuality risked prejudice, harassment and breaches of confidentiality (Heaphy and Yip 2006). Nevertheless, in a community sample of self-identified lesbian and gay elders aged 50+, about one-third in regular contact with social services considered them welcoming to LGB clients, and about the same proportion would be willing to be open about their sexuality with social service providers (Heaphy, Yip, and Thompson 2004).

Likely social isolation can be identified by the distribution of sexual minorities across household types, with particular attention to those living alone. A cross-classification of sexuality by household type in the UKHLS is shown in Table 5. Gay men are about 2.6 times more likely than heterosexual men to live alone, but heterosexual men are about 1.5 times more likely to live in a couple, and are a little more than 3 times more likely to live in a home with children. Lesbians are about as likely as heterosexual women to live alone (0.96), are slightly less likely to live in couples (0.9), but heterosexual women are nearly twice as likely to live with children (1.92). Bisexual men are slightly more likely than heterosexual men to live alone (1.38) and to live with children (1.11), but significantly less likely to live in a couple (0.70). Although at only 3.1 percent, lone parenthood among bisexual men is more than twice the rate of heterosexual men. Bisexual women are less likely than heterosexual women to live alone (0.84) and to live in a couple (0.80) but more likely to live with children (1.12).

These household structures shed light on the material needs, and likely household resources, of British sexual minorities. The striking absence of children in the lives of gay men and lesbians implies a degree of freedom from providing for children's living expenses and potential material advantage. Alternatively, fewer children could result in a greater experience of social isolation and social care needs in old age. Moreover, bisexuals seem to have very similar households compared to heterosexuals yet suffer inequalities somewhat worse that gay men and lesbians.

Considering adults aged 50+, the results shown in Table 6 emphasize likely elder isolation. Older gay men are about 2.7 times more likely than heterosexual men to live alone, while bisexual men are also more likely to live alone (1.34). Lesbians are significantly less likely than heterosexual women to live alone (0.43) while bisexual women are about equally likely to live alone (0.97). This preponderance of gay and bisexual men living alone is of particular concern for the link between sexuality and poverty in old age.

**Table 5** Sexual Orientation by Household Type broken by sex UKHLS Data. Base: 40,610 adults aged 16+ (weighted)

| | | Alone, pension-able | Alone, not pension-able | Single Parent | Couple, no children | Couple, pensioner no children | Couple, with children | Other HH types, childless | Other HH types, with children | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men | Heterosexual or straight | 4.6% | 9.7% | 1.1% | 14.5% | 17.4% | 23.4% | 19.0% | 10.2% | 100.0% |
| | Gay men | 3.7% | 33.2% | 1.5% | 30.2% | 4.4% | 3.6% | 17.7% | 5.7% | 100.0% |
| | Bisexual men | 3.2% | 16.6% | 3.1% | 7.1% | 7.3% | 24.5% | 27.3% | 10.9% | 100.0% |
| | Other | 5.9% | 10.5% | 2.0% | 4.3% | 12.5% | 24.0% | 23.5% | 17.4% | 100.0% |
| | Prefer not to say | 8.3% | 13.5% | 2.3% | 6.4% | 18.8% | 16.1% | 23.9% | 10.6% | 100.0% |
| | Total | 4.7% | 10.3% | 1.1% | 14.4% | 17.1% | 22.9% | 19.3% | 10.2% | 100.0% |
| Women | Heterosexual or straight | 10.8% | 5.7% | 6.8% | 12.1% | 14.9% | 21.4% | 17.4% | 10.9% | 100.0% |
| | Lesbian | 1.4% | 14.6% | 4.3% | 38.8% | 6.4% | 8.4% | 18.6% | 7.6% | 100.0% |
| | Bisexual women | 2.5% | 11.4% | 10.9% | 14.1% | 5.7% | 18.7% | 22.5% | 14.1% | 100.0% |
| | Other | 11.9% | 6.5% | 12.5% | 7.3% | 15.1% | 14.0% | 21.2% | 11.5% | 100.0% |
| | Prefer not to say | 16.5% | 5.2% | 7.5% | 7.5% | 16.3% | 17.1% | 17.7% | 12.2% | 100.0% |
| | Total | 10.8% | 5.8% | 6.9% | 12.2% | 14.8% | 21.0% | 17.5% | 10.9% | 100.0% |

**Table 6** Sexual Orientation by Simplified Household Type, respondents aged 50+, broken by sex. UKHLS Data. Base: 17,597 adults aged 50+ (weighted)

| | | Alone | Couple | Other Situations | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men | heterosexual or straight | 18.9% | 58.4% | 22.8% | 100.0% |
| | gay men | 51.6% | 40.7% | 7.7% | 100.0% |
| | bisexual men | 25.2% | 62.9% | 11.9% | 100.0% |
| | other | 27.0% | 43.1% | 29.9% | 100.0% |
| | prefer not to say | 28.6% | 46.3% | 25.1% | 100.0% |
| | Total | 19.6% | 57.7% | 22.7% | 100.0% |
| Women | heterosexual or straight | 28.9% | 46.8% | 24.3% | 100.0% |
| | lesbian | 12.5% | 62.8% | 24.7% | 100.0% |
| | bisexual women | 28.0% | 50.9% | 21.2% | 100.0% |
| | other | 32.9% | 41.9% | 25.3% | 100.0% |
| | prefer n | 35.4% | 39.9% | 24.8% | 100.0% |
| | Total | 29.1% | 46.6% | 24.3% | 100.0% |

## Health

Health is viewed as a resource in the production of material well-being (Albelda, Badgett, Schneebaum, and Gates 2009; Badgett 2001). Unhealthy individuals experience poverty because they lack the physical, emotional or mental capacity to provide for their needs. Also, those with poor health may have different or, in fact, greater material needs than people with better health (Albelda, Badgett, Schneebaum, and Gates 2009). Perhaps because of its historic link with gay male sex, health inequalities related to HIV dominate much of the research linking LGB health and poverty (See e.g., Haile, Padilla, and Parker 2011). While HIV prevalence and its consequences are important, I provide here a review of research on LGB health that is more general.

Some critics argue poor LGB health results from a lifestyle that is not conducive to good health. This is often argued to be a thinly veiled critique of "the gay scene" – a lifestyle centered on bars and clubs with easy access to drugs and alcohol (Mitchell, Howarth, Kotecha, and Creegan 2009). However, not all LGB people participate in "the gay scene" and, indeed, there is otherwise no singular "LGB lifestyle" (Hunt and Fish 2008).

"Minority Stress Theory" (MST) offers a more analytically powerful framework for explaining general sexuality related health inequality. Derived from social stress theory, MST posits that minority group members experience additional stress not experienced by majority groups simply because of their minority group membership (Brooks 1981; Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003). The concept of minority stress applied to LGB populations is based on the

premise of societal heteronormativity where heterosexuality is taken for granted and considered of greater worth and esteem (Butler 1990; Herek 1990; Meyer 1995). Sexual minorities are thereby subjected to stress related to stigmatization (Meyer 1995). Since this heterosexism is pervasive, stress associated with sexual minority status is chronic and rooted in cultural values often outside of the individual's control to change (Meyer 1995). This literature articulates various stressors specific to LGB populations (King, Semlyen, See Tai, Killaspy, Osborn, Popelyuk, and Nazareth 2007; Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003). First, internalized homophobia, bi-phobia or trans-phobia is how one directs negative societal attitudes about homosexuality, bisexuality, or transgender/transsexuality toward the self. Second, stigma relates to expectations of rejection and discrimination as a consequence of minority sexual identity. Third, actual experiences of discrimination and violence related to being a sexual minority trigger stress responses. Finally, unlike many minority groups where the minority status identifier is visible such as skin color, sexuality can often be socially concealed, introducing the additional stress of monitoring concealment and disclosure as well as the consequences of that disclosure. "[I]t is likely that the social hostility, stigma and discrimination that most LGB people experience is likely to be at least part of the reason for higher rates of psychological morbidity" (King et al. 2007). Thus, these stressors are unique to sexual minorities and occur in addition to daily stress levels which everyone experience.

Through a number of qualitative interviews with working class Lesbians in Scotland and northern England, Taylor (2007) found that behavior monitoring to avoid negative consequences was common. In particular, the intersection of working class background and lesbian identity caused significant stress in the lives of many of her sample. This is not surprising as Frable et al. (1998) showed that homosexuality, per se, was concealable and that among students at an elite private university those who concealed their sexuality had lower self-esteem compared to students who did not conceal or did not have a concealable stigma. More recently, Sedlovskaya et al. (2013) showed gay men maintain separate public and private personalities, and that doing so increases the prevalence of depressive symptoms.

***Mental health***. LGB populations tend to have higher rates of both internalized issues, such as depression or anxiety disorder, and externalized issues such as drug and alcohol dependence, self-harm, parasuicide, and suicide itself (King et al., 2007). For example, Lehavot and Simoni (2011) examined mental health and substance abuse in a community sample of 1,381 self-identified lesbian and bisexual women. Direct measures of minority stress were included in a structural equation model. The authors found minority stress was a significant explanatory factor in models of mental

health problems, with strong indirect effects on substance abuse operative through mental distress.

In a systematic meta-analysis of existing health research, King et al. (2007) found that depression and anxiety disorders (either over a period of 12 months or a lifetime) were at least 1.5 times higher, while alcohol and other substance dependence over 12 months was also 1.5 times higher in lesbian and gay men compared to heterosexuals. With a community sample of self-identified LGB, and transgender, people in Lambeth, Keogh et al. (2006) found 41 percent reported mental and emotional health issues within the last year and over half attributed mental and emotional health issues to their sexuality. Among sexual minorities, bisexuals seem to suffer worse mental health. In a community sample of self-identified LGB people, Dobinson et al. (2003) found bisexuals reported poorer mental health than either heterosexual or lesbians and gay men.

Low self-esteem and high anxiety experienced as a consequence of minority stress contribute to deliberate self-harm (Poteat and Espelage 2007; Ryan and Rivers 2003). Skegg et al. (2003) found gay and bisexual men more than five and a half times more likely to self-harm than heterosexuals. Hunt and Fish (2008) analyzed a community sample of self-identified lesbians and bisexual women, finding 20 percent deliberately harmed themselves compared to 0.4 per cent of the general population, while about 50 percent of lesbian and bisexual girls under the age of 20 have self-harmed compared to about 7 percent of teenagers generally.

In a community study of gay men in Edinburgh, Stonewall (2003) found about 26 percent had attempted suicide, with about 54 percent reporting seriously considering suicide at some point in their life. In their meta-analysis of psychological morbidity, King et al. (2007) found gay men and bisexuals two times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexuals (See also Warner, McKeown, Griffin, Johnson, Ramsay, Cort, and King 2004). Greco and Glusman (1998) report LGB young people's suicide rates were two to three times higher than heterosexual peers, accounting for 30 per cent of completed adolescent suicides.

***Physical Health.*** LGB populations tend to suffer worse physical health, particularly poor general health status, increased risk for cancer, heightened diagnoses of cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes, and other chronic conditions (Lick, Durson, and Johnson 2013; Lick, Tornello, Riskind, Schmidt, and Patterson 2012). Allostatic load is a physiological marker of chronic stress and higher loads are associated with cognitive decline, increased frailty, poorer self-rated health, immobility, depressive symptoms, and chronic conditions (Beckie 2012; Juster, McEwen, and Lupien 2010). Juster et al. (2013) found in a small community based Canadian sample that gay and bisexual men had lower allostatic loads than heterosexual men. In contrast,

Arheart et al. (2013) found in a US population-based study that LGB people were 35% more likely than heterosexuals to have high allostatic loads.

Smoking and drinking habits are generally found to vary by sexuality. Hunt and Fish (2008) found approximately two-thirds of lesbians and bisexual women had ever smoked compared to half of heterosexual women. Hagger-Johnson et al. (2013) examined data from the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England on 18/19 year olds, founding lesbian and gay young adults significantly more likely to smoke, drink heavily and binge drink in particular. They found, however, that bisexuality was associated with smoking prevalence but not heavy or binge drinking. In a comparative study of largely US data sets, Ziyadeh et al. (2007) found lesbians and bisexual women were more likely to drink heavily or binge drink compared to heterosexual peers. Lesbians and bisexual women also seemed to start consuming alcohol at an earlier age compared to heterosexual women (Greenwood, White, Page-Shafer, Bein, Osmond, Paul, and Stall 2001). Examining UK data, Malley (2001) suggests heavy drinking among lesbians persists across the life course, in contrast to heterosexual women who seem to drink less as they age. Though US population data show American gay and heterosexual men equally likely to drink heavily or binge drink (Drabble, Midanik, and Trocki 2005; Trocki, Drabble, and Midanik 2005), Mitchell et al. (2001) report various UK community studies showing British lesbians and gay men both having higher alcohol consumption rates than heterosexuals.

Since smoking prevalence is high among LGB people, LGB populations not surprisingly show an increased risk various cancers, particularly lung cancer, anal cancer in men (Palefsky, Holly, Efirdc, Da Costa, Jay, Berry, and Darragh 2005) and cervical cancer in women (Fish and Wilkinson 2000). Anderson et al. (2004) found anal cancer 20 times more common in gay men than the general population. According to Hunt and Fish (2008), 8.3 percent of lesbian and bisexual women aged between 50 and 79 has been diagnosed with breast cancer compared to about 5 percent of all women. Hunt and Fish (2008) further report that 15 percent of lesbian and bisexual women over age 25 have never had a cervical smear test, compared to 7 percent of women in general. They argue test rate differences reflect perceived stigma in the health service and a belief that not having sex with men means lower risk of genital problems.

Table 7 shows a simple regression using UKHLS data of sexual orientation on the SF-12 composite measures of physical and mental health (For details on the SF-12 measures, please see Ware, Kolinski, and Keller 1995). With only age controlled, these data clearly show that sexual minorities, particularly bisexuals, have poorer physical and mental health compared to heterosexuals.

**Table 7** Regression of SF 12 Physical Health and Mental Health scores on sexual orientation controlling for age, broken by gender. UKHLS Wave 3 data. T-scores shown in parentheses.

| | **Men** | | **Women** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SF12 Physical Health Score | SF 12 Mental Health Score | SF 12 Physical Health Score | SF 12 Mental Health Score |
| Heterosexual (omitted) | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| Gay/Lesbian | -2.493** | -4.175*** | -0.371 | -1.911* |
| | (-3.22) | (-5.33) | (-0.48) | (-2.15) |
| Bisexual | -1.552* | -5.375*** | -3.403*** | -6.910*** |
| | (-1.98) | (-5.90) | (-3.70) | (-6.83) |
| Other | -5.921*** | -2.426* | -2.872*** | -3.624*** |
| | (-6.42) | (-2.45) | (-4.23) | (-4.23) |
| Prefer not to Say | -2.006*** | -1.644*** | -2.963*** | -0.787 |
| | (-3.81) | (-3.48) | (-6.10) | (-1.68) |
| Age | 0.110*** | -0.059** | 0.158*** | 0.009 |
| | (4.86) | (-2.66) | (7.18) | (0.42) |
| $Age^2$ | -0.003*** | 0.001*** | -0.004*** | 0.001*** |
| | (-14.02) | (5.77) | (-17.48) | (3.84) |
| Constant | 54.047*** | 50.024*** | 52.621*** | 46.039*** |
| | (115.67) | (97.71) | (113.54) | (91.94) |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

These findings underscore how minority stress can have lasting life-long consequences on physical and mental health. Sexual minorities in the UK may have greater care needs over the life course, including likely worse health in old age, both of which are strong correlates of poverty. Poorer health can be related to impaired social participation, vis., in education and training, in labor markets, and as a matter of social interaction in communities. While more research needs to be conducted to fully test these relationships, UKHLS evidence implies sexual minorities in the UK do not necessarily have the same mental and physical health resources as heterosexuals through which to fully engage in UK society.

## Education

Education is the cornerstone of human capital creation (Becker 1981). Ordinary models of earnings hinge on educational qualifications and continued training. For example, research on the gender pay gap has long attributed recent gains in female pay to long-term trends towards greater female educational attainment (Blackaby, Clark, Leslie, and Murphy 1997).

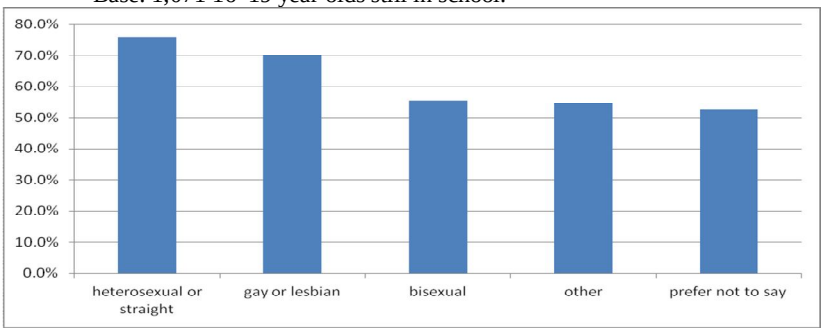
Sexuality related inequality in education, therefore, can be translated into differential labor market outcomes with attendant consequences for poverty incidence (Badgett 2001).

## Educational Attainment

Given issues related to mental health and sexuality, and the problem of youth homelessness, there is surprisingly little research on links between education and sexuality with no specifically UK based research in this area. Nevertheless, research on sexuality wage differentials with UK Labour Force Survey data find gay men and lesbians in couples more highly educated than heterosexual men and women in couples (Arabsheibani, Marin, and Wadsworth 2007; Arabsheibani, Marin, and Wadsworth 2005).

Using UKHLS data, Figure 1 shows the proportion of 16–19 year olds still in school who aspire to receive A-levels. Here, only a slightly lower proportion of gay or lesbian students, about 70 percent, are interested in getting A-levels compared to heterosexual students (76 percent). While this difference is not statistically significant, significantly fewer bisexual students, about 55 percent, aspire to A-levels with similar results "other" sexuality and those preferring not to say.

