My Power, My People:
Exploring the Identity Management of
Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Employees in the Irish Workplace

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Summary

This thesis explores the identity management of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) employees in Ireland. A qualitative method (semi-structured interviews with 29 participants) is used to examine what affects LGB identity management in the workplace. The study uses a Critical Realist perspective, influenced by Feminist Theory and Critical Theory. The theoretical framework underpinning the analysis of the data is comprised of Dramaturgical Theory (Goffman, 1959), Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), The Stranger (Simmel, 1908), and Power (e.g. Fleming & Spicer, 2014).

A number of findings are outlined in this thesis. Firstly, the role of power, in particular hegemonic heteronormativity, in the identity management of LGB employees is explored. The analysis shows how, because of this power dynamic, LGB employees can represent a form of the Stranger (Simmel, 1908) in the workplace.

Secondly, this thesis shows how identity management can take place and is influenced on multiple levels, at the individual level, at the group level, at the organisational level, and at the macro-level.

Thirdly, the different strategies that one may take in managing their identity are outlined here. A framework showing a continuum from separating one's LGB identity from one's workplace identity, to integrating or highlighting it, is constructed.

Lastly, the role of the LGBT network, which is under-researched in the academic literature, is discussed. This analysis show how the LGBT network represents a source of social support, moderates the Stranger status that some LGB employees

face, provides voice for LGB employees, and signals to both the network's members and non-members that the organisation is accepting and supportive of LGB identities.

A number of implications of this research, for both the academic literature and for HR policy and practice, are discussed.

Chapter 1. Introduction

"'Damn it all, MacMurrough, are you telling me you are an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort?'

'If you mean am I Irish, the answer is yes.'"

Jamie O'Neill[iii]

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation explores the identity management of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) employees in Irish workplaces. Through qualitative, semi-structured interviews, this complex and multifaceted phenomenon is explored, with rich descriptive quotes and stories providing detailed insight into the experiences, thoughts and feelings of the 29 research participants. Key findings developed from the analysis of the interview data include the multi-level influences on LGB identity management; the differing ways in which an LGB employee may try to integrate or separate their sexual identity from their workplace identity; the role of LGBT networks in identity management; and how power, manifesting as hegemonic heteronormativity, can influence the identities of LGB employees and the management thereof.

An exploratory study, the initial research objective was to look generally at the factors and experiences that influenced an LGB person's career and workplace experiences. However, early in the analysis of the data, the theme of identity and its management was found to be a major theme, identity then became one of the central focuses of this thesis. Later, power emerged as a meta-theme underlying all of the analysis. This dissertation therefore explores LGB identity management in the workplace, and shows, in particular, the forms in which power can impact on it.

As mentioned, a qualitative approach was taken, with in-depth interviews conducted with twenty-nine LGB people. A broad sampling strategy was purposefully taken; as this study was exploratory, the aim was to discover if commonalities in identity management exist across organisational levels, and industry contexts. The interviewees thus represent a variety of roles, sectors and experiences. The interviews they took part in were semi-structured, and roughly followed a topic guide developed

with reference to a systematic literature review on LGB workplace issues (presented in Chapter 2). Thus, the interviews were broad and far ranging in scope, with a variety of topics explored, including coming out, discrimination, and workplace social interactions. Some participants talked more about certain subject that they felt were important to them, and indeed some even introduced topics that hadn't arisen in the interview guide that subsequently became a major theme, such as the interplay of LGBT networks with one's identity.

This research took place at a time of great change for the LGBT community in Ireland. During the course of this research project, three major legislative changes affecting the LGBT community took place. In May 2015, a referendum was held (and passed) to change the wording of the Irish constitution to allow the introduction of same-sex marriage. In July 2015, the Gender Recognition Act was passed in the Oireachtas (legislature of Ireland), and allowed transgender individuals to choose their legal gender without requiring medical or state approval. Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act, allowing institutions with a "religious ethos" to legally discriminate against employees that could contradict this ethos, such as LGBT employees, was repealed in December 2015. These changes in the legislation made Ireland, which decriminalized homosexuality only in 1993, one of the most progressive countries in the world for LGBT rights.

In this chapter the structure of the dissertation and a broad-level overview of the research project are given. Firstly, the scope and focus of the study and where it is positioned in the business and management domain is outlined, and research questions that guided the design and execution of the study are then explored. Secondly, the main theories and concepts relevant to this dissertation are introduced.

Thirdly, the methodological design of the study is described. Lastly, the chapters in this dissertation are outlined.

1.2 Overview of Study

Study Focus

Sexual minorities are described as "one of the largest, but least studied, minority groups in the workforce. Compared to more "visible" diversity groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, discussion around sexual orientation is invisible and sensitive in the equality diversity discourse (Colgan & Rumens, 2014), and there is a dearth of literature on the topic in the business and management fields (McFadden, 2015). This study addresses this lacuna in the literature by exploring one aspect of the lesbian, gay and bisexual employees' workplace experiences.