**Figure 1** Aspirations for A-levels by sexual orientation, UKHLS Data.
Base: 1,071 16–19 year olds still in school.




Most published evidence on educational aspirations and attainment comes from the US National Study of Adolescent Health (AdHealth), a nationally representative, school-based longitudinal study of 20,745 American students in grades 7 through 12. The survey asked about same-sex attraction, behavior and identity between four sweeps of data collection conducted in 1995, 1996, 2001, and 2008/9.

Pearson, Muller, and Wilkinson (2007) analyzed AdHealth sweeps 1–3 linked to school transcripts to examine sexuality related school integration

and stigma associated with same-sex attraction. They found the academic performance of same-sex attracted boys lower than opposite-attracted boys and that this is related to emotional distress and substance use. Same-sex attracted girls, however, did not exhibit poor academic performance.

Using same-sex behavior as a measure of sexual orientation in these data, Ueno et al. (2012) found American women reporting same-sex contact obtain lower educational degrees than those without same-sex contact regardless of its timing and continuity. American men reporting first same-sex contact in young adulthood obtain higher degrees than others. This is the opposite result to Pearson, Muller and Wilkinson (2007) who analyze sexual attraction rather than sexual behavior.

Walsemann, Lindley, Gentile, and Welihindha (2013) revisited the issue incorporating the 4th sweep of AdHealth data. They found American women attracted to the same-sex only in adulthood to have lower educational attainment than women attracted to the opposite-sex in both adolescence and adulthood. Women attracted to the same-sex in both adolescence and adulthood were less likely to have a high school diploma compared to women attracted only to the opposite-sex in both adolescence and adulthood. Furthermore, American men attracted to the same-sex only in adolescence had lower educational attainment than men attracted to the opposite-sex in both adolescence and adulthood. The authors conclude that same-sex sexuality operated against women's achievement in these data, but not necessarily for men.

In the UK, young adults in the UKHLS were asked the likelihood of various life outcomes including the likelihood of receiving training or a university degree. Figure 2 contains these results. Significance tests suggest no differences across sexuality groups for males, but significant differences for females. Lesbians or women with "other" sexuality think they are less likely to go to university, and to finish their degree if they do end up going to university.

**Figure 2** Likelihood of educational outcomes by sexual orientation, UKHLS Data. Base 3,507 16–24 year olds

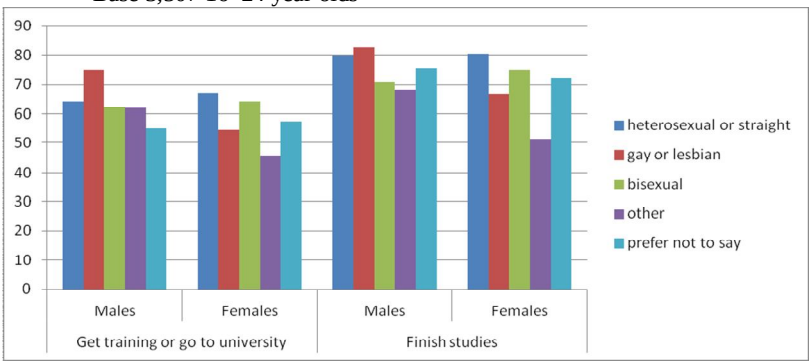


Table 8 shows education attainment in the form of highest qualification by sexuality. The table contains relative risk ratios derived from a multinomial logit model controlling for age. The results for men show no difference between gay, bisexual and heterosexual men in educational attainment. However, those who self-identify as "other" or "prefer not to say" are significantly less likely than heterosexual men to receive qualifications. The results for women suggest lesbians are 3 times more likely than heterosexual women to obtain a university degree, with higher odds in all other types of qualifications though these are not significant results. Bisexual women are no different from heterosexual women in educational attainment. As with men, women who claim "other" identity and "prefer not to say" are significantly less likely to obtain qualifications as compared to heterosexual women.

**Table 8** Highest qualification by sexual orientation, age adjusted. UKHLS Data. Base: 49,015 adults aged 16+ (weighted). Shown are relative risk ratios (please see table notes).

| | | Degree | Other higher degree | A-level etc. | GCSE etc. | Other qual. | No qual. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men | Heterosexual / Straight | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | Gay | 1.95 | 1.43 | 1.24 | 1.00 | 1.51 | ----- |
| | Bisexual | 1.24 | 0.78 | 0.96 | 1.05 | 0.64 | ----- |
| | Other | ***0.39*** | 0.52 | ***0.48*** | ***0.46*** | 1.23 | ----- |
| | Prefer not to Say | ***0.39*** | ***0.37*** | ***0.31*** | ***0.50*** | 1.06 | ----- |
| Women | Heterosexual / Straight | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | Lesbian | ***3.05*** | 1.71 | 2.00 | 1.86 | 1.95 | ----- |
| | Bisexual | 0.85 | 0.71 | 0.91 | 0.80 | 1.05 | ----- |
| | Other | ***0.13*** | ***0.27*** | ***0.21*** | ***0.34*** | 0.71 | ----- |
| | Prefer not to Say | ***0.47*** | ***0.39*** | ***0.60*** | ***0.60*** | ***0.67*** | ----- |

Notes: Figures shown in ***bold-italics*** are statistically significant $p < 0.05$. Results are from a multinomial logistic regression where age is controlled. Relative risk ratios are ordinarily interpreted like odds ratios relative to the omitted category, heterosexuals in this analysis.

## School Bullying, a Special Case of Minority Stress

The only UK literature examining educational outcomes link them to homophobic school bullying. Early exit from education resulting from homophobic school victimization can increase poverty risks and limit employment

opportunities (Dunne, Prendergast, and Telford 2001; John and Patrick 1999). Discussions of youth homelessness noted previously touch on this issue.

Bullying is abuse, intimidation or aggressive domination of others through the use of force, threat or coercion. Most young people in the UK experience some harassment from their peers, with a significant amount happening on school grounds (Warwick, Aggleton, and Douglas 2001; Warwick, Chase, and Aggleton 2004). In the early 1990s, Whitney and Smith suggest 27 percent of junior/middle school children and 10 percent of secondary school children are bullied "sometimes" or more often (1993). Most bullying involves verbal abuse of a sexual nature, typically concerning the sexual orientation of the victim (Rivers 2001).

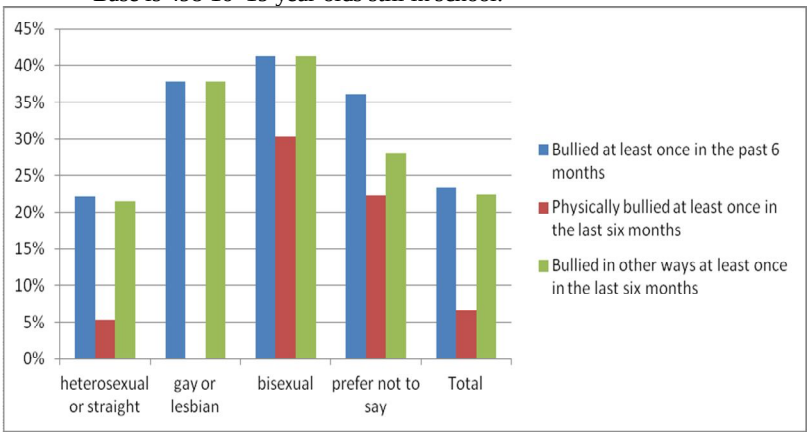
Homophobic bullying incidence rates vary from study to study, perhaps due to variation in sample designs and the behaviors monitored. Trenchard and Warren's (1984) seminal work on sexuality and bullying analyzed a community sample of about 400 LGB Londoners aged 16–21. They found 58 percent experienced verbal abuse, with 39 percent experiencing violence or harassment specifically at school. Approximately 21 percent experienced physical abuse, with boys more likely to experience physical attacks than girls. Almost 11 percent reported being thrown out of the family home as a consequence of their sexuality. Approximately 7 percent reported institutional pressure at school to change their sexual orientation. Ian Rivers and colleagues studied homophobic bullying in the UK with a community sample of LGB youth and young adults in 2001. Approximately two-thirds of LGB young people were bullied regularly (Rivers 2001; Rivers and Carragher 2003; Rivers and Cowie 2006; Rivers and Duncan 2002; Rivers and Noret 2008). Using a community based survey of 1,614 LGB, and transgender, young people in Great Britain recruited on-line, Stonewall reports in 2012 about 55 percent of LGB young people experienced homophobic bullying. About 53 percent experienced verbal bullying, 23 percent experienced cyber bullying and about 16 percent received physical abuse. A shocking 6 percent of LGB pupils were subjected to death threats at school (Stonewall. 2012). These findings suggest no discernible change in homophobic bullying prevalence over the past 30 years in the UK.

Since most British research on homophobic bullying was conducted with community samples lacking relevant comparison groups, incidence rates are difficult to interpret. When comparisons can be drawn across sexuality groups using population data, LGB young people clearly suffer significantly higher bullying rates than heterosexual young people (McNamee 2006; McNamee, Lloyd, and Schubotz 2008; Poteat and Espelage 2007; Poteat, Mereish, DiGiovanni, and Koenig 2011; Schubotz and O'Hara 2011). The only UK based population study of homophobic bullying was conducted in Northern Ireland in the 2000s. Schubotz and O'Hara (2011) found 70 percent of same-

sex attracted 16 year old boys experienced bullying at school compared to only 28 percent of heterosexual boys, while 62 percent of same-sex attracted girls were bullied compared to 37 percent of heterosexual girls.

Among 16–19 year olds still in school, UKHLS data show, in Figure 3, slightly lower rates of bullying than community studies or the Northern Ireland research. Approximately 22 percent of heterosexual students report bullying experiences – physical or otherwise – whereas nearly 38 percent of lesbian or gay students and 41 percent of bisexual students report being bullied. Bullying in "other ways" is more common than physical bullying – most likely this includes name calling, taunting, taking belongings or social isolation. Bisexual students are particularly vulnerable to both physical and other kinds of bullying.

**Figure 3** Experiences of Bullying, UKHLS Data.
Base is 498 16–19 year olds still in school.




While the consequences of being victimized or bullied are often quite severe regardless of sexual orientation (Davidson and Demaray 2007; Stadler, Feifel, Rohrmann, Vermeiren, and Poustka 2010), research suggests these experiences have more severe consequences for LGB than for heterosexual adolescents (Poteat, Mereish, DiGiovanni, and Koenig 2011; Rivers 2001; Rivers and Cowie 2006; Schubotz and O'Hara 2011). Pilkington & D'Augelli (1995) argue that the fear of being socially isolated from a peer group results in LGB youth remaining hidden about their experiences and consequently suffering higher levels of stress leading to poorer later life health outcomes.

In the UK, suicidal ideation is significantly higher for victimised LGB youth (Rivers and Cowie 2006; Schubotz and O'Hara 2011) and they are more likely than non-victimized LGB youth to contemplate self-harm (Rivers 2001). UK studies have also found higher rates of depression among vic-

timized LGB youth compared to non-victimized LGB youth (Rivers and Cowie 2006; Schubotz and O'Hara 2011).

For victims of harassment or violence at school, avoidance of situations where incidents occur is a natural response. Critical for material well-being is the impact of truancy among bullying victims on human capital creation through education. For example,

> 'I got harassed and slagged and threatened and started dodging school' (Gay man aged 24, quoted in John and Patrick 1999).
> 'My focus was on how to deal with my sexuality rather than my education' (Gay man aged 28 quoted in John and Patrick 1999).

Homophobic victimization matters for all students, not just LGB youth. In a population study from the US, Reis and Saewyc (1999) examined the effects of homophobic school bullying regardless of the victim's sexual identity. They found victimized heterosexual students were 3 times more likely to be truant than non-victimized heterosexuals. In a different study, LGB victims are 4 times more likely to be truant than non-victims (Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, and DuRant 1998). Malcom et al (2003) found two-thirds of bullied same-sex attracted youth absented themselves from school. Rivers and Cowie (2006) found approximately 27 percent of victimized British LGB students skipped school because they felt unsafe versus 5 percent of non-victimized LGB students.

Even when LGB students attend class, bullying and victimization negatively affects school performance. Among British students, Rivers and Cowie (2006) found 24 percent of homophobic bullying victims received GCSE grades below C whereas 17 percent of non-harassed students performed at that level. Schubotz & O'Hara (2011) found 73 percent of heterosexual girls in Northern Ireland were satisfied with their school achievement whereas only 48 percent of lesbian and bisexual girls were satisfied.

Schools are often viewed as heterosexist institutions where gay and lesbian identities are marginalized within classrooms (Epstein and Johnson 1994; Epstein and Johnson 1998). As a matter of policy, research in the UK concerning bullying over the past decade has focused on school based or voluntary sector responses (Buston and Hart 2001; Crowley, Hallam, Harré, and Lunt 2001; Mishna, Newman, Daley, and Solomon 2009; Robertson and Monsen 2001; Taylor 2007; Warwick, Aggleton, and Douglas 2001; Warwick, Chase, and Aggleton 2004). Hartup & Stevens (1997) conducted a meta-analysis of school policies, victimization and mental health outcomes and found school support mechanisms significantly mediate the effects of victimization on self-esteem. Naylor and Cowie (1999) examined a community sample of 52 schools with well-established anti-bullying policies and systems of peer support finding the proportion of children who remained silent about their bullying experiences was far lower than in a comparison

community sample of schools without such policies. Given increased tolerance, if not acceptance, of homosexuality in recent years, schools in some locations may no longer be homophobic institutions. McCormack and Anderson (2010) examined a "Standard sixth-form college" in southern England and found boys were able to express physical tactility and emotional intimacy without it being homosexualized, suggesting that homophobia in some schools is marginalized.

Bullying clearly affects mental health, school attendance and school performance – all of which are implicated in educational achievement and human capital creation. Paradoxically, gay men and lesbians still achieve high education given this evidence of school victimization. Achievement may be linked to sexual identity concealment or resilience to bullying. Alternatively, young gay men and lesbians may anticipate labor market discrimination and therefore overcompensate through education to insulate against its effects (Arabsheibani, Marin, and Wadsworth 2005, p. 335). Of course none of this highlights any relationship between school victimization and achievement among bisexuals, transsexuals or transgendered students.

The better educated are often found to be least likely to experience poverty and social exclusion. Data on poverty incidence, particularly among gay and bisexual men, do not necessarily correspond with this finding however. British gay men are somewhat more educated then heterosexual men yet exhibit characteristics of poorer living conditions. One reason could be poorer health, but it could also be labor market exclusion.

## Employment

Although households could derive income from various sources, labor earnings are the single largest family financial resource (Tilly and Albelda 1994). Moreover, the build-up of pensions or savings from labor income impacts poverty risk old age. Here, I review links between sexuality and labor supply, hiring and promotion within firms, occupational choices, and wages.

## Labor Supply

Given the importance of labor income to material disadvantage, an initial question concerns whether labor supply varies with sexuality. In most British and American official data sources, such as labor force or current population surveys, sexuality can only be inferred from the relationship status among household members. Since 1990, same-sex sexual orientation could be inferred from household relationships in the US Census, but not

bisexuality or other sexual categories. A similar approach has been used in the UK with Labour Force Survey data.

Using 2000 US Census data, Antecol and Steinberger (2013) examined the labor supply of lesbian couples versus heterosexual couples. The authors distinguished between women who are primary earners within couples and women who are secondary earners in couples. They found a larger gap in labor market participation among primary earners, with lesbian primary earners significantly more likely to work, and work more hours, compared to heterosexual women who were primary earners. After controlling for presence of children, the gap in labor supply and work hours between married heterosexual women and lesbian secondary earners disappeared, with a slight attenuation in the gap among primary earners.

Comparing UK Labour Force Survey to US Census data, Arabsheibani, Marin, and Wadsworth (2007) found differences between the US and UK in labor force participation. Controlling for age, education, race, and health, coupled gay men in both countries were less likely to participate in the labor market than heterosexual married men. However, coupled lesbians in both countries participated in the labor market at rates about 10 to 12 points higher than heterosexual women.

## Earnings

Research on pay gaps between sexuality groups is considered core evidence of discriminatory experiences faced by sexual minorities. Research can be divided into studies based on sexual orientation derived from relationship status, akin to labor supply research using UK Labour Force Survey or US Census data, and studies based on individual sample surveys where sexuality is derived from self-reported identity, attraction or behavior. The former approach is not ideal as it ignores single person households and any sexual minority in an opposite-sex relationship. Comparisons are ordinarily drawn between gay men and heterosexual men, and between lesbians and heterosexual women. Little is known about bisexual wages compared with other groups.

American research using relationship status in census or labor force survey data to identify gay and lesbian couples generally finds a pay penalty for gay men and a pay premium for lesbians relative to heterosexuals (Allegretto and Arthur 2001; Antecol, Jong, and Steinberger 2007; Clain and Leppel 2001; Elmsie and Tebaldi 2007; Gates 2009; Klawitter and Flatt 1998). Gay pay penalties tend to be between 25 and 35 percent, whereas lesbian premiums are around 15 to 25 percent. Using same-sex sexual behaviour as a measure of sexual minority status, largely using pooled US General Social Survey data for various years, researchers also typically find a

gay male pay penalty of about 30 percent (Badgett 1995; Badgett 2001; Berg and Lien 2002; Black, Makar, Sanders, and Taylor 2003; Blandford 2003; Carpenter 2007; Cushing-Daniels and Yeung 2009; Martell 2010). Only two studies using this approach found a lesbian pay premium, however (Black, Makar, Sanders, and Taylor 2003; Blandford 2003). Data sets with earnings and self-identified sexuality are rare. Analyzing the US Centers for Disease Control Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data for 1996–2000, Carpenter (2004) found a penalty for gay men and lesbians both. Later analyzing 2001 California Health Interview Survey data, Carpenter (2005) found no effects of sexual identity on earnings. This suggests in the US a strong regional impact on sexuality and material disadvantage. Only one paper evaluates pay differentials of self-identified bisexuals where a pay penalty was found for bisexual men and women compared to heterosexual men and women respectively (Berg and Lien 2002).

In the UK, a series of papers by Arabsheibani and colleagues document pay differentials based on sexuality using UK Labour Force Survey Data. Their work is similar to analyses in the US where sexuality is observed through household relationships. Analyzing pooled data from 1996 to 2002, Arabsheibani, Marin, and Wadsworth (2005) find a gay male pay penalty while lesbians earn a pay premium. In particular, income returns to education and living in London were lower for gay men than for heterosexual men (Arabsheibani, Marin, and Wadsworth 2005). UK lesbians, on the other hand, would have earned *less* if their characteristics were rewarded at the same rate as heterosexual women. More recently, Arabsheibani, Marin, and Wadsworth (2007) pooled LFS data from 1996 to 2004. They found no difference in earnings between coupled gay men and heterosexual men in couples. However, lesbians in couples seem to have an aggregate 6 percent pay advantage over heterosexual women in couples.

These findings corroborate other research in the UK. Analyzing data from 2000/2001 that overlaps with the UK LFS data Arabsheibani and colleagues analyzed, both Frank (2006) and Booth and Frank (2008) found no significant effect of sexuality on pay among academics. Analyzing more recent pooled LFS data from 2004 to 2007, Longhi and Platt (2008) found that no difference in pay between men in same-sex and heterosexual couples. Longhi and Platt, however, compare women in same-sex and heterosexual couples to men in heterosexual couples and find comparable pay penalties for both groups suggesting gender disadvantages for lesbians and heterosexual women alike.

Frank (2006) and Booth and Frank (2008) are the only studies of pay differentials in the UK reliant on self-reported sexuality rather than household relationship status. Both can be distinguished, however, as they focus on a sample of UK academics rather than the general work force. Moreover,

bisexual pay is largely ignored in the literature. And, no LGB pay study adequately accounts for career interruptions, or lack of them, for child birth among women.

A very rough analysis of UKHLS data for earnings differentials is shown in Table 9. The models regress log hourly wage on sexuality with education, age, the presence of children, and parental status controlled. These results show no difference in earnings among gay men and heterosexual men, however lesbians seem to experience a pay premium compared to heterosexual women ($\hat{b}$ = 0.110, $p < 0.01$). Bisexual men earn less than heterosexual men ($\hat{b}$ = -0.126, $p < 0.05$) as do men identifying as "other" sexuality ($\hat{b}$ = -0.147, $p < 0.01$) and those who prefer not to say ($\hat{b}$ = -0.124, $p < 0.01$). Bisexual women and women self-identified as "other" do not differ in earnings compared to heterosexual women, while women who "prefer not to say" earn significantly less than heterosexual women ($\hat{b}$ = -0.078, $p < 0.05$). Although these models require more robust econometric detail, the results correspond somewhat with American findings using individual level data of a lesbian pay premium but not gay male pay penalty in the UK.

**Table 9** Regression of log hourly wage on sexual orientation controlling for education, age and the presence of children, split by sex.
UKHLS Data. Base: 22,324 employed adults aged 16+ (weighted).
Shown are coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

| | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|
| Heterosexual/Straight | — | — |
| Gay/Lesbian | -0.009 | 0.110** |
| | (0.048) | (0.034) |
| Bisexual | -1.126* | -0.031 |
| | (0.057) | (0.056) |
| 'Other' sexuality | -0.147** | -0.062 |
| | (0.047) | (0.040) |
| Prefer not to say | -0.124** | -0.078* |
| | (0.034) | (0.036) |
| No Qualification | — | — |
| Degree of equivalent | 0.570*** | 0.512*** |
| | (0.032) | (0.021) |
| A level or equivalent | 0.298*** | 0.234*** |
| | (0.033) | (0.022) |
| GCSE or equivalent | 0.205*** | 0.166*** |
| | (0.031) | (0.022) |
| Other qualification | 0.139*** | 0.082*** |
| | (0.039) | (0.023) |
| Age | 0.060*** | 0.042*** |
| | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| $Age^2$ | -0.001*** | -0.000*** |
| | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Children aged 0-2 in HH | 0.032 | 0.098*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.019) |
| Children aged 3-4 in HH | 0.006 | 0.019 |
| | (0.021) | (0.019) |
| Children aged 5-11 in HH | 0.034 | -0.021 |
| | (0.017) | (0.012) |
| Parent of any non-resident children | -0.029 | -0.125*** |
| | (0.017) | (0.014) |
| Constant | 1.988*** | 2.254*** |
| | (0.062) | (0.055) |

Notes: * = $p < 0.05$; ** = $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$

**Hiring, Promotion, and Termination**

Apart from pay differentials, other aspects of job quality can influence material well-being. Skill sets and likely productivity are not the only concerns for employers when hiring. Conducting participant observation work with 120 professionals in the US during the early 2010s, Rivera (2012) found employers often seek candidates sharing their leisure pursuits, life experiences and self-presentation styles. Rivera's data suggests shared culture can be highly salient and outweigh productivity indicators. While her findings are relevant for the distribution of LGB across occupations, this work similarly suggests barriers to career advancement among LGB workers.

Experimental research on hiring practices across European labor markets routinely finds disfavor among employers in hiring gay men though less so for lesbians (Ahmed, Andersson, and Hammarstedt 2013; Drydakis 2009; Patacchini, Ragusa, and Zenou 2012; Weichselbaumer 2003). Where job offers are made, wages tend to be somewhat lower for both gay or lesbian than heterosexual applicants (Patacchini, Ragusa, and Zenou 2012).

British research in this area is limited. Frank (2006) examined the experiences of UK academics and found gay and bisexual men to be systematically overlooked for university administrative positions (See also Booth and Frank 2008). In a community survey for Stonewall Wales, Robinson and Williams (2003) found 20 percent of Welsh respondents concealed their sexuality in the workplace, and women were less likely to be "out" at work than men. Moreover, 25 percent reported being dismissed from their job because of their sexuality; men were more likely to report being dismissed from a job than women for this reason.

Denvir and colleagues reviewed 470 UK employment tribunal cases brought between 2004 and 2006 on grounds of sexual orientation discrimination (Denvir, Broughton, Gifford, and Hill 2007). They found most contained allegations of bullying and harassment. The authors then conducted qualitative interviews with 15 claimants. They found employers tended to respond to discrimination allegations by formally disciplining or demoting *complainants*. Indeed, a common theme was bullying or harassment by superiors, not just work colleagues. The authors note that one of the barriers to raising complaints was a desire to conceal sexual identity at work to avoid further problems: "If you don't want to be 'out' at work then there is very little you can do even if you think you've been treated unfairly" (Denvir, Broughton, Gifford, and Hill 2007, quote from claimant, p. 35). The authors highlight extended problems some claimants faced including difficulty in obtaining references, being black-listed in their local communities as being trouble-makers (as well as everyone now knowing their sexual orientation) or needing to move to a new city or town. All of these

outcomes can promote joblessness with consequences on experiences of poverty.

Other claimants reported more severe health issues:

> 'I nearly had a mental breakdown, I actually went down the self-harm route and I knew that I was suffering from mega depression … I am a reasonably strong and tough person, but … I ended up so ill … I'm still seeing a psychologist and I'm on anti-depressants.' (Quote from lesbian, HR manager in Denvir, Broughton, Gifford, and Hill 2007, p. 136)
>
> 'I hadn't worked, I was so depressed and so ill. I think I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown to be honest because it got me so low, all the things that happened. I mean I was shot at with a gun, I had damage to my property, my car. Name calling, telephone calls, you know, humiliation, intimidation, just everything that it got to a point when I did attempt to take my own life. And that is not me at all, that is not me at all … And I actually ended up living, you know the curtains were drawn all the time, I used to just come home and go to bed, shut everything else out, not answer the phone, move my car up the road. So I just wanted to disappear really, it was terrible, really really bad, really bad. And they had no idea of the damage that they caused, they've just got no idea, none at all.' (Quote from gay, male, IT manager in Denvir, Broughton, Gifford, and Hill 2007, p. 137)

Among the claimants interviewed, the authors found 3 were heterosexual and were harassed or bullied in the work place as though they might be homosexual. This reflects continuing low status and stigma associated with sexual minorities in the UK.

## Occupational Segregation

The occupational distribution of gay and lesbian workers suggests systematic constraints on careers. Analyzing US General Social Survey data for 1994 to 2008, Martell (2010) argues that estimated wage penalties of 12 to 18 percent experienced by gay men in the US reflect a compensating differential. Gay men accept lower earnings in exchange for the ability to work in more tolerant workplaces. Plug, Webbink, and Martin (2014) analyzed occupational distributions using Australian twin data collected between 1988 and 1990. The twins were asked about their own and their twin's sexual orientation, in addition to a range of occupational information including disclosure of sexuality at work. They found lesbians and gays with a public sexual identity shy away from prejudiced occupations. Adopting a number of control variables and alternative explanations, their results corroborate

Martell's findings concerning sexuality constrained labor market participation. Through a series of qualitative interviews with workers in Brighton, Ryan-Flood (2004) found gay and lesbian workers actively pursue certain careers which avoid workplaces perceived to be homophobic. Several respondents suggested doing so meant that they forewent financial advantages elsewhere (2004). Ryan-Flood quotes one interviewee as saying "I've made decisions based on the fact that, you know, I can't be who I am, and I know that in terms of money I could have gone off and earned a lot of money somewhere else" (Ryan-Flood 2004).

**Housing Wealth**

Home ownership represents for many families their largest financial asset. For those approaching retirement and the related health care needs of old age, the ability to rely on housing wealth is paramount to understanding experiences of poverty in old age.

Concerned about discrimination in mortgage markets, Jepsen and Jepsen (2009) analyze the 2000 PUMS to evaluate whether home ownership rates vary by sexuality. They operationalized sexuality through couple relationship status. They found same-sex couples were less likely to own a home than heterosexual couples. Although the average value of houses owned by gay male couples was statistically similar to houses owned by married heterosexual couples, houses owned by lesbian couples had lower average values. Consistent with arguments about discrimination in mortgage markets, they found same-sex couples were slightly less likely to have a mortgage compared to married heterosexual couples. Similarly, Leppel (2007) analyzed the decision to own rather than rent a home using US Census data with relationship status determining sexual identity. She found high income lesbians were more likely to own rather than rent compared to high income gay men.

Do sexual minorities experience discrimination in rental markets? Correspondence tests in Sweden conducted by Ahmed, Andersson, and Hammarstedt (2008) found no significant difference between heterosexual couples and lesbian couples in responses from landlords, nor in invitations to view rentals. However, Ahmed and Hammarstedt (2009) using similar methods found discrimination against gay male couples, even when controlling for application timing, geographical area, landlord type, apartment size and rental cost. A hypothetical heterosexual couple received contact from landlords in 56 percent of applications whereas a gay male couple with matching characteristics received contact in 44 percent of applications. Of contacts, 53 percent of heterosexual couple responses were positive whereas 41 percent of gay couple responses were positive. The heterosexual couple received

immediate invitations to view property in 29 percent of applications whereas the gay male couple received immediate viewings in 21 percent. In Sweden, it would seem gay men are more likely to be discriminated against in rental markets than lesbians.

UK home tenure linked to sexuality has never been examined. While a robust econometric analysis of the matter is beyond the scope of this review, Table 10 shows housing tenure for all adults aged 16+ by sexuality derived from a multinomial logistic regression where age and living in London were controlled. This analysis excludes respondents considered to still live in the parental home. Shown are relative risk ratios. Consistent with some American research, gay men, lesbians and bisexuals are all more likely to live in rental accommodation compared to heterosexuals. The odds of owning a home can be calculated from these data, the results indicate that gay and bisexual men are significantly less likely to own their own home compared to heterosexual men. Bisexual women are no different from heterosexual women to own their home, however lesbians are significantly more likely to own their own home compared to heterosexual women. Men and women, both, who self-identify as "other" are significantly more likely to live in local authority or housing association housing.

These findings suggest gay and bisexual men are disadvantaged in terms of housing wealth compared to lesbians and bisexual women. Consequently, gay and bisexual men will not be able to trade housing wealth for other financial resources as they age as readily as others. And, since gay men are more likely to approach old age alone, without the resources of a partner or support of children, lack of housing wealth could result in a significantly higher likelihood of poverty in old age. The reasons for housing wealth inequality related to sexuality in the UK are yet unclear as this is a sorely under researched area.

**Table 10** Home tenure by sexual orientation, controlling for age and London. UKHLS. Base: 35,541 adults aged 16+ not currently living in the family home (weighted). Shown are relative risk ratios (see table notes).

| | | Own outright or with mortgage | Rent | Local authority or housing association |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men | Heterosexual / Straight | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | Gay | ----- | ***1.63*** | 1.50 |
| | Bisexual | ----- | ***1.69*** | 1.62 |
| | Other | ----- | 1.52 | ***2.22*** |
| | Prefer not to say | ----- | ***2.23*** | ***2.66*** |
| Women | Heterosexual / Straight | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | Lesbian | ----- | ***1.75*** | 0.55 |
| | Bisexual | ----- | ***2.10*** | 1.20 |
| | Other | ----- | 1.25 | ***2.43*** |
| | Prefer not to say | ----- | ***1.77*** | ***1.58*** |

Notes: Numbers shown in ***bold-italics*** are statistically significant $p < 0.05$. Results are from a multinomial logistic regression where age is controlled. Relative risk ratios are ordinarily interpreted like odds ratios relative to the omitted category, heterosexuals in this analysis.

## Savings and Household Finances

Apart from housing wealth, savings, pensions, annuities and other financial instruments comprise the remaining wealth of most families. Very little is known about household financial management of same-sex versus opposite sex couples, much less whether savings propensities vary with sexuality (Burgoyne, Clarke, and Burns 2011; Negrusa and Oreffice 2011; Stiers 1999; Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan 2001). Analyzing the 2000 PUMS, Negrusa and Oreffice (2011) model the ratio of mortgage payments to house value as a measure of savings propensity. They found lesbian couples had higher savings propensities compared to heterosexual or gay male couples. Lesbian couples paid an additional 8.6 percent of their average annual mortgage compared to others. Gay male couples had lower savings propensities compared to heterosexual couples. Results also suggest childlessness allowed same-sex couples to divert more resources into savings. The authors interpreted these findings in terms of life expectancy differences between men and women. Since women live longer than men, couples with at least one female will be more risk averse and therefore will divert more resources into savings.

Evidence of financial preparations for retirement across sexual orientation groups is extremely sparse both internationally and in Britain. In a community study of lesbian and gay elders aged 50+, Heaphy, Yip, and Thompson (2004) found only 19.6 percent of women and 11 percent of men made financial plans for times of serious illness. Most said they would rely on social services, sell their homes to finance personal care, or turn to whomever they could find who was willing to help. More recently, Burgoyne, Clarke, and Burns (2011) found about half of same-sex couples took steps to safeguard their partners' financial interests.

Research in the US suggests gay and lesbian couples may be better financially prepared for retirement than heterosexuals (Negrusa and Oreffice 2011). Based on 2000 PUMS, Negrusa and Oreffice (2011) compared social security and retirement income of same-sex and opposite sex couples whose household head was aged between 60 and 80. They found same-sex households had significantly more retirement income than opposite-sex households, controlling for age, education and other socioeconomic characteristics. Same-sex couples received approximately $5,785 more in annual retirement income than married couples. The authors note that childlessness across the life-course may have contributed to larger financial holdings in retirement for LGB couples. Nevertheless, elderly LGB people in the US, like those living in the UK, are more likely to live alone. This particular analysis, being limited only to couples, cannot conclusively establish same-sex privilege in retirement for this reason (Negrusa and Oreffice 2011).

Considering retirement arrangements by sexuality in the UK, an early review of the UK pension situation by Smith and Calvert (2001) found little evidence of equal pension take-up across sexuality groups. They found that although stakeholder pension schemes allowed individuals to nominate partners regardless of sex, they found little evidence that such schemes were taken up at rates sufficient to counteract heteronormative policy assumptions concerning retirement plans. In 2001, Smith and Calvert found few public sector pension schemes made provisions for same-sex partners. I have found no current evaluation of pension schemes to ascertain whether provisions are more equitable in light of civil partnership and anti-discrimination legislation in recent years. Moreover, quantitative research into the household economic arrangements of retirees by sexuality has yet to be conducted in the UK. Therefore, the contribution of savings and household financial differences by sexuality as it relates to poverty likelihoods, particularly for older people, remains unknown.

## Summary

While most literature addressing the lives of sexual minorities focuses on experiences of stigma, discrimination, and harassment across a range of domains, very little research attends to the material consequences and life chances resulting from such inequality. While inequality in treatment and opportunity can contribute to the experience of poverty, it need not do so. This review has focused on the core problem of poverty itself, and reviews available research that illuminates this link. Since there is a paucity of good UK focused research, this review contributes top line findings from UKHLS data concerning poverty incidence and poverty drivers related to health, education, earnings, household structure and wealth accumulation. Clearly, the UKHLS analyses presented in this review require further examination, checking and rigor. Nevertheless, the findings mostly corroborate international evidence.

***Gay men.*** The review and UKHLS findings for gay men suggest they are somewhat more likely to experience poverty than heterosexual men. Standard measures of poverty incidence are not statistically significant using UKHLS data. However, results clearly show gay men are more likely to receive income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit, suggesting some problems with needs provision.

This report highlights a few areas where gay men are materially disadvantaged compared to heterosexual men. Young men are generally more likely to experience homelessness and the literature implies gay men are over-represented among homeless populations. Gay boys are significantly more likely to experience school victimization and bullying, increasing the risk of suicide, parasuicide, school truancy and depression, while inhibiting school performance. Although gay men have slightly higher odds of obtaining university degrees compared to heterosexual men, this finding is not statistically significant. Gay men's health is significantly poorer than heterosexual men's health – both physically and mentally. However, gay men have comparable earnings to heterosexual men even though evidence suggests gay men trade tolerant occupations for pay comparably remunerative of their human capital. Gay men are more likely to be in rental accommodation compared to heterosexual men and consequently will have less housing wealth in old age. Gay men are also significantly more likely to live alone, particularly men aged 50 plus. Taken together, these findings suggest gay male poverty risks in old age much higher than heterosexuals.