In this dissertation, the interplay of one's LGB identity with one's work identity is explored, particularly focusing on identity management (see Section 2.3). In Ireland, lesbian, gay and bisexual people enjoy full legal protection from workplace and educational discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation under the Equal Status Acts 2000-2015 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. However, discrimination does still occur in the Irish workplace (McIntyre & Nixon, 2014), and many LGBT people still conceal their sexual orientation from all or some of their colleagues (Mayock, Bryan, Carr & Kitching, 2009). This study explores the process of identity management in the workplace, where one has a possibly marginalized LGB identity.

Topic and Research Questions

As mentioned previously, the initial scope of this project was broad, exploring any major factors of influence in an LGB person's career and workplace experiences; however, and as outlined in this section and shown in Figure 1, this did not remain the case. The initial research question was *"What are the factors and experiences, both inside and outside of the workplace, that can affect an LGB person's career?"* A systematic literature review (Pittaway, Robertson, Munir, Denyer, & Neely, 2004) was thus undertaken to explore in a broad manner anything pertinent to the topic. In doing so, a lot of information regarding the topic, as well as the characteristics of the extant literature on the topic, was garnered. In addition, the interviews held with the participants were far-reaching in scope and topic, including considerations surrounding discrimination, early identity development, familial relationships, and day-to-day work.

However, during the data analysis phase, it became clear that a great deal of the discussions was underpinned by the theme of identity, and how the participants managed it. Identity management is a concern for all employees (see Chapter 3 for a literature review that was subsequently performed on the topic of identity), but in particular LGB employees (and other groups with concealable, possibly discrediting identities), who face the choice of concealing their sexual orientation, and possibly undergoing personal consequences (as outlined in Chapter 2), or revealing their sexual orientation and running the risk of being excluded, marginalized or discriminated against (see Chapter 2). While a relatively large amount of the research on LGB workplace experiences is on identity management (compared to, for example,

LGB youth's career development), the small amount of research overall on this topic means that a lot about the process, and the factors influencing it, are quite unknown.

With a large amount of data pertaining to the topic (gained through the interviews), but with a similarly large dearth of knowledge about it (as evidenced by the literature review), the research thus became more focused on the identity management of LGB workers in the Irish workplace, and the underlying influences on this process that critical realism highlights, rather than on the broader workplace experience itself. In researching this aspect in particular, one can decrease the gap in knowledge within the literature, and at the same time provide a detailed exploration of the process that will be useful for employers and organisations. A number of research questions were identified to guide the analysis:

> *RQ: What affects an LGB employee managing their identity*
> *in the workplace?*

This question retains the broad exploratory nature with which this research was initially approached, by not specifying particular influences or factors to concentrate on, yet focuses it in particular on identity management. The critical realist approach to identifying underlying influences of a phenomenon is also reflected in the wording of the research question, and moves the analysis from a purely descriptive goal to the goal of both describing the process of identity management *and* explaining why it is so. The wording of the research question also highlights how identity management, as well as being unconscious, can also be a conscious, on-going process, as suggested by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

The move from a very broad open question about LGB workplace experiences and careers to the more focused exploration of LGB identity management in the workplace is typical of qualitative research, which by nature is a "messy" process (O Dwyer, 2004: 1). In a similarly complicated turn, during the analysis of the preliminary data arising from the semi-structured interviews, three additional sub-questions, related to the main research question, were identified in order to further comprehend in more detail certain factors and themes that kept arising. These add further depth to the research and reflect particular dimensions of the data.

SRQ1: How do people differ in the management of their LGB

identity in the workplace?

This sub-question highlights the myriad of differences that individualize a person and affect their identity management. Building on the primary research question, which looks at the factors and influences on the process, this question focuses more on the differences between people in how they approach managing their identity. This builds on previous research, which highlights the different ways in which one can manage their identity, but adds to this research in that it focuses more on the person (rather than the act), and why they might feel compelled to make these identity management decisions. This is relevant for organisations also, because it highlights the differences inherent in their LGB employees' approach to identity management, and includes the workplace's role in the process.

One particular factor affecting identity management, which arose from both the analysis of the interview data and the influence of critical theory and feminist theory, was that of power in the guise of hegemonic heteronormativity, a dominant ideological discourse that positions non-heterosexual identities, expression and acts as

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discredited and "other". A hegemonic discourse is by nature a systemic, macro-issue, and I therefore began to wonder how it affected other levels, including the micro-level, and in particular the micro-level process of identity management. The next research sub-question focuses on this influence:

> *SRQ2: How does hegemonic heteronormativity manifest in the Irish workplace and what effects does it have on the identity management of LGB employees?*

A theme that was not present in the literature (see Chapter 2), but that arose from the analysis of interview data, was that of LGBT networks, or affinity groups, a once uncommon feature in companies that is now becoming more popular (Raeburn, 2004). This sub-question focuses specifically on LGBT employee networks. On an organizational level, the groups have a number of clearly defined functions that benefit both the organisation and the careers of the LGB employees therein; however, this research sub-question looks primarily at the role they play in the identity management of LGB employees.