***Lesbians.*** British lesbians are about as likely as heterosexual women to experience poverty. UKHLS data show, however, that lesbians are significantly less likely to be behind with rent or mortgage payments, less likely to be behind in council tax payments, yet are significantly more likely to

receive job seeker's allowance. This is not surprising since lesbians are significantly more likely to participate in the labor market compared to heterosexual women. Young lesbians are significantly likely to experience homophobic bullying in schools with associated problems of school truancy, depression, poor school performance and alarming rates of self-harm. The literature suggests lesbians experience poorer health over the life course, although UKHLS data show that only mental health is somewhat poorer than heterosexual women. Lesbians are, nevertheless, significantly more likely than heterosexual women to obtain university degrees. UKHLS data are also comparable to studies elsewhere finding a pay premium for lesbians, even when controlling for motherhood. Like gay men, however, lesbians are significantly more likely to live in rental accommodation compared to heterosexual women, however lesbians are also significantly more likely than heterosexual women to live in owned accommodation. Taken together, these findings suggest that British lesbian experience less material disadvantage than heterosexual women. However, as women, lesbians may be disadvantaged relative to men though perhaps not always in the same ways as heterosexual women.

***Bisexual men and women.*** Research into the lives of bisexuals is severely limited both internationally and in the UK. UKHLS data provide initial insights into the lives of bisexual men and women for two reasons. First, data resources often do not contain measures allowing bisexual people to be identified. And, secondly, sample sizes are often not large enough to do meaningful statistical analyses when bisexuality is indicated. UKHLS has a large enough sample of self-identified bisexual people to perform statistical analyses of this meaningful subgroup.

Bisexual men are almost four percentage points more likely to experience poverty than heterosexual men, although using standard poverty risk measures this finding is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, bisexual men are nearly four times more likely than heterosexual men to be behind in payment of all household bills and are more than twice as likely to receive income support, suggesting real difficulties in meeting material needs. In other ways, bisexual men are strikingly similar to heterosexual men. They are as likely as heterosexual men to live in homes with children, they are as likely to receive child benefit and somewhat more likely to receive child tax credit.

Bisexual women are nearly three percentage points more likely to experience poverty than heterosexual women, although this finding is not statistically significant. Nevertheless, compared to heterosexual women, bisexual women are almost two times more likely to be behind with council tax payments, about 2.3 times more likely to be behind with some household bills and more than three times more likely to be behind with all household

bills. Bisexual women are about equally likely to receive various state benefits compared to heterosexual women. Bisexual women are equally likely as heterosexual women to live in households with children, even young children. They are, however, strikingly less likely to have access to the internet.

Bisexual men and women are somewhat more disadvantaged than heterosexuals across a number of areas contributing to poverty. In education, little is known about bisexual experiences of bullying and harassment and sample sizes in UKHLS are too small to differentiate bisexuals from other sexual minorities. Nevertheless, bisexual young people seem to have lower educational aspirations than heterosexual, gay and lesbian youth. However, UKHLS data suggest that educational outcomes are comparable to heterosexual men and women. Health outcomes are rarely differentiated for bisexuals. Nevertheless, UKHLS data show both bisexual men and women experience poorer mental and physical health than heterosexuals. The literature is virtually silent on bisexual employment experiences, however UKHLS data suggest bisexual men and women both suffer a pay penalty compared to heterosexual men and women. In old age, bisexuals might appear to be similar to heterosexuals as they are as likely to have children and are not particularly likely to differ in terms of housing arrangements such as living alone or with a partner or spouse. Taken together, these findings suggest greater likely material disadvantage for bisexual men and women compared to heterosexuals. Their incomes are significantly lower than heterosexuals, yet having children and poor health when combined with lower incomes and lower housing wealth all contribute to their greater likelihood of poverty compared to heterosexuals.

***Other findings.*** This review largely focuses on the main categories of sexual identity: gay men, lesbians, bisexual men and women. This is perhaps because there is more research into aspects of material disadvantage and its drivers related to the life experiences of people who self-identify into these categories. UKHLS data provide evidence that those who self-identify as "other" experience significant material disadvantage with poverty rates often two times higher than heterosexuals. "Others" are likely to be behind with rent or mortgage payments, and with some or all household bills. They are also likely to receive most main state benefits including income support, housing benefit, disability benefits, and council tax benefits.

This "other" identity could include a range of self-identification categories besides gay, lesbian or bisexual. However, given a rough demographic assessment, it seems likely that both "Other" and "Prefer not to say" are associated with age and ethnicity. Consequently, sexuality may be endogenous to factors more directly related to poverty. For example, older Britons are more likely to prefer not to disclose their sexuality than younger generations

while ethnic minorities are more likely to self-identify as "Other" compared to the white British population. Since both the elderly and ethnic minorities are more likely to experience poverty, issues of age and ethnicity intersect with attempts to unpack links between poverty and sexuality. Poverty findings for "Others" in the UKHLS may mask more relevant disadvantage by age or ethnicity. Ethnic minority and elderly people with non-normative sexuality are possibly more likely to report "Other" or "Prefer not to say." If so, then sexuality is a further layer on top of disadvantage these groups may already experience.

***The continuing problem of data.*** Much of the research reviewed in this report relies on community studies of self-identified gay men or lesbians, and sometimes bisexual men and women. UK data resources are scant and only recently have good quality samples been able to provide information on sexuality and life outcomes. Data resources are improving in the UK as further studies are incorporating measures of self-identified sexuality including the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, the forthcoming sweep of the Millennium Cohort Survey, the most recent round of the Work Employment Relations Survey, and the various rounds of the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles. Although research capacity is improving, it is not yet ideal. The Office for National Statistics Integrated Household Surveys do not release income information, for example, and many of these studies just mentioned have smaller overall samples meaning sexuality analyses using them may lack statistical power. There remain clear areas where sexuality matters and data is not forthcoming, and extant research is quite old, such as homelessness, retirement and pensions. Finally, sexual identity may not be the most appropriate means of measuring sexuality in social surveys. Indeed, results from UKHLS could be interpreted to imply that observed variation across sexuality groups could result from underlying processes associated with identity formation and claiming. Therefore, better data that allows for unpicking sexual classification and how this relates to material outcomes and life chances remains sorely needed.

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# GANGSTA RAP LYRICS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CRUELTIES: ARE THESE ARTISTS SEARCHING FOR ENLIGHTENED WITNESSES AND SEEKING TO REVEAL THE REAL TRUTH OF BLACK MOTHER-SON LOVE?

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*You stankin' funky nasty trifling bitch You!*[2]

*It is now de rigueur to deny that the antimaternal verbal content of the dozens of other black tropes [like bitches] bears any relation to problems in the actual mother-son relationship. I find this politically correct denial simply preposterous.*[3]

*How is repressed anger very often vented? By humiliating girls, who symbolize mother.*[4]

ABSTRACT. Author argues that few writers, feminists, and cultural commentators have actually understood why gangsta rap artists vilify women, especially blacks, with demeaning lyrics, often decrying words that wound as patriarchal oppression. Such critiques deny access to the deeper, more repressed sources for the murderous rage and corrosive hatred that such artists appear to have for black females. Rather, the author posits that the source of such rage and hatred is childhood cruelties of black infants and toddlers in the earliest years of their lives by black parents, especially females. That cruelty gets repressed, surfacing again as nearly auto-biographical lyrics because these artists unconsciously need to reveal the truth of their cruel sufferings to others, and they need others like enlightened witnesses to validate their lyric-based personal histories, without at the same time directly confronting their cruel mothers.

Keywords: race; gender; mother-son; maltreatment; lyrics; developmental psychology

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## 1. Introduction

In "Nasty Bitch," Bust Down, who'd been a practicing psychologist, refers to women as nasty, always horny hussies. In dealing with these women, black rappers like Down must engage in what T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting called "dicksmithing,"[5] making themselves hyper-masculine.[6] Black men, who get played, just have sex. But rappers, who use sex as tool mastery over women, need to reduce black women to mere, eager vessels for their semen.[7] They need to demean them as having foul, feminine odors.[8] For these rappers, tool masters need to have sex that distorts, wounds, or cripples black women.[9] Bust needs to exploit, refusing the common courtesy of giving her oral sex too. Tool masters like Down need to dominate black women, perhaps so that they can garner love, respect, control, or power.[10] Such tool masters perhaps need poetic, cultural licenses to "kill" black women.[11] In the end, "Nasty Bitch" concludes with Bust Down, having been sucked off by a woman for drugs (i.e., rocks), objectifying, demeaning, and vilifying her.

In "Blacklash," Orlando Patterson would argue that such vilifying tropes by rappers like Bust Down confess the nearly unspeakable – the myth of the much vaunted, oft-professed black mother-son love.[12] Do "Nasty Bitch"'s lyrics attack black women unjustly? Or are they "antimaternal," revealing a corrosive hatred and a murderous anger toward black mothers?[13] Based on "The Body Never Lies," Alice Miller would argue that rappers' lyrics, like other creative endeavors, contain unconscious biographical fragments, which means rappers like Bust Down are leaking their "repressed traumata."[14] But what is the trauma's source? Hinting at the source, Patterson tells us that an internal crisis exists between black men and women. But psychologically and developmentally, the source must be the earliest possible interaction between black males and females – *childhood*! During early childhood, are black mothers emasculating their male infants and toddlers?[15] If so, does such emasculation leave little boys doubtful about their authenticity (not sexuality), causing them later to purge any offensive toxins that may have suppressed their natural, normal impulses?[16] How did black mothers curb such impulses?[17] Apart from blaming slavery, Patterson has an answer: "the parenting practices of the black lower classes have become increasingly abusive,"[18] which leaves black children with "hurtful and even traumatic memories."[19]

Alas, the crux arrives: do complex traumatic memories, especially repressed ones, cause black men like rappers to embrace what Patterson calls "misogynistic irresponsibility"?[20] As Lloyd deMause notes, childhood trauma leaves us with no evidence of emotional memories, except for an overactive amygdala.[21] Social evidence would be deplorable outcomes like

disproportionately high black addiction, suicide, dropout, murder, poverty, and incarceration rates.[22] Based on culture, religion, and prior childhood abuse, black mothers' parenting practices have severely punished their children, especially black boys, "as the best means to educate kids in values of social responsibility and respect for parents."[23] Yet, complex trauma resides in bodies;[24] teenage memories, as Miller would say, are tainted by parent-told excuses: "white racists would do worse, so obey!" Obeying perforce embraces respect. Did real, bodily memories resurface in Too $hort's lyrics like "You fuck with us, bitch, something gettin' broken"? If rappers really do love their mothers, why do they vilify black women, who may be mothers? If asked, mothers like Dr. Mahalia Ann Hines abstractly says: "Of course, I love him. As mothers, we always love our children."[25] Likewise, her son, Common, dutifully says: "she is a mother, a grandmother, my best friend."[26]

Based on "The Body Never Lies," Miller would differ with Common. She'd say that rappers who suffered childhood abuse can only obey, respect, and honor their black mothers if they massively repress and completely detach from their true emotions. Bluntly put, Miller would say that they "cannot love and honor their parents because unconsciously they still fear them. . . . [T]hey cannot build up a relaxed and trusting relationship."[27] Without trust, black mother-son love is a "pathological attachment," a mix of "fear and dutiful obedience that hardly deserves the name of love."[28] That "love" must be based on "emotional blindness," which denies little black boys the truth, and which causes them to become corrosively hateful and murderously angry.[29] At who? Black mothers, who relied on what Miller calls "poisonous pedagogy," to mask their cruel goal to break their children's will, especially boys.[30] But repressed cruelty arguably resurfaces when rappers like Eazy-E says in "Still Talking:" "slapped a ho;" then with bravado, he declares himself a "woman-beater." Ironically, black mothers may actually fear and hate their little black boys who may become pathological,[31] and so they use cruelty to break little innocent black boys, making them perforce what they fear, and causing them to become hateful and angry.[32] Once so afflicted, rappers can't be rejected, especially if it triggers the child's earliest, repressed memory of a mother's rejection, and so in "Fuck Me Now," rapper Willie D promotes raping women who reject his sexual advances. To get a "mother's" dark "love", rappers like N.W.A. in "She Swallowed It," rapes a 14-year-old, and says: "Punch the bitch in the eye/then the ho will fall to the ground/Then you open up her mouth/put your dick [in], move the shit around."[33] Thus, these verbal assaults on black women become symbolic revenge on cruel black mothers.

And so, I proffer a rather disquieting thesis. I argue that adult children like rappers unconsciously want to assault their black mothers because such

mothers subjected them to "cruelty as love," because they brutally beat and emotionally neglected them, because they gave them not love and tenderness but morality and performance, and because adult rappers unconsciously need to tell their traumatic childhood histories through lyrics. By so doing, these rappers also seek enlightened witnesses who can help them understand why they live with hatred and anger.[34] Yet, rappers can't tell their histories openly, even if they had complete recall. It remains *verboten* to vilify black mothers.[35]

In this chapter, I advance this thesis by analyzing gangsta rap lyrics through Alice Miller's framework, so that as Bessel A. van der Kolk and Alexander C. McFarlane would argue, I can show that black males like rappers are verbally and symbolically, and in the worse cases actually, harming black women as reenactments of their own earliest childhood cruelty. They also engage in self-destructive behavior that links to "painful encounters with hostile caretakers during the first years of life."[36] In "Free From Lies," Miller argues that without helping or enlightened witnesses, such children can become destroyers in later life,[37] and so the *deep, dark secret* of the black community's crime, violence, and instability has as much to do with cruelty in the infant years of little black boys as with regressive social policies.

## 2. Black Mothers' Cruelty as Love: Hatred, Anger, and False Bond of Hopefulness with Their Sons

Through cruelty as love, as Freud would say, black mothers forge "a life-long bond […] of damaged children to exploiting and abusive parents," one that starts in the earliest years of an infant's life.[38] It's not that white racism or regressive social policies don't affect blacks in the worst ways. They do. Historically, slavery exploited blacks who, through authoritarian parenting, helped to reproduce new, well-disciplined slave laborers.[39] Likewise, Jim Crow's peonage systems exploited blacks, and black mothers again used authoritarian parenting to teach their children to know their "proper place."[40] And so while slavery and Jim Crow exploited blacks *out there*, black care-givers exploited, oppressed, and subjugated infant children *in here* – the home! Hip-hop rappers know this truth, too. In "Lodi Dodi" on *DoggyStyle*, Snoop Dogg recounts how a mother "deck[ed] Sally in the face," "punched her in the eye," "punched her in the belly," and "stepped on her feet." Why? Sally's mother wanted drugs from Snoop Dogg, and after debasing herself by "cryin on [his] shoes and grabbing [his] dick," Snoop Dogg who was nineteen rejected her and her "wrinkled pussy." Sally's mother wanted her daughter to obey, to get out the way. Snoop's point goes to the parent-child relationship, and how some black mothers used violence against their

children to meet their selfish needs. Such parents may even sexually exploit a 19-year-old black male. Although Snoop Dogg told us that "this type of shit happens every-day," he still nevertheless uses offensive, derogatory lyrics to describe a black mother's body.

From slavery to today, black caregivers, particularly mothers, needed black children to obey. Because fathers were often gone or abroad husbands, childrearing mostly fell to black mothers, which E. Franklin Frazier stressed in "The Negro Family in the United States."[41] Strict obedience meant no back talk. Black children submitted to their parents' will, making their assertiveness impotent.[42] As Dunaway told us, all black mothers "were stric' . . . 'that made children stand [in] fear everywhere they went.'"[43] Such mothers rarely indulged their children with love and tenderness. When suffering, these black children had to be stoic. Black mothers "will not suffer complainings."[44] As Dunaway writes, "Hardworking, decent, courteous children were not likely to offend anyone; nor would they bring retribution upon their mother."[45] Writing in 1963, Ralph Ellison correctly observed in "Richard Wright's Blues:" "Even parental love is given a qualitative balance akin to 'sadism.' … The horrible thing is that the *cruelty* is also an expression of concern, of *love*."[46]

Cruelty as love endangered Richard Wright, who in "Black Boy" confessed that his first cruel, nearly murderous trauma began, and was always, at home.[47] Why were black parents so sadistic? Are they beating and neglecting their children, especially little boys, because they fear losing them to white racists or because they fear little black boys and what they might do? Are little black boys stand-ins for black mothers' own traumatic, childhood experiences? Although slavery and Jim Crow have been cited time and again as the answer to everything that ails black folks, which only keeps people distracted from the uncomfortable truth, it's more than likely that black mothers were traumatized too. Van der Kolk and McFarlane argue that such parents may be neurotics because they are pathologically warding off through defense mechanisms "unacceptable unconscious wishes and impulses."[48] Put more psychoanalytically, a black parent's "character continues to have a protective function. It 'binds' impulses in stable ways, limits flexibility, and constitutes an armor against the external world."[49] If such parents have internalized the great lie that Ellison denotes, *viz*., that Jim Crow race relations required such cruelty to protect black children, especially little black boys, from their own impulses, then cruel black mothers tragically destroy in their children what was once destroyed in them, *viz*., impulses. To conceal their cruelty, black caregivers create the moral precept not only of obeying and respecting them, but also of surviving white racism, which requires little black boys to not question their parents' authority and to become vigilant against external forces like America's white

racism. This intergenerational transmission of cruelty as love not only has deleterious effects on black family stability, but also on the current attitudes and beliefs that young black men, corrosively hating and murderously angry, have on black women because these young black men, "their bodies – the spurned and humiliated children within – still did not feel understood and respected."[50] As van der Kolk and McFarlane observe, given that the present becomes so unconsciously informed by the repressed past, childhood trauma of black parents "can lead to a range of maladaptive responses in their current lives, to which 'neurotics' keep responding as if they are reliving the past."[51]