> *SRQ3: What role does the LGBT employee network play in the lives and identity management of LGB employees?*

These research questions, taken together, allow a more comprehensive overview of the multi-level influences on an LGB person's identity management in the workplace: the different ways in which individuals approach managing their identity, and the influences that both heteronormativity and LGBT networks play in the process.

The journey from envisaging broad, exploratory, non-specified research on LGB workplace experiences and careers, to a more focused study concentrating on identity

management, is depicted in Figure 1. The next section outlines why this topic is of importance and relevance to both research and practice.

Importance and Relevance of Topic

This topic requires study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the business and management literature suffers from a dearth of research on LGB employees (McFadden, 2015). This study adds to the small amount of research that helps both researchers and practitioners better understand the unique challenges, experiences and issues that a lesbian, gay or bisexual person faces in the workplace, providing data and recommendations for those involved in diversity and inclusion programs at work, and helping shape a better environment for this group of employees. In addition, while a large body of literature focuses on identity at the micro-level in organizations, only a small amount surrounding the identity management of LGB employees has been conducted. As has been confirmed by other authors (e.g. Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Madera, 2010), being open about one's sexual identity at work has benefits for both the organization and the individual. A large body of literature also exists that argues an economic case for diversity within organizations, and support of LGBT employees (e.g. Brenner et al., 2010; King & Cortina, 2010; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002). Therefore, an increased understanding of the identity management process as it evolves and is shaped across multiple levels (including the individual, relational, organisational and social layers), will have psychological, social and financial advantages for employees and employers, and will enhance the limited existing research performed on this phenomenon.

Finally, only a small number of studies on LGB employees have been performed in the Irish context. Previous studies have used general quantitative surveys (e.g. Mayock et al., 2009, McIntyre & Nixon, 2014), or specific professions, with Neary (2013, 2014, 2016) focusing on teachers in the Irish education system.

This study will therefore add to the literature on diversity and inclusion in the workplace, add to the small amount of research on LGB workplace experiences, and give an overview of how LGB employees manage their identities in the Irish workplace in particular. Although specific in its focus, there are nonetheless a number of findings that can be applied to other groups and contexts (see Chapters 10 and 11).
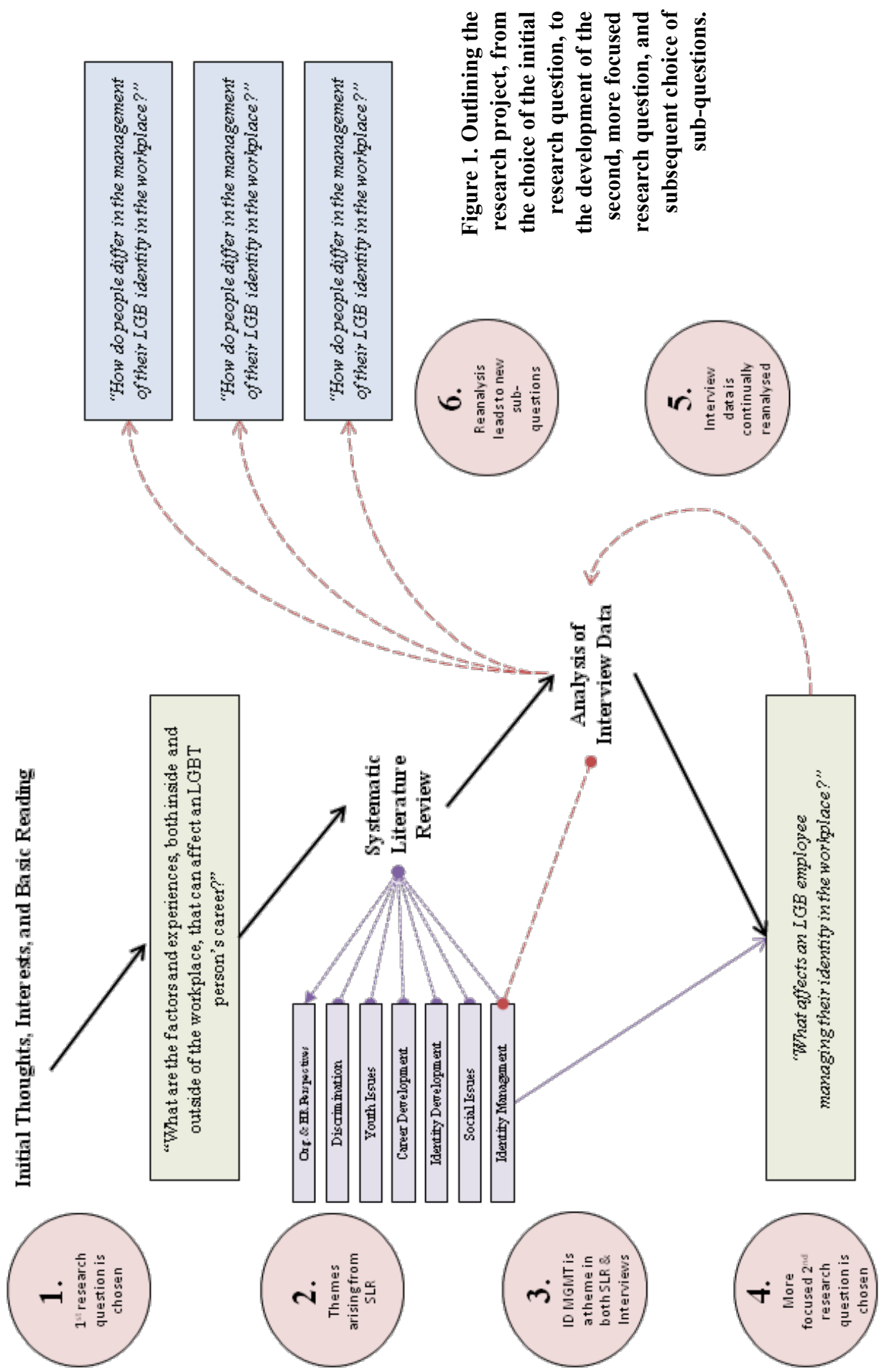
Figure 1. Outlining the research project, from the choice of the initial research question, to the development of the second, more focused research question, and subsequent choice of sub-questions.