By unconsciously reacting to a repressed past that's no longer present, black mothers cannot connect their cruelty as love to why black men like rappers write lyrics about their deepest need for vengeance. Today, we know that scholars have extensively documented the link between "childhood abuse and subsequent victimization of others."[52] So, mothers who were abused hurt their infants and toddlers, and to cope with what happened to them, those adult children who become rappers find themselves unconsciously reliving their earliest, childhood past. If these rappers were dissed, or disrespected, thus reducing them to mere objects, they'd reduce women to disrespectable objects. And so, rappers like Too $hort in "Freaky Tales" on *Born to Mack* plays a "real pimp/Laying on my back with my dick in her mouth." If these rappers were not touched lovingly and held tenderly by their caregivers, especially during their infant and toddler stages, then they'd compensate, as Janov suggests, by becoming hyper-masculine.[53] And if so, then rappers like N.W.A., in "Findum, Fuckum, And Flee" on *Efil4Zaggin* treat women as repositories for their dicks.[54] Too $hort's and N.W.A.'s lyrics reek not only of vengeance but also of misogyny, thus reducing black women to mere exploitable objects. On this point, Gwendolyn Pough, quoting from and citing to Imani Perry, writes:

> Every time one turned on BET (Black Entertainment Television) or MTV, one encountered a disturbing music video: Black men rapped surrounded by dozens of black and Latina women dressed in bathing suits, or scantily clad in some other fashion. Video after video proved the same, each one more objectifying than the former. Some took place in strip clubs, some at the pool, at the beach, or in hotel rooms, but recurrent theme was dozens of half-naked women.[55]

As Diane Weather editor of "Essence" does, we can simply view Too $hort's and N.W.A.'s lyrics as "astonishing, brutal, and misogynistic,"[56] but we'd have to ignore the childhood context out of which it inexorably flows. Although patriarchy promotes misogyny, Weather's view must overlook the subtextual complexity if she ignores depth psychology.[57] By so doing,

Weathers must perforce fault white men and dominant norms, while she vouchsafes black mothers who actually and symbolically murder their little black boys, which limits Terri Adams and Douglas Fuller's analysis in "The Words Have Changed But the Ideology Remains the Same."[58] In that piece, they argue that misogyny and racism have long histories in the United States, and thus misogynistic rap roots itself within capitalist patriarchy.[59] Without patriarchy, we could credibly argue that rappers, especially female artists, perhaps would not view women as the socialized "other," thus making them unacceptable targets for venting their repressed trauma's hatred and anger. In that vein, rappers, including females, would not objectify but re-present the black body as beautiful.[60] Yet, by bracketing black mothers from judgment and by faulting white racism and sexism, writers and scholars like Weather, Adams, and Fuller implicitly reinforce the myth of black mother-sons' special "love,"[61] which has been driven askew by white racism or patriarchy.[62] That lie must fall under the weight of clinical literature that says cruelty toward children does not cause trauma, but repressed cruelty does.[63] That repression occurred in the earliest period of infancy when he cannot speak, when he's not ego separated from his caregiver, and when he's forced to ignore his cruelty, so that he can feel safe, which later causes black little boys to become hateful and angry toward their mothers.

Accordingly, rappers like Snoop Dogg in "Can U Control Yo Hoe" on *Rhythm and Gangsta* must be hateful and angry toward black mothers who spent their time controlling "hardheaded" little black boys, requiring them to obey, knowing their proper places, and humiliating them with slaps in the face. Snoop Dogg writes:

> *Can you control your hoe? (You got a bitch that won't obey what you say)/You can't control your hoe? (She hardheaded, she just won't obey)/Can you control your hoe (You've got to know what to do, what to say)/You've got to put that bitch in her place, even if it's slapping her in her face/Ya got to control your hoe/Can you control your hoe?*

Despite the obvious misogyny in Snoop's lyrics, we can get a better, clearer glimpse of the potential childhood context out of which such lyrics might flow by replacing "hoe" and "bitch" with "little black boy" and "little nigger man." By so doing, we can suddenly hear black mothers not only rationalizing the need to brutally control little black boy, but also the cruel methods by which they did so. Consider Ralph Ellison's words. In "Richard Wright's Blues," Ellison observed that to protect black children during Jim Crow, black mothers severely beat them, and justified such cruelty by citing Jim Crow, which required abused children to associate familiar people like parents not with safety and comfort[64] but with accepting severity and apparent tenderness.[65]

In bold honesty, Ellison's words conjoin cruelty as love *and* emotional blindness. Not wishing to see black mothers as cruel, little black boys have to accept the morality, the lie, that Jim Crow justified their cruel suffering, humiliation, and oppression. In "My Father's Son," Associate Justice Thomas risked, when beaten by nuns, brutal beatings by his "father" if he complained.[66] So broken and humiliated was Thomas that he cried if his "father" looked at him.[67] Similarly, James Love writes through his emotional blindness: "My mother was hands-on. I'm telling you, my mother could beat your ass."[68] After disobeying and getting caught, "that woman beat my ass. . . . That was my last whupping. . . . Mama can beat your ass in total darkness. But I can't remember a time she wasn't there for us."[69] By the time James, who's a police officer, had entered his 30s, he was no longer angry. Such memories produce no tears. Having repressed his cruel childhood, and having grown insensitive to his suffering, James had virtue; he respected his mother.[70] So, today they could laugh about this cruel beating.[71] At the very least, James' mother has destroyed his natural, normal response to pain.[72] Regardless, that pain lives in his body, all authored by his mother's cruelty.

Yet, as Miller writes, the earliest childhood cruelty causes adult violence later in life.[73] As one scholar argued, violent, demeaning, and humiliating lyrics can cause real pain and suffering, especially to women onto whom such vilifying lyrics are projected.[74] Consider Chuck D's words:

> The dominant image of black masculinity in hip-hop is that fact that somebody can be confrontational but confrontational with the wrong cat. It's like they're not ever confrontational with the cats that will claim I'll wipe your whole neighborhood out, because it's almost like *they're trained not to even see them.* It's like, my beef is with this cat right here that looks just like me.[75]

As such, rappers hurt, demean, violate, and humiliate not their black mothers but "innocent surrogate objects,"[76] and so as Chuck D aptly pointed out, black animosity toward black women keeps black men emotionally blind, so that they just can't get to the truth. If they're hurting others, and if they're writing vilifying lyrics, which symbolically represent violence, rappers might believe that they are properly discharging their anger and venting their "impotent fury."[77] Or worst, they're engaged in a kind of cultural critique of America as a hyper-aggression nation. In this way, Jadakiss states: "Killing is always there since the beginning of time. A lot of it is exaggerated, but it's based on a true story I guess. I don't know what it is."[78] That's true. However, Jadakiss and other rappers haven't been around since the beginning of time. As infants, they had no sense of America's objective history. Based on how they're parents met their primal needs in infancy, they'll have a personal, subjective history.[79] As Sue Gerhardt points out, that history's

foundation is emotions. We now know that "feelings come first," and then "our rationality, which science from its inception prized so highly, is built on emotion and cannot exist without it."[80] Moreover, neurologists like Michael Meaney argue that early nurturing builds better brain architecture. Paul Tough would argue that black mothers who traumatize their children cause cortisol to damage an infant's prefrontal cortex.[81] Given such personal, subjective histories, are rappers who project vilifying lyrics at black women really attempting to cope with the rage and anger they suffered at the hands of black mothers?[82]

Hence, given my thesis, rappers really want to, or perhaps need to, target their black mothers. However, as Miller and Chuck D would argue, rappers cannot really confront black mothers. First, black culture brooks no tolerance for directly confronting or indirectly challenging the authority of black parents, especially mothers. In "Richard Wright's Blues," Ellison makes this point when he noted that once brutally beaten, Richard had no counterpoise to his mother's brutal authority by seeking support from other adults, especially his father. Second, the black church's mass religious conscious mandates that black parents physically batter their willful children, and as Miller would point out, black children come to believe that they've suffered appropriately because they were disobedient. Third, since infancy, and since being cowered, little black boys have come to see their mothers as omnipotent, thus fearing to acknowledge consciously what their bodies know *actually* and *intimately*.[83] Fourth, in an effort to raise the ideal black man, black mothers have distorted their perception of their cruel reality by refusing little black boys the emotional space to express authentic pain and anger and by suggesting obedience training will enable them to survive white racism.[84] We've all heard: "Nigger, man up!" Eventually, as Miller would point out, these rappers will accept that they are forbidden to know the truth. To do so effectively, rappers will prefer emotional blindness over the truth, and along the way, they'd rather call each other niggaz in an emasculating way, humiliate black women by ascribing vilifying lyrics to them, and devalue their own lives by glibly telling us that they'd kill another black man. For example, N.W.A. said in "*Findum, Fuckum, And Flee*" on *Efil4-Zaggin*: "'Cause if a bitch tries to diss me . . . I smack the bitch up and shoot the nigga that's with her."

Given the foregoing, it is clear that like other children who have had their perceptions distorted by abuse, cruelty, and neglect, rappers have had inconsistent love and trust in their worlds, especially in their earliest life. One result of such inconsistency is that rappers will tend to glorify the very violence that black mothers inflicted upon them.[85] As in the case of hypermasculine men, they will actually, verbally, and symbolically inflict violence on innocent women. Why? If deMause Gerhardt, Meaney, Miller, McFar-

lane, Tough, and van der Kolk are correct, rappers are fighting back against the physical, unconscious "memory of a threatening father, mother, or caregiver."[86] And Arthur Janov tells us that under acute distress or emotional intensity, the brain systems like the amygdala records experience. It's just like the body. Miller notes: "Their bodies do not learn what we try to instill in them by words but what they have experienced physically."[87] And so despite the lie, the morality of white racism, on which black mothers rely to justify their cruelty as love, rappers will imitate, which follows from unconscious memories, and hurl it lyrically at black women. Hence, destructive, traumatic memories of their earliest experiences with black parental oppression will not affirm life but demean theirs and others. As Miller says in "The Body Never Lies," while black mothers' morality, or the lie, prevents rappers "*from recognizing reality*, the truth [remains] enshrine the bodies of these highly gifted individuals."[88]

### 3. Through Vilifying Lyrics, I Seek: Rap Artists' Hopeful Search for Enlightened Witnesses

Rappers use vilifying, demeaning, and violent lyrics in their unconscious search for the truth and to ask for help. Such lyrics unconsciously become an outlet for their corrosive hatred and murderous anger. In "Bitches Ain't Shit," from Dr. Dre's *The Chronic* album, Snoop Dogg (aka Snoop Lion) reduced women to what Patricia Hill Collins described as "materialistic [genitalia]"[89] while he, and perhaps all rappers, wish to avoid what Lisa Jones termed "paychecks."[90] Rappers like Snoop simply can't vilify black women without objectifying themselves, i.e., tool masters. Yet, none of them engages in a deep critique of the earliest context out of which this gendered tension must arise – cruelty from black parent to black male child. In "Lollipop," from his *The Carter 3* album, Lil Wayne declared: "Shawty say the nigga that she wit can't hit/But shawty, I'ma hit it hit it like I can't miss/And he can't do this, and he don't do that/Shawty need a refund, need to bring that nigga back." In "Mamma" on his *Endangered Species* album, Big Pun had been easily provoked to violence: "Why he had to fuck with me, now I got kill this man." Burdened by an emotional hair trigger, Big Pun killed easily and with impunity. He knows that three kills will get him "triple life." However, while he was at the movies, Big Pun killed someone "for steppin on my kicks (STUPID)." Later, he revealed that he's a stone cold, pathological killer: "I can murder half the world [while] laugh[ing]." Yet, if anyone hurts his mother, he'd cry and kill again, sending you "where Jesus is." Like James, Snoop Dogg, and Lil Wayne, Big Pun believes that he's defending himself against some external, objective hurt or threat, causing him like others who are just "niggaz and spics" to realize that he's

powerless because "ain't no brothers, runnin shit in the system." Yet, Big Pun's lyrics remind us of Snoop Dogg's "Can't U Control Yo Hoe" because each of them has partially gained access to a repressed trauma of their childhood past. In this way, rappers first experienced cruelty, oppression, and humiliation, not at the hands of white America, but at the hands of their black mothers.

Unfortunately, rappers like Snoop Dogg, Lil Wayne, and Big Pun and black men like James can't recall such cruelty by black mothers. To keep that cruelty repressed, they underwent a neurotic process by which they acquired an "Unreal Self,"[91] *viz.*, the "cool pose" or hyper-masculine braggadocio, to which Patterson referred. By living and acting through the Unreal Self, rappers thus believe emotionally that they have sufficiently armored themselves against the cruelty to which they were subjected as infants and toddlers. But that Unreal Self and performative ways like hyper-masculinity are defense mechanisms, perhaps against the "unacceptable unconscious wishes and impulses" to which van der Kolk and McFarlane referred. Perhaps those "wishes and impulses" were hatred and anger toward their earliest life caregivers who didn't love them as they needed. Or, such children may feel rejected by their caregivers. But these feelings are *unthinkable*. Now enraged because his primordial needs will not be met, the infant wants to fight back. But he can't. He's helpless. So, he dissociates; he becomes the repository of hatred and anger. And he becomes the obedient, controlled, respectful, and non-threatening little black boy, so now his black mother can feel safe because she's cured in him what she could not fix in her own father, rouge uncle, or in her baby's daddy. In "The Color Purple," consider Sophia's indictment: *"A girl child ain't safe in a house full of men."*[92]

But gangsta rapper's lyrics reveal repressed hatred and anger, and at some point, they will want revenge against their earliest caregivers – black mothers. Consider Tupac Shakur, about whom Michael Eric Dyson writes in "Holler If You Hear Me."[93] As a young man, Tupac told Leila Steinberg: "a prison stay, a staple of black male existence, would give him invaluable experience to draw on in writing his raps."[94] Rather than gaining insight and über respect, Tupac confessed: "Jail killed my spirit."[95] Although Tupac worked feverishly, gone were his light and wit. Rather than transcending his "niggas with a gun" ways, "Tupac was trapped by his past."[96] He neither found God nor outwitted the devil. In prison, now his symbolic über parent or superego, an experience that unconsciously required him to access the cruelty of his earliest life, Tupac was defeated. However, he never realized that his earliest life truth, or the truth that he unconsciously sought, had nothing to do with jail, white racism, niggas, or a "dysfunctional society that

profited from [racism and poverty]."[97] In truth, Tupac's mother traumatized him.

Unconsciously, rappers like Tupac want to recall their earliest life sufferings, and they want others to know what they suffered. In this way, they can become *Real* again by accessing their authenticity, spontaneity, and vitality. They can feel, emote, and cry again – not man tears; real ones. Unfortunately, as Miller argues in "Banished Knowledge," the "perfidious fairy" of repression, which spares the infant, exacts a heavy price.[98] "Children are thus forbidden to see their parents' cruelty for what it is and are denied awareness of their cruelty they suffered in the earliest years of their lives. . . . *But the body never forgets.*"[99]

However, an enlightened witness helps the rapper, the adult children, reclaim what his body knows but his mind has forgotten. "To offset that effect," Miller argues, "we need enlightened witnesses – therapists, counselors, and teachers who do not regard the emotions of an adult as haphazard but see them as the logical fruits, sometimes poisonous fruits, of misguided process of insemination."[100] Tupac for example tried to access his childhood history, when he wrote "The Rose That Grew from Concrete."[101] He wrote: "Did u hear about the rose that grew from a crack/in the concrete/Proving nature's law wrong... /Long live the rose that grew in concrete/when no one else even cared!"[102] Tupac dropped his masking identity momentarily, only to retrieve it again in "The Fear in the Heart of a Man:"

> against an attacker I will boldly take my stand/because my heart will show fear 4 no man/but 4 a broken heart I run with fright/ scared 2 be blind in a vulnerable light/I believe this fear is in everyman. . . .[103]

Rappers like other cruelly treated children must carry this lie in their heads while the traumatic truth poisons their bodies. By rejecting his truth, his infant's vulnerability, and the faint memory of a toddler's pained rejection, Tupac had to abstract. Without ever gaining access to his "Real Self," he could thus suffer the pains and vulnerabilities of his childhood history. Rather, he's like every adult child – all of whom live with such fright, such vulnerability.[104] DMX wants, needs, and fears an enlightened witness. His nightmares keep a vigil against his truth. "I have nightmares every night, dog. Every fucking night I have people rocking me to sleep in my dream, whispering, 'We love you DMX!' then they pull out burners and *pop pop*!"[105]

## 4. Conclusion: Tragedy of Emotional Blindness

In the end, rappers will collude with their black mothers, preferring when asked, except in perhaps Eminem's case, to wax on about their mothers' love, and how they still love them, even if at present they're not really on speaking terms. Invariably, they'll fault themselves. Rappers must be torn between getting the truth, not just for themselves, but also for others, so that the world will know what they've suffered, and getting revenge against their black mothers. Yet, the little black boy, who's been broken through cruelty as love, fears the loss of love and perhaps biological death by his mother and really prefers emotional blindness.

Gangsta lyrics maintain such blindness. It's an unconscious strategy that keeps the artist in a protesting game, which prevents the Real Self from knowing pain, from regaining consciousness. This early infant or toddler strategy, one firmly rooted in our limbic system, ultimately doesn't help the adult child. To stave off the conscious awareness of their earliest childhood histories of cruelty, they'll need to constantly re-inoculate themselves against the rise of the Real Self by not appropriately faulting cruel black mothers but by vilifying innocent black women.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Copyright © 2015 by Reginald Leamon Robinson. Professor of Law, Howard University School of Law, Washington, D.C. B.A., *Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude*, Howard University (1981); M.A. Political Science, The University of Chicago (1983); J.D., *Cum Laude*, The University of Pennsylvania (1989). This chapter's thoughts were initially presented at the West Virginia University College of Law's Hip-Hop and the Law Symposium in Spring 2009. This critical essay in a different format and length will be published in *Hip Hop and the Law: The Key Writings That Formed a Movement* (Donald Tibbs, dré cummings, & the late Pamela Bridgewater, eds., 2014, Carolina Academic Press). And it's with sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Pamela Bridgewater, who served as the editor for my chapter in this anthology. Thanks to Jennifer Wriggins for inviting me to present this chapter at University of Maine School of Law in March 2013; and to Crisarla Houston (UDC), Peter Alexander (former Dean and Professor of Law, Indiana Tech), Rhea Ballard-Thrower (Howard University), Larry Backer (Pennsylvania State University), Renata Kowalczyk, Colleen Perry, and Fatima Tlis for commenting on my drafts; and to my research assistants, especially Erin Medeiros, J.D., (class of 2013), Terrius Greene (class of 2015), Christine Santillana (class of 2015), and Michelle-Ann Williams (class of 2015) for their hard work. Of course, the politics and errata belong exclusively to me.