1.3 Research Design

Methodology

This research has been conducted using a critical realist perspective, influenced by elements of feminist theory and critical theory. Critical realism was chosen not only because it was closest to my own beliefs, but also because of its focus on the influences underlying the findings uncovered. While most of the limited research on LGB workplace experiences, particularly the older articles, has primarily had an exploratory design (McFadden, 2015; see Chapter 2), this research combines an exploratory angle with a search for general underlying influence, that can apply to the LGB work experience but also to the experience of other marginalized groups in the workplace. The value that critical realism adds to this research is to promote research design choices that aid the search for these underlying influences, which will ultimately highlight organizational, macro-level, and systemic issues with regard to not only LGB experiences, but within society itself.

Feminist theory and critical theory are the other two philosophical influences on this research. Both of these highlight the role of power in a person's life; the former focusing on inequality and how those at the margins of a system are in a better position to critique it that those at the centre; while the latter focuses on how dominant powers can shape and promote a particular discourse. While originally these philosophical lenses affected only the design of this project, including the selection of participants and how data was collected, they ultimately served another purpose in their focus on the role of power, which emerged as an important influential factor in the workplace experiences of LGB employees. Another obvious influence of the feminist approach to research was the emphasis on the researcher's role in the project and how their standpoint affects how the research is conducted; this prompted me to

deviate from the more conventional route in business management research of using the third person / passive (e.g. "the researcher", "the data was collected") to a more active first person (e.g. "I collected the data"). The overall design of the research project is briefly outlined next.

Data Collection and Participants

This research uses a qualitative design to explore LGB experiences in the workplace, and in particular identity management. Qualitative research is used in obtaining a rich and descriptive dataset that will allow one to explore meanings, descriptions, and concepts, compared to quantitative research which is more concerned with counting, measuring and making causal inferences (Berg, 2001). Because of the relative lack of research on LGB workplace experiences in the literature (see Chapter 2), a qualitative research design was chosen because it would allow me to explore in more depth phenomena, experiences and stories about which these is little extant research. The semi-structured interview was chosen as the data collection method, and allowed me as the researcher to ask open-ended, exploratory questions, and the participant to describe their lived experiences, tell relevant stories and share their perspectives to a greater degree than they could with other data collection methods, in particular those that are quantitative.

The aim of this research was not to research aspects an LGB person's work experiences in a certain role or sector, but to find commonalities across this wide range of people and to explore shared experiences and phenomena, given that this is an exploratory study. Additionally, the research is designed as such in an attempt to uncover underlying mechanisms (a fundamental aspect of critical realism) to better

explain the general influences on identity management in Irish workplaces. With this in mind, a deliberate strategy was taken in order to sample a broad range of participants. The twenty-nine research participants, as shown in Appendix C, thus represent a variety of ages, professions, industries, and seniority level. The youngest participant was 23 and the oldest was 67, and there was a wide range of ages in the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. The levels of experience and seniority that the participants had were varied, with some holding senior roles, some with junior roles, and others self-employed. The research was not focused on any particular industry or organisation, and includes both private (small, medium, and large companies) and public (schools and universities) organisations, some of which were not-for-profit. This cross-sampling was designed to capture a holistic analysis (Mason, 1996). The majority (twenty-four) of the participants held Bachelor's level degrees. The participants were recruited using purposeful and snowball sampling, utilizing my personal network, and LGBT groups online. The sampling and recruitment methods are described in more detail in Chapter 4, on Research Methodology and Design.

Initially, I intended to include transgender employees in this study. Transgender people represent a tiny minority; while there are no Irish estimates, a recent US study estimated the transgender population to be 0.6% of the general population (Flores, Herman, Gates & Brown, 2016). There is a similarly small amount of research conducted in the business and management domain on transgender workers. For this reason, it was envisaged in the initial exploratory stages of this project that transgender people would be interviewed also. One such interview took place, and it was discovered that the process of identity formation and management appeared to be inherently different for transgender workers in comparison to lesbian, gay and bisexual workers. While the acronym "LGBT" is common usage, and transgender

people are commonly associated with LGB people, there remains quite a number of differences in terms of the former's mainstream acceptance in society (Norton & Herek, 2012), the rights they are afforded, and the challenges that they face. One such difference is related to the focus of this dissertation: identity management. Given the differences between forming and having an LGB identity and forming and having a transgender identity, it was felt that this research should sample only LGB workers. To include transgender participants on this specific topic of identity would introduce a number of topics, such as transitioning, that would not be of relevance to the LGB participants, whilst identity processes ostensibly common to all LGBT people, such as coming out, were, under closer inspection, very different. The interview, whilst subsequently not used, indicated that the processes within transgender identity management are fundamentally different than within LGB identity management; because of the disparities, transgender employees were not included in this research.

Domain

This research lies within the business and management domains, and more specifically within the human resource management and organizational behaviour fields. The fields that the research is set in reflects both the subject matter of the research – which, like organizational behaviour, includes social and psychological phenomena – and the aims and contributions of the research, which is to explore how the human resources function within organizations can better understand and alleviate the difficulties associated with managing an LGB identity in the workplace. However, given the nature of the topic, and the broad exploratory focus deliberately taken at the beginning of the project, an open mind was kept with regard to the inclusion of other domains that might add to the research's value, including sociology and psychology.

For this reason, although this research may appear more sociological or psychological – certainly, the subject matter of identity management would lead one to think so – business and management research, concepts and considerations (for example, employee voice, employee groups, the business case for diversity, and the recommendations and implications for HR) anchor this project to these latter domains.

The domain in which this research is situated affects the nomenclature used in this dissertation and the scope of the study. As noted above, a number of the research participants did not identify with the lesbian, gay or bisexual labels, or as male or female. These participants used terms like queer and genderqueer to describe themselves; however, they noted that, for the sake of ease, traditional labels could be used. A consideration that arose from this was whether or not to change the "lesbian, gay and bisexual" portion of the dissertation title to "queer", to reflect the growing use of this term, that acts as both an umbrella term for LGBT+ identities and a post-structuralist identity that rejects normative and binarized sexual and gender identities. However, the vast majority of the literature on this topic as part of this research project uses the customary terminology; to extend the reach of this study it was therefore decided to follow this convention, and to simply note that some participants did not adhere to the traditional structured identities. Following from this, the analysis of the participants' experiences does not include discussion of non-normative identities. While it is envisaged that those who identify not as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, but as queer, may have additional challenges or experiences in the workplace (such as, for example, the mainstream lack of knowledge about these identities), they are not discussed in this thesis.

1.4 Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of two literature review chapters; a chapter on methodology; a chapter on the theoretical framework; four findings chapters; and a chapter on implications and conclusions. The remainder of this dissertation is detailed as follows.

Chapters 2 and 3 present the literature reviews that outline the research that has been conducted already, and situate this dissertation within those conversations. Two bodies of literature are reviewed. Chapter 2 is concerned with previous research on the careers and workplace experiences of the LGBT community, broadly viewed, presenting the current landscape of literature on LGB employees at work. Chapter 3 refers to identity, particularly (but not only) in the workplace. Although a deliberate choice was made to not restrict the literature reviews to any one discipline in order to maximize the inclusion of relevant research, the topic under investigation naturally influenced the literatures that were most prominent, with the business and management, psychology, and sociology domains most well represented.

Chapter 4 of this dissertation, on methodology, gives an overview and discussion of the philosophies influencing this research project, the data collection methods used, the abductive reasoning behind the analysis, and the pilot studies that represented a trial run and subsequent refinement of these methods.

Chapter 5 presents the theoretical framework that underpins the analysis of the data collected. Three main components of the framework, Simmel's Stranger (1908), Goffman's Dramaturgy (1959), and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979, 1985, 1986), are outlined with reference to this research undertaking.

Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 are the findings chapters, and while all are related to the identity management of LGB employees in Ireland, differ in precise topic. Chapter 6 examines heteronormativity in the Irish workplace, and how it can marginalize and exclude LGB employees. Chapter 7 outlines LGB identity management at work on different levels within the organisation. Chapter 8 shows the different ways in which the participants interviewed approached separating or integrating their identity into the workplace. Chapter 9 looks specifically at LGBT networks, their functions, and their role in the identity management of their members and other LGB employees in the organization.

Chapter 10 discusses the contribution that this research makes to the literature and research of this kind, and continues by outlining the implications for practice that the findings presented in this dissertation warrant.

Finally, Chapter 11 presents the conclusions that can be made from this research. Recommendations for future research in this area are given. References and appendices then follow.

Chapter 2. LGBT Careers and Workplace Experiences

"If homosexuality is a disease, let's all call in queer to work:

'Hello. Can't work today. Still queer.'"

Robin Tyler[iii]

2.1 Introduction

This research project explores the workplace experiences of LGB employees in Ireland, and in particular their identity management. This chapter is concerned with the former focus, LGB employees, and outlines the growing, yet still small, amount of research on LGB employees, their careers, and their experiences in the workplace[1]. A systematic literature review (Pittaway et al., 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003) was undertaken in the first year of this research project on the literature surrounding the careers and workplace experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers, in order to better understand that which has been researched before, and to illuminate those areas which still need to be studied. The systematic review draws on literature from the many fields that influence and interact with modern management studies, including psychology, sociology and gender/sexuality studies, but is rooted in research within, and written specifically from, the perspective of human resource management research, within which very little research relevant to this topic exists (McFadden, 2015). In this chapter the major themes and areas of research within the topic of LGBT careers and work experiences are identified and examined; major findings and consensuses are outlined, and gaps in the extant knowledge, which have aided in the development of the research focus for this research project, are also illuminated.

As Prince (1995:169) states, "the literature pertaining to the psychology of gay men – specifically the literature related to the management of stigma and self-concept – can help point to specific implications for the career development of gay men". In this study, articles which focused on cognitive, psychological and social processes within

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[1] The systematic literature review that makes up this chapter was developed into an article (McFadden, 2015) published in *Human Resource Development Review.*

an LGBT person's life (e.g. identity development and coming out) were found to be valuable in studying the work-lives and careers of the LGBT population and can help develop our understanding of the lived LGBT workplace experiences, despite these articles falling outside the domain of the business and management disciplines. Additionally, there is a relative dearth of research into the LGBT population within business and management, compared to sociology and psychology. For these reasons, this review includes literature from a broad range of areas within the social sciences spectrum, which are, however, ultimately anchored to this study in their connection to the careers and workplace experiences of LGBT people.

2.2 The Systematic Literature Review Method[2]

Systematic literature reviews have become more popular in the business and management areas in recent years (Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate, & Kyriakidou, 2004; Pittaway et al., 2004), allowing a researcher to map, categorize, and make sense of an entire body of research on a particular topic, research question, or phenomenon (Kitchenham et al., 2007). This broad-level analysis highlights what is known about a subject, and also, importantly, highlights what is not known (Rousseau, Manning, & Denyer, 2008). Thus, the researcher is able to discover the entire extant knowledge relevant to their study and ultimately to find out what still needs to be researched, within the context of what is currently known. These aims, of course, run parallel to those of the traditional literature review; however, it is not in the aim but in the execution that the systematic literature review differs primarily.

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[2] This section is an adapted and more comprehensive version of the method described in McFadden (2015), the published version of this systematic literature review in *Human Resource Development Review.*

Originating in the medical fields, and used as a means to judge the efficacy of certain treatments or tests, the notionally impartial, clinical nature of the systematic literature review was taken on-board by scholars in other fields in an attempt to vanquish bias and favouritism in their own studies (Tranfield et al., 2003). Key principles of the systematic literature review method include a transparent and reflexive approach, clarity, and focus (Thorpe, Holt, Macphearson, & Pittaway, 2005).

The selection of the papers that make up this literature review was performed within a number of steps that roughly follow Tranfield et al. (2003) and Pittaway et al., (2004):

1. Initial Study

2. Pilot Study

3. Categorization of Literature

4. Review of Literature

5. Synthesis of Review

An outline of each step in the systematic literature review follows.

Initial Study

The initial step of the systematic review ensures the identification of the key scholars within the field and the creation of a search string that may be used to effectively and efficiently query the electronic databases (Pittaway et al., 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003). For the purpose of this review, the following databases were used: EBSCO Academic Source Complete, EBSCO Business Source Complete, and Thompson Reuters Web of Knowledge. These were chosen because they cover a very wide range of journals in a large number of fields: EBSCO Academic Source Complete searches

more than 13,600 journals over a number of fields, EBSCO Business Source Complete covers more than 2,400 peer-reviewed journals in the business and management areas, and Thompson Reuters Web of Science covers more than 23,000 journals in various fields.