2. Bust Down, "Nasty Bitch," in *Nasty Bitch* (Original Release Date Dec. 13, 1991, Lil Joe Records, Inc.).

3. Orlando Patterson, "Blacklash: The Crisis of Gender Relations among African Americans," 62 *Transition* 4, 15 (1993).

4. Alice Miller, "How Is Repressed Anger Very Often Vented?," 22 *Emphatic Parenting* 3 (1999).

5. *See* T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women* 88 (2007) (saying that black men use their mythic dominance to perfect the craft of "dicksmithing").

6. *See* Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* 81- 70-71 (1965) (explaining that black males, having a weaker role in the family and not enjoying positive male roles, compensatory by reinforcing negative stereotypes, particularly by dating many females, giving rise to hypersexuality).

7. Bust Down's lyrics were: "cum was drippin' out of her nose all ova her clothes," and "when I shot my nut . . . she went a slurpin it."

8. Bust Down actually said: "Her pussy hole smelled like sour cream and onion."

9. Bust Down said: "She was limpin, her pussy was stretched out of shape."

10. Bust Down's lyrics were: "While I was fuckin her I said you gon' respect me bitch!"

11. He said: "she went to choke, she couldn't take this dick/But I didn't give a fuck I tried to kill that bitch."

12. *See* Patterson, *supra* note 3, at 15.

13. *Id*. (discussing tropes like bitch and mother fucker, and what such tropes might mean for black male and female relations).

14. Alice Miller, *The Body Never Lies: The Lingering Effects of Hurtful Parenting* 15 (Andrew Jenkins trans., 2004) (a person's unconscious is her biography, a life story, which gets stored in the body and is accessed consciously as fragments.) [hereinafter cited as Miller, *The Body Never Lies*].

15. *Cf*. Wilma A. Dunaway, *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation* 78 (2003) ("All mothers were stric' . . . 'that made children stand fear everywhere they went.").

16. *See* Arthur Janov, *Why We Get Sick, How We Get Well: The Healing Power of Feelings* 22 (1996) (the maltreated child consciously or subconsciously shifts away from her natural impulses or authentic feelings once she realizes that she'll not be loved as she really is, and so to get love and to halt the brutality, which means pleasing the parent, she acts increasingly "unreal, that is, not in accord with the reality of [her] own needs and desires. In a short time the neurotic behavior becomes automatic."); Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* 7 (Hildegarde Hannum & Hunter Hannum, trans., 2002) (if a child cannot react emotionally to her pain, humiliation, and coercion, she must repress her experiences, and she cannot integrate these experiences into her personality. Once repressed, her needs cannot be satisfied, which leads to hopelessness and "often causes severe psychological problems.") [hereinafter cited as Miller, *For Your Own Good*]. *See, e.g.*, Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Born in Bondage: Growing Up Enslaved in the Antebellum South* 101 (2000) ("When one little girl in Virginia accidentally came upon some adults preparing to eat lamb, a food normally unavailable to slaves, an old man took her 'out back of the quarter house'

and whipped her severely, explaining: 'Now what you see, you don't see, and what you hear, you don't hear.'").

17. *See* Thomas L. Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community 1831–1865*, at 159 (1978) ("Mother was the central figure in the quarter family's educational role. From the time she firs suckled her child at her breast, rocked him in her lap, or sang him to sleep, she began the process of transmitting values, beliefs, feelings, that would be reinforced later more deliberately.").

18. Patterson, *supra* note 3, at 15 (discussing antimaternal tension between black mothers and the sons).

19. *Id*. at 9.

20. *Id*.

21. *See* Bessel A. van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* 33 (2014); Bruce D. Perry & Maia Szalavitz, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* 48 (2006) ("Since humans have always been the deadliest animal encountered by other humans, we closely monitor nonverbal signals of human menace, such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language."); Lloyd deMause, "The Origins of War in Child Abuse: The Psychology of Neurobiology of Violence," available at http://www.psychohistory.com/originsof war/03_psychology _neurobiology.html (last visited: Feb. 16, 2012), at *13; Bessel A. van der Kolk & Alexander C. McFarlane, "The Black Hole of Trauma," in *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society* 3, 5 (Bessel A. van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, & Lars Weisaeth, eds., 2007 (most people who suffer trauma can go on living without traumatic memories).

22. Patterson, *supra* note 3, at 9.

23. *Id*. at 14.

24. Peter A. Levine & Maggie Kline, *Trauma through a Child's Eyes: Awakening the Ordinary Miracle of Healing* 4 (2006) ("*trauma is not in the event itself; rather, trauma resides in the nervous system.*") (italics in text).

25. Common with Adam Bradley, *One Day It'll All Make Sense* x (2011).

26. *Id*. at 5.

27. Alice Miller, *Banished Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injures* 14–15 (Leila Vennewitz trans., 1990) [hereinafter cited as Miller, *Banished Knowledge*].

28. *Id*. at 15.

29. *Id*. at 37.

30. Alice Miller, *The Truth Will Set You Free: Overcoming Emotional Blindness and Finding Your True Adult Self* ix (Andrew Jenkins trans., 2001) (under poisonous pedagogy, a parent uses beatings, manipulation, and humiliation to break a child's will, thus converting her into an obedient subject) [hereinafter cited as Miller, *Truth Will Set You Free*].

31. Donna L. Franklin, *Ensuring Inequality: The Structural Transformation of the African-American Family* 157 (1997), citing *The Eighth Generation: Cultures and Personalities of New Orleans Negroes* 161–62 (John H. Rohrer & Munro S. Edmonson, eds., 1960) (black mothers, preferring little girls, were convinced that little black boys would grow to become pathological men.).

32. Edward G. Armstrong, "Gangsta Misogyny: A Content Analysis of the Portrayals of Violence against Women in Rap Music, 1987–1993," 8 *J. of Crim. Jus. & Pop. Culture* 96, 100 (2001).

33. *Id*.

34. Miller, *Banished Knowledge*, *supra* note 27, at 7 (an enlightened witness is a potential helper to a suffering child. Such a potential helper will not "shrink from unequivocally taking the side of the child and protecting him from power abuse on the part of adults. In our child-inimical society such people are still rare.").

35. *See, e.g.*, Michel Martin, "Does Sparing the Rod Spoil the Child?," *NPR's Listen to the Story*, June 19, 2012, available at http://www.npr.org/2012/06/19/155358677/does-sparing-the-rod-spoil-the-child (last visited: June 19, 2012) (three ministers discuss, among other things, Pastor Creflo Dollar who had been arrested for assaulting his daughter, and the next day, Sunday, Pastor Dollar denied the charges, saying, to the congregation's whoops and applauds, parents must discipline children in a culture of parental disrespect.). *Cf*. Miller, *Truth Will Set You Free*, *supra* note 30, at 101–102. Writing about and analyzing Frank McCourt's "Angela's Ashes," Miller notes that McCourt described in gruesome detail the cruelties he'd suffered in childhood; however, "he never rises up against his tormentors, attempting instead to remain loving and tolerance [sic] and seeking salvation in humor." . . . "Humor saved Frank McCourt's life and enabled him to write his book. His readers are grateful to him for it. Many of them have shared the same fate and they want nothing more dearly than to be able to laugh it off." By implication, Miller was noting how McCourt like so many of us who were abused as children used humor to rationalize implicitly what he'd suffered, and again by implication, McCourt perforce kept the faith by refusing to vilify the parental caregivers who tormented him.

36. van der Kolk & McFarlane, *supra* note 21, at 11.

37. *See generally* Alice Miller, *Free from Lies: Discovering Your True Needs* 45–89 (Andrew Jenkins trans., 2007) [hereinafter cited as Miller, *Free from Lies*].

38. *See* Sigmund Freud, "The Aetiology of Hysteria," reprinted in *The Freud Reader* 96–111 (Peter Gay ed., 1989).

39. *See* Dunaway, *supra* note 15, at 77 ("Harsh as it sounds, the slave household was expected 'to carry out the repressive socialisation of children. The family must raise children who have internalised hierarchical social relations, who will discipline themselves and work efficiently without constant supervision.").

40. Bell Hooks, *Salvation: Black People and Law* 23 (2001) ("Taught to accept subordination, black children naturally felt in a state of psychological conflict. On one hand we had to possess enough self-esteem to seek education and self-advancement, yet on the other hand we had to know our place and stay in it. All too often parents used harsh discipline and punishment to teach black children their 'proper place.'").

41. *See, e.g.*, E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939).

42. Judith Heimlich, *Breaking the Will: Shedding Light on the Religious Child Maltreatment* 108 (2011) ("The autonomous will and self-assertiveness of the child must be reduced to impotency.").

43. Dunaway, *supra* note 15, at 78.

44. Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925, at 219 (1977).

45. Dunaway, *supra* note 15, at 76.

46. "Richard Wright's Blue," reprinted in Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* 71, 91 (1964).

47. Richard Wright, *Black Boy (American Hunger): A Record of Childhood and Youth* 6–7 (Harper Perennial ed., 2009) (originally published 1944) (Richard's mother beat him nearly to death after accidentally setting the house on fire).

48. van der Kolk & McFarlane, *supra* note 21, at 7.

49. *Id*.

50. *See* Miller, *The Body Never Lies*, *supra* note 14, at 33.

51. van der Kolk & McFarlane, *supra* note 21, at 7.

52. *Id*.

53. *See* Janov, *supra* note 16, at 195 ("When there is insufficient holding and caressing very early in life, it is probably the amygdalae that transform stored pain into compulsive sexuality.").

54. N.W.A.'s actually lyrics were: "When the pussy holes are open/Ready to fuck until my dick is raw."

55. Gwendolyn D. Pough, "What It Do, Shorty?," 1 *Black Women, Gender + Families* 78, 82–83 (2007).

56. Valarie Smith, "An Introduction to Misogyny in Popular Culture" 14 (Sept. 2010) (quoting Diane Weather).

57. *See generally* Rollo May, *The Discovery of Being: Writing in Existential Psychology* (1983).

58. *See* Terri M. Adams & Douglas B. Fuller, "The Words Have Changed But the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music," 36 *J. of Black Studies* 938, 942 (2006).

59. *Id*. at 942.

60. *See* Pough, *supra* note 55, at 83 (complicating the tension between objectification and representation).

61. *See* Stacey Patton, "Why is America Celebrating the Beating of a Black Child?: A Mom's Violence Won't Keep Her Son Safe," available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/04/29/why-is-america-celebrating-the-beating-of-a-black-child (last visited: May 4, 2015) (discussing a black Baltimore mother, who out of love and wanting to keep her son out of the riots and perhaps safe from police action, beat her son publicly). That mother, Toya Graham, told CBS News: "He gave me eye contact. And at that point, you know, not even thinking about cameras or anything like that – that's my only son and at the end of the day, I don't want him to be a Freddie Gray. Is he the perfect boy? No he's not, but he's mine." *Id.*

62. *Cf*. David A. Lowe, "Beating Our Black Children Furthers the Legacy of Slavery," available at http://the grio.com/2014/09/15/adrian-peterson-child-abuse-slavery (last visited: May 3, 2015).

63. *See* Miller, *For Your Own Good*, *supra* note 16, at 7 ("We already know that neuroses are a result of repression, not of events themselves.").

64. *See* Perry & Szalavitz, *supra* note 21, at 67.

65. Ralph Ellison, "Richard Wright's Blue," reprinted in *Shadow and Act* 71, 85 (1964); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* 510 (1974) (same).

66. Clarence Thomas, *My Father's Son* 15 (2007).

67. *Id*. at 28.

68. "A Mother's Valor," in Keith Michael Brown, *Sacred Bond: Black Men and their Mothers* 3 (1998).

69. *Id*.

70. Miller, *Banished Knowledge*, *supra* note 27, at 5 ("Not to take one's own suffering seriously, to make light of it or even to laugh at it, is considered good manners in our culture. This attitude is even called a virtue, and many people (at one time including myself) are proud of their lack of sensitivity toward their own fate and above all toward their own childhood.").

71. "A Mother's Valor," *supra* note 68, at 8.

72. *See* Miller, *Truth Will Set You Free*, *supra* note 30, at 102 ("Laughter is good for you, so they say, and it certainly helps you survive. But laughter can also entice you to be blind. You may be able to laugh at the fact that someone has forbidden you to eat of the tree of knowledge, but that laughter will not really wake you up from your sleep.").

73. *See* Miller, *Banished Knowledge*, *supra* note 27, at 43 (discussing how traumatized adult children project their hurt, pain, and suffering onto others).

74. Byron Hurt, "Hip-Hop (Abridged): Beyond Beats and Rhymes" 3 (2006), www.mediaed.org.

75. *Id*. at 6.

76. Miller, *Banished Knowledge*, *supra* note 27, at 24 (every adult child who commits murder not in self-defense but on innocent surrogate objects is compelled to "avenge the gross abuse, neglect, and confusion suffered during childhood and to leave the accompany feelings in a state of repression.").

77. *Id.* at 40 ("But repression is a perfidious fairy who will supply help at the moment but will eventually exact a price for this help. The impotent fury comes to life again when the [adult's] own child is born, and at last the anger can be discharged – once again at the expense of a defenseless creature.").

78. Hurt, *supra* note 75, at 7 (Jadakiss talking about killing as always existing).

79. *See* Miller, *Truth Will Set You Free*, *supra* note 30, at ix (abused children have not an objective but subjective history).

80. Sue Gerhardt, *Why Love Matters: How Affection Shapes a Baby's Brain* 4 (2004) (discussing how emotions are the foundation of the intellect).

81. Nicholas D. Kristof, "Cuddle Your Kid!," *NY Times* (Oct. 20, 2012) (op-ed) (discussing how cortisol damages prefrontal cortex, and discussing the insights of neurologists Michael Meaney and Paul Tough).

82. *See generally* Ken Magid & Carole A. McKelvey, *High Risk: Children without a Conscience* 26 (1988) ("At the core of the unattached is a deep-seated rage, far beyond normal anger. This rage is suppressed in their psyche. Now we all have some degree of rage, but the rage of psychopaths is that born of unfulfilled needs as infants. Incomprehensible pain is forever locked in their souls, because of the abandonment they felt as infants.").

83. *See* Miller, *The Body Never Lies*, *supra* note 27, at 33. Consider the implications of Miller's argument in the context of rap lyrics.

> [Rappers, like] "different writers who, though they unconsciously revealed the truth about their childhood in their works, were never able to admit this truth to their conscious minds because of the infant fear that lived on in them in a disassociated state.

> Even in adulthood, the child within could not believe that he/she would not be killed if the truth were told. Because this fear is supported, not only in our society but all over the world, by a commandment that admonishes us to be lenient and forgiving to our parents, it has remained disassociated and thus impervious to any attempts to come to terms with it. . . . The central point in all this is that the body cannot relate to the commandments of morality. Ethical concerns are entirely alien to it. Bodily functions like breathing, circulation, digestion respond only to the emotions we actual feel, not to moral precepts. The body sticks to the facts. *Id*.

84. *See* Lawson Bush V, "How Black Mothers Participate in the Development of Manhood and Masculinity: What Do We Know About Black Mothers and Their Sons," 73 *J. of Negro Educ.* 381, 383 (2004).

85. Miller, *Free from Lies*, *supra* note 37, at 47–48 (referring to abused children who glorify violence).

86. *Id*. at 48. On this point, Miller writes:

> The well-known American pediatrician Dr. T. Berry Brazelton once filmed a group of mothers holding and feeding their babies, each in her own particular way. More than twenty years later he repeated the experiment with the women those babies had grown into, who now had babies themselves. Astoundingly, they all held their babies in exactly the same way as they had been held by their mothers, although of course they had no conscious memories from those early years. One of the things Brazelton proved with this experiment was that we are influenced in our behavior by our unconscious memories. And those memories can be life-affirming and affectionate, or traumatic and destructive. *Id.*

87. For material on how moral precept can't override the trauma experienced by the body, see *id*. at 48.

88. Miller, *The Body Never Lies*, *supra* note 14, at 35.

89. Snoop Dogg's lyrics were: "Bitches ain't shit but hoes and tricks/Lick on deez nutz and suck the dick/Get's the fuck out after you're done/And I hops in my ride to make a quick run." *See* Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* 156 (2000).

90. Collins, *supra* note 89 at 155, citing Lisa Jones, *Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair* 267 (1994). Lisa Jones said: "If the sexual politics that foster these reactions remain unexamined, as Lisa Jones succinctly states, the potential damage done to both Black women and Black men is great: 'Between rappers turning 'ho' into a national chant and [the movie *Waiting to*] *Exhale* telling African Americans that our real problem is the shortage of brothers who are both well hung and well paid, I'm getting to think that all we can offer each other as black women and men is genitalia and the paycheck.'" *Id.*

91. Janov, *supra* note 16, at 20 (as the maltreated child consciously shifts away from her authentic feelings, so that she can please the parent, she acts increasingly "unreal," without regard to her real "needs and desires. [T]he neurotic behavior becomes automatic.").

92. Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (1983).

93. Michael Eric Dyson, *Holler If You Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur* 215 (2001) (referring to Tupac's prison stay).

94. *Id*.

95. *Id*.

96. *Id*.

97. *Id*. at 216.

98. Miller, *Banished Knowledge*, *supra* note 27, at 39 (discussing the double-edged sword of repression, which saves and "kills" at once).