The first step of the initial study was a simple search of the databases using a broad search string, using keywords based on the author's prior experience (Pittaway et al., 2004), relating to both the *Sample* of interest in this research (the LGBT population) and the *Context* (the workplace, the career, employment, etc.). These articles were then filtered down, both automatically and manually, in a number of ways, to make the results more relevant to the topic. For inclusion in this review, articles had to be published in English language peer reviewed journals; those that were not were filtered out. Irrelevant fields were also filtered out (e.g., immunology, physics, and neurology) to ensure that false positives (e.g. Huebner & Davis, 2005) were eliminated. The remaining articles were then filtered down further by deselecting those that were irrelevant to the topic: the careers and workplace experiences of LGBT people. Only the titles and, where necessary, the abstracts of the articles were read at this point to decide if they were relevant. Articles published before the year 1985 were also excluded from the search, as it was felt that the political, legislative, and social landscape has changed so much between pre-1985 and the present day that many of those articles would be irrelevant today. As noted by Anteby and Anderson (2014), the mid to late 1980s represented a shift in the "frames" or discourses used in reference to the gay and lesbian community in the organizational literature (the acronyms "LGB" and "LGBT" were not yet in common usage). Before the mid-1980s, the focus in the general academic literature was on discovering a presumed cause for why one becomes gay or lesbian and how to "cure" it, and the terms and

concepts used were similar to those used in reference to deviant groups (e.g., Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1955; Reitzes & Diver, 1982). From the mid-1980s, however, the discourse evolved from an individual having supposedly deviant tendencies into one where gay and lesbian became a regarded as a collective, non-deviant identity, which was analogous to and discussed in the same way as having a minority ethnic identity (Anteby & Anderson, 2014). After this, the literature became significantly more sympathetic to the LGBT community and concentrated on discrimination and how to increase gay and lesbian visibility, rather than aetiology or "cure".

The citation histories of the remaining articles were then analysed. Major authors within the field were identified based on the number of citations each had received; the databases were queried with the names and initials of these key authors and additional, relevant papers by them were added to the review. The articles that cited these key authors' articles were then reviewed, and included or excluded based on their relevance to the research question. While this is a subjective aspect to the systematic approach, it was in effect quite easy to consider if a paper was relevant, because of the very open, exploratory nature of the research question.

The initial query of the databases resulted in a total of 11,394 articles. After filtering and excluding irrelevant articles (for example, Huebner & Davis (2005) recorded the levels of salivary cortisol of gay men who had disclosed at work: a recurring "hit" on the database search, but of no real relevance to the research question), only 51 articles remained across the three databases. The citation histories of these papers were analysed to help the key authors in the field; these were the authors (12 in total) with the most citations, regardless of number of publications or journal field. In querying

the databases for additional papers by these authors, an additional twenty relevant papers were identified. By analysing the citation histories of the papers of the most cited authors, another six papers were identified as relevant to the research question. In total, the initial study resulted in 77 papers.

By reviewing the titles and examining the keywords, and their synonyms, of each of the articles that had been chosen so far, a definitive search string (see Table A1 in Appendix A) was created with which to query the databases. This larger search string was constructed in a similar fashion to the initial search string (i.e., *Sample and Context*), but now included the various synonyms of the initial search terms that the authors had used in their articles.

Pilot Study

The second step of the systematic review, the pilot study, tests the effectiveness of the search string created in the initial study (Pittaway et al., 2004), and gathers potential articles that will make up the basis of the review. Any changes to the search string that were felt necessary were performed in an iterative process early in the pilot study. The three databases that were used were then queried with the established search string, and articles were included or excluded as per the relevance to the research question.

The pilot study allowed for the development (and subsequent redevelopment) of a definitive search string with which to query the databases. This larger search string resulted in an addition of 59 papers to the review, when duplicates from the initial study were accounted for. The total number of papers before the exclusion process was undertaken was therefore 136.

Categorization of Literature

The third stage of the systematic review involved the resulting articles (136) being included or excluded from the review according a number of criteria (see below), their affiliation with the key authors in their field, and their citation history (Pittaway et al., 2004). To bracket any biases, the exclusion/inclusion process drew from frameworks constructed by other authors (Meyrick, 2006; Popay, Rogers and Williams, 1998). I used the following criteria:

(a) Scholarly nature, i.e. not in a practitioner journal

(b) Specific relevance to the research topic;

(c) An original focus or topic;

(d) Clearly defined contributions to knowledge, that are supported by the data and/or theory presented in the paper.