99. Miller, *The Truth Shall Set You Free*, *supra* note 30, at 96-97.

100. Miller, *Banished Knowledge*, *supra* note 27, at 97 (discussing the important role of the enlightened witness).

101. Tupac Amani Shakur, *The Rose That Grew From Concrete* 3 (1999).

102. *Id*.

103. *Id*. at 31.

104. *See* Arthur Janov, *The New Primal Scream: Primal Therapy 20 Years On* 75 (1991) ("nightmares are forms of defense" against death, for people have nightmares are virtually reliving early life trauma, and her vital signs reach lethal levels as she attempts to flee or repress her traumatic pain).

105. Earl Simmons (as told to Smokey D. Fontaine), *E.A.R.L: The Autobiography of DMX* 3 (2002).

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# THE BOOMERANG EFFECT OF LIBERAL ABORTION LAWS IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETIES: THE CASE OF GENDER BIASED SEX-SELECTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT. The women are still facing many challenges while exercising their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights despite the series of concerted efforts undertaken by the international community within the last half a century to ensure better protection and promotion of women's human rights and fundamental freedoms. Of particular concern is the use of women's human rights discourse to satisfy the patriarchal aspirations of the society. As known, the sex ratio at birth (SRB) or the secondary sex ratio represents the number of registered male births divided by the number of registered female births and is usually within the range of 105–106 boys to 100 girls with few geographical and temporal variations observed across the world. The analysis of the statistical data on SRB in Azerbaijani population shows that the ratio of male to female population had been within the normal range up until early 1990s. The skewed SRB started to be observed thereafter with occasionally as high deviations as 118 men to 100 women and quite minor decline in the recent years. The findings of the research regarding this phenomenon indicate that although son preference had constituted an inalienable component of the whole system of patriarchal values nurtured in the mindsets of the population throughout the centuries given the series of socio-cultural and economic considerations, the phenomenon began to impact the sex ratios at birth following the decline of fertility rates and the advent of modern technologies enabling prenatal determination of sex. Yet, so far the related studies have paid little attention to the construction of the legal framework behind the phenomenon. This article aims at filling this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the rationale and mechanisms behind the existing legal and policy framework on abortions and explores the linkages between these mechanisms and the increasing number of abortions performed to ensure the birth of a son child.

Keywords: sex selection; fetus; abortion laws; reproductive rights; gender equality; son preference

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The last decades have witnessed series of concerted efforts aimed at advancing women's human rights worldwide including the adoption of the UN CEDAW Convention (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) as well as a number of regional, sub-regional and national legal and policy initiatives that followed. Nevertheless the women in many parts of the world are still among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups facing challenges regarding protection, promotion and exercise of their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. The discourse of women's human rights is extensively employed by policy makers all over the world while the real commitments are seriously lagging behind in the vast majority of cases. And it is especially appalling when the women's human rights parley is misused to reinforce the patriarchal notions of humanity with serious repercussions for those few victories that the gender equality advocates have been able to achieve to date. The discourse of reproductive rights in general and the issue of abortions in particular require specific consideration in this regard.

As known, any disputes on abortions inevitably involve the whole array of attitudes from the standpoint of philosophy, ethics, religion, sociology, human rights and gender studies. The issue of abortions has always been among the most controversial moral and legal dilemmas worldwide. The central terrain in the problem of induced abortions per se is occupied by the queries seeking to establish whether an unborn child should be given an opportunity to be born or is it actually a woman's right to control her body that should prevail. Series of questions aim to address the major questions that are relevant in this case: whether a human embryo or a human fetus has a moral value and in case if it does, is it entitled to human rights possessed by the members of human family already born, whether abortions are ethically permissible and should the society limit, ban or facilitate abortions (Tooley et al. 2009). It should be stressed that the debate over the moral and legal facets of abortions started long ago and have led to formation of two major moral stances on the issue: pro-life/anti-abortion and pro-choice/pro-abortion.

The pro-choice movement has always argued in favor of a woman's right to choose abortion to prevail over a child's right to be born stating that the very burden of childbearing is inter alia a clear interference with a mother's right to privacy and her right to control her body, which deprives her from many educational and professional opportunities as well as equal standing in the society. The proponents of this moral stance argue that in cases where human personhood is not proven, which is the case with pregnancies when a fetus has not yet reached a point of viability,[1] a woman should have unrestricted right to decide whether to continue with her pregnancy or not. Many in this group do not consider a fetus to be a person, i.e. a human being that has reached a point of viability, before they are born.

Others consider its rights to be very limited against the rights of those that have already been born, parents or other siblings. For instance, one of the famous arguments in this regard was presented by Judith Jarvis Thomson, well known for the use of series of thought experiments to justify the philosophical points she presented. Thomson believed that although a fetus was assumed to be a human being having a right to life, a right to choose abortion should prevail as a woman should have a right to control her body without any external interference. She referred to justifications of the right to life of a fetus as "slippery slope arguments" and put forward the thought experiment with the violinist plugged for a certain period of time into a woman's body, against her will, to survive. So, the woman had to choose whether to unplug a violinist thus killing him or wait nine months to enable him to survive (Thomson 1995). Although the thought experiment presented by Thomson is more applicable in cases of pregnancies following rape, her main argument in the paper stemmed from her belief that "the right to life consists not in the right not to be killed, but rather in the right not to be killed unjustly" meaning that it was not sufficient enough to prove the moral impermissibility of abortions by merely referring to a fetus as a living human being, a person. She believed that it was crucial to prove that abortion was not just a killing, but that it was "a just killing" in a vast majority of cases and this form of killing had to be permitted. She drove away from the rights discourse and focused on moral discourse to justify abortions. Another defense of moral permissibility of abortions came from Mary Anne Warren, who distinguished between abortion and infanticide and in the light of this believed that a fetus, being a human being but not a person, was inferior to his/her mother and had to be aborted as s/he limited women's right to freedom and self-determination (Warren 2000).

It is of course out of the question that despite much possible derogation the ultimate decision of abortion should be made by a mother, i.e. a person who is one of the two major directly involved "plaintiffs" in the case. It is her right to choose whether to undergo an abortion and prevent the birth of an unwanted child or let a child be born and enjoy its right to life. However, this view is seriously opposed by the pro-life movement that does not approve of abortions. Their arguments are mainly grounded in the belief into the sanctity of human life and they insist on the right to life to be applicable to an unborn child as well. They believe that a fetus is a person from the very moment of conception and therefore s/he should be allowed the opportunity to develop and be born. This group is of belief that aborting a child is tantamount to killing any other person and abortions could be justified in just few exceptional cases such as rape or pregnancy related complications posing a threat to a mother's life (Beckwith 2007; Adams and Lundquist 2013).

The recent decades have also witnesses the emergence of the middle stance on the issue that is mainly pro-life with certain pro-choice exceptions. The third moral stance believes that abortion should in fact be allowed in too many cases other than those few exceptions acceptable by pro-life movement. But they are apprehensive that allowing abortions on such a scale would lead to disappointing consequences that would allow abortion on demand and would foster irresponsible attitudes to contraception. This group is also of belief that in any case abortions will always be sought by women and it's better to allow legal and safe abortions to avoid the negative consequences of clandestine ones (Kaczor 2010).

Nevertheless, we should acknowledge that these debates could be valid in societies where both sides of the "litigation" are more or less on an equal footing, i.e. that the national legal and policy framework is in place or at least is striving to ensure adequate protection to both parties involved and the dilemma is about having the ultimate decision of whose right is to prevail. But these arguments become void when it comes to the societies where little attention is paid to the rights of women in general and their reproductive rights and freedoms in particular. Therefore, being far from the intentions to fuel further the long lasting debates between pro-life and pro-choice supporters, this paper aims to explore the ways in which the reproductive rights discourse is commonly misused to exploit the reproductive functions of the women in case of a particular example of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

While over a half a century ago abortions constituted one of the most contributing and inexcusably utilized instruments for prenatal intervention to ensure a birth of a son-child in the South-East Asian countries mainly, the 2011 PACE (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) resolution has highlighted several European countries as the ones demonstrating alarmingly high skewed SRB (sex ratio at birth) caused most probably by the practice of sex selection abortions favoring male population (PACE Resolution 1829/2011). It is with regret that the largest country in the South Caucasus, the Republic of Azerbaijan is currently occupying one of the leading positions in this list.

As known, the SRB or the secondary sex ratio representing the number of registered male births divided by the number of registered female births is usually within the range of 105–106 boys to 100 girls with few geographical and temporal variations observed across the world. The analysis of the statistical data on SRB in Azerbaijani population obtained from the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan demonstrates that the ratio of male to female population had been within the normal biological range up until early 1990s. The skewed indicators started to be observed

thereafter with occasionally as high deviations as 118 men to 100 women and very minor decline (116) in the recent years.[2]

Such a ratio of male to female population is alarming and the available research shows that similar imbalance could theoretically be due to series of factors inclusive of under-enumeration, series of biological factors, or deliberate action in the form of sex selection abortion (Kaczor 2010; Guilmoto 2012; Purewal 2010). It is also acknowledged that while the issues of under-enumeration and biological factors could cause similar imbalance, the phenomenon is mainly attributed to sex selection that can occur in several ways including selection prior to conception via sperm separation, selection after conception preceding implantation stage via genetic diagnosis of IVF (in vitro fertilization) embryos, via induced abortions and finally via infanticide performed during the period following the birth (Kaczor 2010).

Given that the current paper is mostly concerned with the deliberate elimination of a girl fetus, it is important to note that the term "sex selection abortion" will be used to refer to deliberate premature termination of pregnancy irrespective of period of gestation to prevent the birth of a girl child. This approach is taken to avoid any misunderstandings that could arise due to diverse contexts where the phrase is usually used.

It should be noted that following the period of multiple upheavals that took place in the Republic of Azerbaijan after the collapse of the USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), the country have passed through the process of major transition that have in fact also been widely misused to justify the existing failures in the political, economic and other spheres. The international community has already widely admitted that any similar transition should be accompanied by the major transformation of gender relations which is one of the key factors that would ultimately define whether the humanity will have a transition "from the state of nature to the state of culture" (Beauvoir 1981). Obviously, this transformation does require concerted efforts on the side of all involved actors to ensure that the rights and freedoms of all are duly acknowledged and respected without attributing inferior status to the women. Ideally such a transformation should create an enabling environment for the women to freely exercise the wide array of the human rights and freedoms they are entitled to according to a number of international, regional and national human rights provisions inclusive of their rights to quality education, employment and income-generating opportunities as well as health. The major precondition for the realization of this is to ensure that the women's roles do not remain confined to the domestic field mainly and the traditional notions of "motherhood," "reproduction," and child caring are seriously challenged as the fields of the women's major responsibility thus providing them with the opportunity to exercise inter alia their right to decide freely and consciously on the number, spacing and

timing of their children with all the necessary information and means to do so (ICPD 1994). The due tribute in this regard should be paid to the pro-choice advocates whose tenacious and concerted efforts has led to the reproductive rights discourse being integrated into the national legal and policy frameworks of many countries in the world to protect the women from unwanted and unplanned pregnancy and child caring that could have serious negative implications for their future educational and professional advancement. But little did the pro-choice advocates know that there would be another side of the coin in the societies with the deeply rooted patriarchal traditions and aspirations where the provisions on a woman's right to control her reproductive functions would pave their way into the national legal and policy frameworks following the processes far distant from the intentions to support the advancement of gender equality and thus, would be extensively misused for realization of one of the most inhumane manifestations of gender based discrimination in the form of the sex selection abortions favoring male population.

The evidence based data suggests that the practice is widespread in patriarchal societies. The traditional dependency of the family "continuity" on sons, acceptance of sons as the major bread winners of the family as well as the major supporters of the elderly parents, acceptance of girls as the transitory members of the family contributes to sons being considered "assets" as opposed to daughters being, on the contrary, accepted as "liabilities" (Coale 1991 and Guilmoto 2012). Obviously, perception of sons as more valued children in the family as compared to daughters, leads to numerous instances of intervention to regulate the sex composition of the family and this leads to multiple socio-demographic implications for the countries concerned.

For better or for worse, Azerbaijan is among those few countries that are situated on the crossroads between East and West, between Asia and Europe. This inescapable scenario is believed to have had quite far-reaching repercussions for the population of the country including inter alia the challenges faced in the attempts to frame one's gender identity. As known, the concept of gender identity, representing the socially constructed component of biological sex a person belongs to, guides the formation of related gender roles manifested through the person's behavior in his/her social environment. Although it is subject to interdisciplinary research, combining the perspectives of gender studies and behavioral sciences to reveal the exact mechanisms impacting the formulation of particular gender roles unique to the Azerbaijani society, it is widely acknowledged that a series of diverse factors including inter alia the traditional patriarchal aspirations of the population, religious background as well as the decades of soviet dominance produced a distinctive recipe of what it is to be a woman

in Azerbaijan. It is the truth universally acknowledged that the modernization processes taking place during the soviet era have to certain extent contributed to women achieving higher levels of education and subsequently getting access to the job market, even though they were also expected to be successful in doing the most of the housework and child caring, thus being caught under the double burden of career and family responsibilities (Heyat 2002). Despite the fact that a girl child was provided with equal opportunities to study and advance her education, she was also constantly reminded that her utmost and peculiar role in the society was to get married and raise children. While men's education was considered as a means for the end of financial income and family support, women's education was meant to be utilized for giving proper up-bringing to the children. Though the children of both sexes were believed to be equally loved and cared for in the vast majority of cases, a son child was given a preference due to the series of socio-cultural and economic considerations such as the continuation of the family lineage, protection of family honor, implementation of certain religious-traditional rituals and most importantly the guarantee of the elderly parent support. And it is with regret that such a preferential treatment has paved the way for the sex selection abortions in the light of the falling fertility rates and the advent of modern technologies enabling prenatal determination of a fetal sex as of the start of 1990s (Aliyeva 2014). The evidence based data reveals that when the intention to have fewer children, whether driven by economic or any other considerations, is coupled with the willingness/ pressure to produce "a male heir," the families opt for possible means to regulate the sex composition of their children (Duthe et al. 2012). And abortions that constitute one of the most inalienable ingredients of women's sexual and reproductive freedom and rights[3] are regrettably extensively used to achieve the desired sex composition in Azerbaijani families.

While viewed in a larger historical spectrum, the liberal abortion laws of Azerbaijan Republic represent nothing but a product inherited from the soviet legal system as is the case with the vast majority of other post USSR republics. The thorough scrutiny of the issues, deployed to back up and advocate for the related legal and policy measures undertaken during the Soviet era, reveals important facets that bring the light to the issues that sparked the "liberalization" of abortion laws in the USSR.

As known, abortion was legalized in the former USSR in 1920, then totally banned in 1936 and re-legalized in November 1955 following the decree of the Supreme Council of the USSR. It should be acknowledged that the USSR was the first country in the world that made abortion available, upon request and often at no cost. This was stated in the joint Decree of 18 November 1920 issued by the People's Commissariat of Health and the People's Commissariat of Justice on "Protecting the health of the women"

(Heer 1965). The legalization of abortion by the government was described as "a temporary necessity" following the period of economic crisis, war, revolution, civil war to ensure that the women are provided with the opportunities to control their fertility due to being unable to take care of their children (Heer 1965). The Decree sparked fierce debates between the proponents and opponents, i.e. the government and health officials with the former arguing that the women in the given situation would seek abortions anyway and it was the government's responsibility to ensure that the issue is legally regulated to avoid a number of clandestine abortions having major detrimental public health consequences while the latter strongly opposed legalization of abortions in the light of the harmful effect on population growth as well as significant harms posed to women's health (Solomon 1991). All in all, the issue of a "temporary necessity" and the very language of the Decree prove that the rationale behind such an important decision having enormous public health and demographic implications was too distant from the notion of reproductive rights.

However, Joseph Stalin's concerns over the population growth had led to the ban to be imposed on abortions in 1936. It should also be stated that outlawing abortions was accompanied by series of other legal provisions as seen in the title of the law "On prohibition of abortions, increasing the pecuniary aid to women in childbirth, provision of state assistance to large families, expansion of the network of maternity homes, day nurseries and kindergartens, reinforcement of criminal punishment for failure to pay alimonies, and on certain amendments to legislation on divorces" (Decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars, 1936). Simultaneously with this legal prohibition, series of efforts followed to stimulate the fertility increase. Thus, the social allowances were increased, series of limitations on pregnancy and maternity leaves were eliminated, and criminal liability was imposed for refusing to hire a pregnant woman or reducing her salary (Randall 2011). The series of policies stimulating fertility including the social allowances to women giving birth to the sixth and subsequent children followed. But these allowances were abolished in 1948 when the World War II already ended and the problem with population depletion was thought to be over. It should also be stated that neither a ban on abortions, nor the above stated policy measures were sufficient enough to decrease the number of abortions in the country. Abortions continued to be performed illegally as ironically these policies were going hand in hand with the measures that encouraged married women to get employed. Furthermore, very small amount of the national income was spent on housing (Heer and Bryden 1996) in addition to very few efforts to reduce women's burden regarding childcare.

The prosecution of women for abortions was lifted in August 1954 after Stalin's death and according to the Order of 23 November 1955 "On revocation of abortion ban" the abortions had to be performed at health institutions upon women's will and request (Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR 1955). The major reason for this revocation was related to a large number of maternal death cases following clandestine abortions.

An abortion could be performed in the first 12 weeks of gestation since the above-mentioned decree of 1955. In 1982 this period was extended up until 28 weeks for those women willing to have an abortion on medical and social grounds (Ministry of Health USSR, Order #234, 1982).[4] In an attempt to control the high rate of abortions taking place illegally the government continuously extended the circumstances allowing legal abortions. Thus in 1987 another Decree listing a whole range of non-medical circumstances was issued. These issues included the following: a death of a husband during the pregnancy, an imprisonment of a pregnant woman or her husband, a deprivation of maternity rights, a multi-parity (in cases when the number of children exceeded five), a divorce during pregnancy, a pregnancy following rape, and child disability in the family. It should also be stated that the document further stated that an abortion could also be performed on any other ground not on this list following the approval of the respective commission (Ministry of Health USSR, Order #1342, 1987).

It was expected that the legalization would entail a serious drop in the sharp increase in abortion-caused death rates, however Sadvokasova's research (Sadvokasova 1969) states that this legalization didn't lead to complete elimination of the criminal abortions. To start with, the very language of the decree was advocating for the majority of women to choose motherhood over abortion to encourage population growth. Although the official state discourse was acknowledging the right to family planning and fertility regulation in line with the international legal standards, the available public health services were inaccessible or absent, the quality and quantity of the specialized health services was not adequate to the needs of the population and there was a lack of specialized health personnel. Furthermore, even though the government declared support for contraception from time to time (Popov 1990), little efforts were undertaken to make contraception available and further ban on the widespread use of oral contraceptives was imposed in 1974 (Ministry of Health USSR, Directive on the side effects and complications of the oral contraceptives). The state was dictating reproductive behavior to the population. Thus, the induced abortion was becoming the only available means of family planning extensively utilized by the population in the attempts to control their fertility.

So, the absence of sex education and related counseling at health facilities, schools and other institutions, imposition of a ban on contraceptive

methods and legalization of abortions is representative of the very ambiguous reality of the Soviet Union regarding the case of abortions. The analysis of the policies regulating sexual and reproductive health and rights in the USSR reveals series of important contradictory aspects on the issue. Thus, the government legalized abortions in 1955 underlying that the women have the right to avoid negative health consequences of illegal/self-induced abortions. But the question is whether this measure was about the right/opportunity granted to women to control their bodies and reproduction as the language of the above stated Decree was about controlling the consequences, why in fact, control over one's body must include the vast majority of preventive measures as well. Obviously, this was the very violation of the woman's right to control her body as she was not provided with adequate knowledge and means for ensuring that every pregnancy was in fact wanted. The official state discourse disapproving abortions despite legalization can provide additional proof for the above stated argument. Thus, the state sanctioned anti-abortion campaign accompanying the 1955 legalization of abortions described abortions as the greatest evil destroying woman's health and her ability to become a mother in the future. The whole spectrum of sentiments was also used. To further back-up its pronatalist agenda the series of movies were produced that were highlighting the tragedy of abortion, and the posters in women's clinics also provided visually impressive pictures of the consequences of induced abortions (Randall 2011). The messages delivered to the society in this respect stated that abortion does never happen without consequences, abortion of a first child would lead to infertility depriving a woman from the opportunity to conceive again, a woman would never be happy if unable to have a child, a woman would never experience the happiness of motherhood and would be left alone, etc.

To sum up, all soviet policies and programs surrounding the case of abortions were purely pronatalist and far distant from being liberal in a sense that would allow the women to control their fertility and reproduction, with strong emphasis on a woman's role as a mother and a caregiver in the first place leaving little space for de-facto realization of women's reproductive rights and freedoms. And as the preceding sections reveal, the legalization of abortions was in fact the acknowledgement of the state's failure to provide its population with the information and the means to effectively control their fertility. Obviously, the soviet legacy of extensive reliance on abortions as the major means of family planning had major repercussions for the related legal and policy frameworks of post-soviet republic including Azerbaijan.

Although a series of important changes were aspired to following the collapse of the USSR, the legal and policy framework of the Republic of Azerbaijan on reproductive health and rights did not undergo mass transfor-

mations and the vast majority of the provisions of USSR's legal framework on abortions have paved its way into the legal system of independent Azerbaijan. According to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on protection of the healthcare of the population adopted in 1997 induced abortion is allowed during the first 12 weeks of gestation. Beyond this gestational age, abortion is available only on medical and selected social grounds. Thus, article 30 on induced abortion states: "Every woman has the right to freely decide on the maternity related issues. An induced abortion is allowed to be performed until the 12th week of gestation upon a woman's request. An induced abortion can be performed until 22nd week of gestation on social grounds. An induced abortion is allowed to be performed at any term of pregnancy if there are any medical conditions and based on a woman's consent. An induced abortion must be performed by qualified medical doctors at public and private health institutions. The list of medical and social reasons for induced abortion is determined by the relevant body of executive power. Induced abortions performed by doctors outside of either public or private hospitals or other health institutions are prohibited."[5]

The thorough analysis of this provision as well as the rules and regulations issued to provide further guidance for implementation of this provision demonstrates the ambiguous reality regarding the liberalism of national abortion legislation. So, while the Law specifically emphasizes only mother's consent necessary for an abortion to be performed until 12th week of gestation as well as for an induced abortion guided by the medical causes at any stage of pregnancy (a threat to a mother's life, series of health problems including viral infections, development anomalies of the child, etc.), thus endorsing greater reproductive freedom for women, it also allows for the extensive range of discretion concerning social clauses which leads to many cases of misuse of abortions by the population.

It is worthwhile to note that the list of the social clauses is guided by the rationale introduced in the Soviet Union in 1987, when the authorities presented the list of 13 social factors allowing a late term induced abortion (Ministry of Health USSR, Order #1342, 1987). Thus a disability status of a husband (I or II disability group),[6] a death of a husband during pregnancy, deprivation of parental rights, confirmed unemployment status of either a husband or a wife, residence at the places of detention, extramarital pregnancy, divorce during pregnancy, pregnancy following rape, multi-parity (5 and more children), presence of a disabled child in a family, refugee or IDP (internally displaced person) status of a mother, absence of housing constitute the social grounds for legal termination of pregnancy up until 22nd week of gestation (Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan Republic, Order #5, January 12, 1999). While at the first glance the provision provides an almost exhaustive list of the factors that strive at ensuring that a birth of a child is

prevented in cases when it is not possible to provide him/her with adequate living conditions as well as the environment that would foster a child's physical and mental development, the very language of the above-mentioned article as well as the thorough elaboration of all 12 clauses opens quite broad scope for the late term induced abortions. The majority of the derogation clauses listed above is widely utilized by the population to use abortions as the means of family planning in the absence of effective family planning policies in general and for the purposes of sex selection abortions in particular.

Thus, given that it used to be rather difficult and costly to determine the sex of a child prior to the 12th week of gestation, the timeframe allowing for the abortions to be performed until 22nd week has facilitated unrestricted utilization of abortions by the population for the purposes of sex selection. One of the major loopholes in this regard is related to the social clauses allowing induced abortion in cases where a mother is having IDP status. Although, the logic of socio-economic hardship was guiding the introduction of this clause into the list, the clause is possibly among the criteria extensively misused among the IDP population for performing late term sex selection abortions given the prevalent patriarchal attitudes among IDP population in Azerbaijan. Same is applicable in case of a derogation concerning the official unemployment status of either of parents. As known, a husband is usually perceived as a major breadwinner in the family, while a women's major responsibility is narrowed down to taking care of children. Thus her unemployed status would usually constitute a sufficient ground for the access to late term abortion. Another ambiguity in this regard is related to the cases of pregnancies out of wedlock. Actually the introduction of this particular clause into the document is questionable as a reasonable justification for late term abortions. As known, if a woman wants to terminate unwanted and out of wedlock pregnancy, she would do everything possible to undergo an abortion as soon as possible at much earlier stages of pregnancy in order not to compromise her reputation, especially in patriarchal societies. The same is relevant in cases of pregnancies when the family is having many children and it is financially hard for them to allow for the birth of yet another child, when the family is already having a child with disability, or is in difficult living conditions due to absence of appropriate housing. Overall, while the cases of late term pregnancy termination could be justified in such cases as the death or the disability status of a husband, rape or deprivation of parental rights as well as a series of medical clauses, it is difficult to see the rationale behind the late term abortions justified by the rest of the above-mentioned social clauses that are extensively misused in reality for the purposes of sex selection.

All in all, the issue is further complicated in the absence of strict penalties for late term abortions as well as sex selection abortions. The issue of abortions is specifically mentioned under a separate article in the Criminal Code of Azerbaijan Republic (1999). Thus, article 141 of the Code specifically articulates the prohibition of the abortions to be performed by the specialized personnel outside the health institutions imposing monetary penalties or correctional labor for the breach of this prohibition (141.1). Article 141.2 further increases the amount of the monetary penalty and the period of correctional labor for the abortions performed by a person without specialized high education in health. If the actions described under the previous two articles result in serious health complications for the woman concerned this may entail monetary penalties or correctional labor or prohibition to occupy any position within a year or even deprivation of freedom up until a year depending on the graveness of the health damage caused (141.3). And finally, if the above-mentioned actions lead to a death of a woman concerned then a subject would be taken accountable by being deprived of an opportunity to occupy any position within the course of three years and deprivation of freedom up until five years (141.4).

The criminal punishment and penalties are mainly imposed for the cases of abortions performed illegally, i.e. either at the health institutions without relevant accreditation or by a person without adequate specialization. The penalty does not apply to a woman who terminates her own pregnancy or cooperates in an illegal termination. However, when the above-mentioned provision of the legislation criminalizes only abortion performed outside of health institutions with relevant accreditation or by a person without relevant specialization, there are no any pieces of the legislation that would provide for any criminal or administrative penalties for late termination of pregnancy, if performed at the health institution with adequate accreditation and by the relevant personnel, i.e. when the fetus is older than 12$^{th}$ week of gestation in the absence of social or medical grounds stipulated in the related legislation or when older than 22$^{nd}$ week of gestation in the absence of any medical grounds.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that the government has never declared its official position on fertility level of the population. Total fertility rate of the population for 2013 constituted 2.2 of which 2.1 is for urban areas and 2.3 is for the rural districts of the country.[7] Although "the National Reproductive Health Strategy 2008–2015" aims at reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies, improving knowledge and responsibilities of population in family planning, increasing convenience to family planning services and contraception, the percentage of the contraception usage is low with the overall prevalence of contraceptives among married women at 54.9% inclusive of withdrawal, rhythm and other high-failure traditional

methods. The use of modern methods of contraception is very low (13.9%) (Demographic and Health Survey 2011).

In 2008, the government came up with the project of the law on "Protection of reproductive health and family planning." The provisions of the article on abortion were similar to the ones already coded in the national legal system of the country with few exceptions such as a prohibition to reveal a sex of a fetus and requirements for parental consent in regard to teenage pregnancy termination. The draft law went through several hearings in the country's parliament and was rejected following opposing views put forward by various groups of parliamentarians and civil society with the opponents arguing that artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood (woman aged 18–35 gestating an unborn child) and sperm donors envisaged in the bill contradicted "national mentality" while the proponents believed that the adoption of the bill would contribute to preventing a vast number of divorces and infertility.

So, the problem is actually twofold. On the one hand the government has no effective legal and policy framework on family planning and fertility which leaves the population with the induced abortions to be used as the only available means of family planning taking into account the financial implications of child bearing. While on the other hand, the existing system of gender relations and the related inferior role attributed to the women in a family and society makes a girl an unwanted child with the enormous pressure placed on a family to produce a son child. And it is at this exact point when the liberal abortion laws of the country step in to "assist" in realization of this selection.

The consequences of such an imbalance in the population are detrimental. First of all, the trend has devastating consequences for the future population dynamics. The increasing number of the population of one sex leads to the "marriage squeeze," representing a situation when the men or women of a particular ethno-cultural group find it hard to find a partner from the same group. The experiences of the South-East Asian countries where this problem has been persistent for years shows that the excess male surplus is closely linked to the increased violent behavior in the countries concerned with the doubled crime rates, as well as accounts of bride abduction, trafficking, rape and prostitution (UNFPA 2011).

The practice also has devastating consequences for the women that are under pressure to abort their girl children to produce the "heir" for the family. The available research reveals that these women are harmed both psychologically and physically. In addition to the number of health complications encountered by these women as a result of a number of late term abortions, the female suicide rates in China have been among the highest in the world just like in South Korea (WHO 2009). The anecdotal evidence

attributes this to the psychological burden of the guilt they feel due to killing their own children whether through abortions or infanticide following the birth of a child. Furthermore, in countries like Azerbaijan where the women have only recently started to advocate for better protection and promotion of women's rights and freedoms, the limited number of women would lead to the increased pressure on women to assume the traditional gender roles of mothers, wives, baby-carers, etc.

As the above analysis reveals, similar negative consequences are actually taking place due to extensive misuse of the liberal abortion laws, acknowledged by the international community as the major prerequisites for protection and promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights of the women. Of the major concern is the fact that the phenomenon endangers the liberal character of abortion laws. The issue remained out of the national policy agenda up until recently, when the imposition of a ban on abortions was voiced as one of the most effective ways to prevent the practice of sex selection. Even though this parley did not get extensive back up from either the government or the public, it should be particularly stressed that the introduction of such a ban will have inevitable negative public health consequences in general and in the current realities of Azerbaijan in particular. With the current usage of modern contraceptive methods at 14% (Demographic and Health Survey 2011) and widespread lack of awareness among the population on available means of family planning, the women would recourse to the clandestine abortions to regulate their fertility, including abortion of an unwanted girl child, which would sharply increase the maternal mortality and morbidity rates in the country. Besides, as the international practice reveals, neither general ban on abortion, not particular ban on sex selection abortion has any positive effect on combating sex selection practices of the population, as both measures present rather short-term actions that do not address the very root causes of the problem.

As the preceding sections reveal, while the liberal character of the legal framework regulating the issue of abortions in Azerbaijan cannot be questioned, it should be admitted that the rationale and mechanisms behind this framework were far distant from the intentions to ensure de-facto gender equality. Therefore, it became rather easy to use unrestricted access to induced abortions for the purposes of gender biased sex selection in the absence of strong legal and policy framework on protection of women's human rights. The experiences of the countries that have encountered this problem show that many years of coordinated and concerted efforts are needed to avert the phenomenon of the skewed sex ratio at birth in the country. What is even more important is that these efforts do not compromise the sexual and reproductive rights of the women. Only then would it be possible to ensure that Azerbaijan Republic is no longer heading a tiny

circle of countries with no noble claim to fame – aborting a fetus to prevent a birth of a girl child.

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## NOTES

1. Fetal viability refers to the ability of an unborn child to survive outside a mother's womb.

2. The data is retrieved from the database of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan www.stat.gov.az

3. It is now widely acknowledged that the International Conference on Population and Development held in 1994 in Cairo, Egypt as well as the Fourth Beijing Conference on Women marked the beginning of the era when the international community started undertaking the first steps towards the recognition of the human right to abortion. The article 8.25 of the Cairo document states that "[i]n no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning… All Governments … are urged to strengthen their commitment … to reduce the recourse to abortion through improved family-planning services. Prevention of unwanted pregnancies must always be given the highest priority and every attempt should be made to eliminate the need for abortion."

4. Further regulations were later issued to legalize "commercial" abortions in private health institutions as well as paid services in public hospitals (legalized in March 1988 and outlawed in December 1988 by the Ministry of Health USSR)

5. For the list of medical and social reasons for induced abortion see: Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan Republic, Order #5, January 12, 1999; Ministry of Health of Azerbaijan Republic, Order #170, December 05, 2008.

6. As stipulated in the Regulations on Criteria for Determining Disability issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan Republic in August, 1997, the persons in I and II disability groups are individuals with most severe and multiple disabilities.

7. The data is retrieved from the database of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan www.stat.gov.az

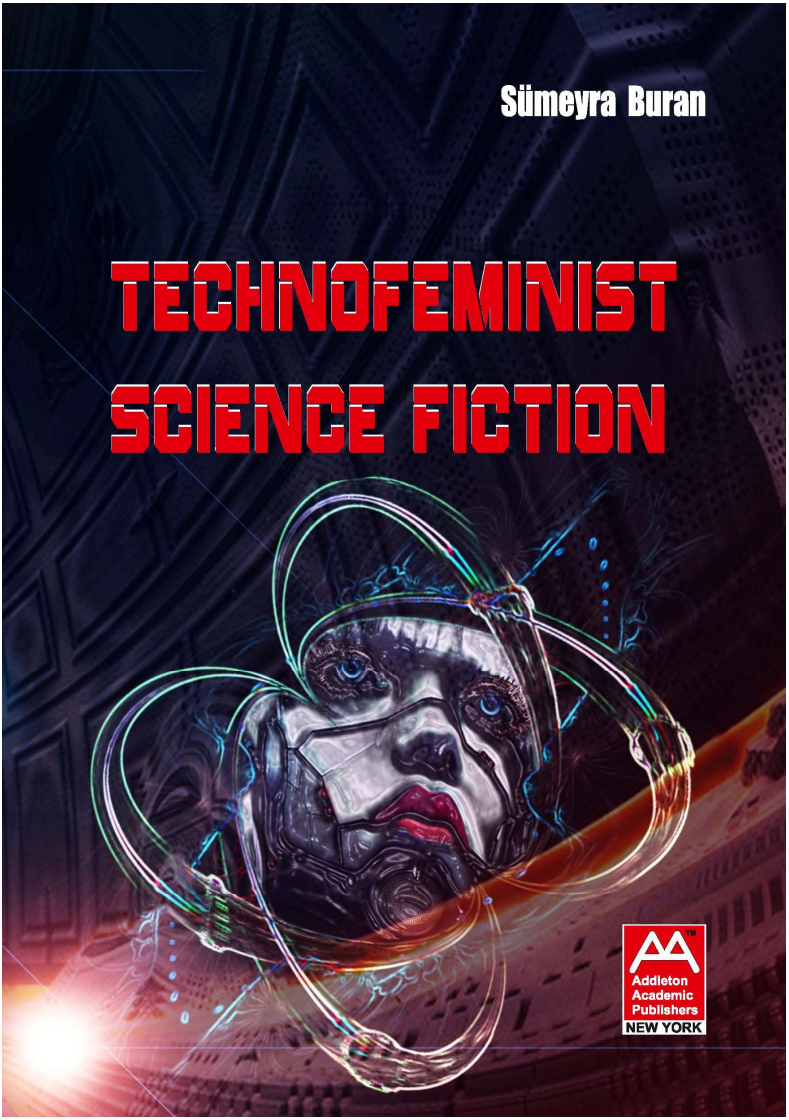
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