Criterion (a) was chosen to address the practitioner articles that appeared in the search results. While these were originally included in the first two steps, because of the direct relevance to the topic, further reading showed that these were more journalistic in nature and drew from and cited scholarly research, rather than conducting empirical research themselves. For example, an article entitled *Why LGBT Employees Need Workplace Allies* (Hewlett, 2013) from the *Harvard Business Review* appeared in the 136 remaining articles, but was subsequently removed.

With regard to (b), the relevance of each paper to the research topic was judged again, this time with reading the entire paper (rather than the abstract, as in the former step). In this way, some articles that were thought relevant were subsequently excluded

from the review. For example, Lewis' (2010) article, while related to lesbians and gay men's vocational choices (and thus included in the Initial Study), was very specific to the non-profit sector, and it was felt that it would be of relevance to the research topic. However, the Initial Study still brought my attention to this article, and so could it could be re-included later, if the interviews had brought up themes to this article (in this case, it did not). The majority of the papers excluded in this process was as a result of this criterion.

With the 136 papers that remained after the Pilot Study, there were naturally overlaps in the topics that were being discussed. Criterion (c) was developed to address these overlaps, and ensure that overly similar topics or results were not included twice in the review analysis. In practice, this happened very little; one example is Rumens' (2008; 2012) similar analyses of workplace friendships between gay men and straight women. While a study more focused on this aspect of LGBT workplace experiences would probably include both these papers, I excluded the former article in favour of the latter, which had a more general discussion that related to more aspects of the research topic.

Criterion (d) related to how well defined the contributions presented in the remaining papers were; while this recommendation was taken from the aforementioned Meyrick (2006) and Popay et al., (1998) frameworks, in reality the filtering process (and the editing process within academic journals) did this exclusion for me, and no further papers were removed at this point.

In ensuring that these recommendations were kept at the forefront when judging papers on their quality, any personal or research biases of my own were held at bay, and a true and proper systematic approach was taken. Before exclusion, the overall

demographics of the literature, such as their publication year, the fields in which they were published, and the methodologies used, were recorded in order to map the research surrounding this topic more clearly.
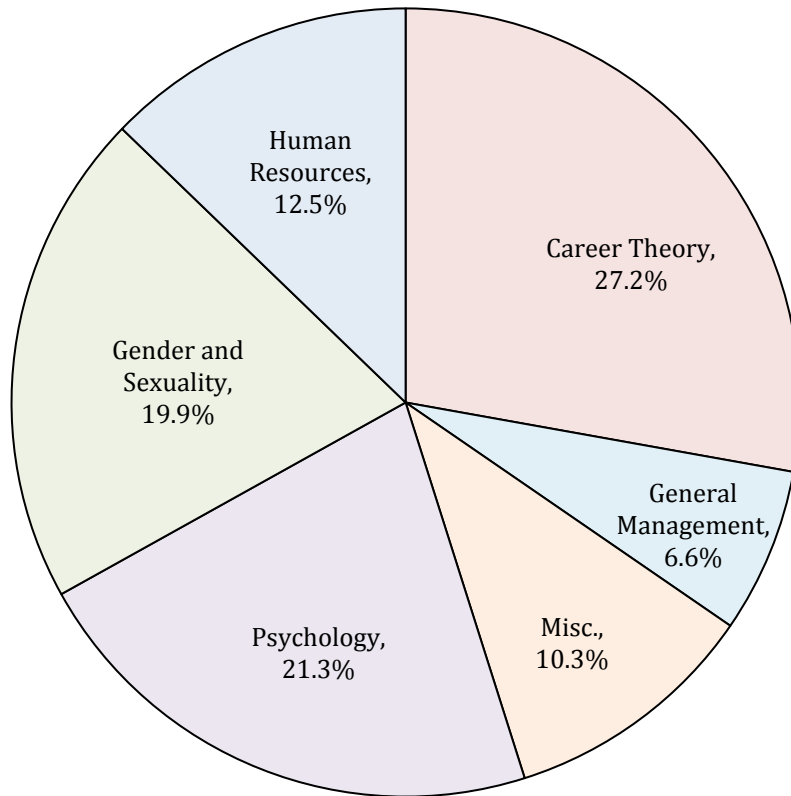
Figure 2. An overview of the 136 articles that resulted from the initial and pilot study steps of the systematic review, according to the fields they are published in.

Figure 2 shows the academic fields in which the 136 papers that resulted from the initial and pilot studies were published in. While almost 50% of the relevant papers were published in journals related to the human resources, career theory and management areas, the fields of psychology and gender/sexuality studies were also well represented. These papers, whilst not written directly from a HR practitioner

perspective, were nonetheless found to be relevant to the area of LGBT careers and workplace experiences.

One particular finding from the categorization of the literature that was relevant to my PhD was how the respective authors recruited a sample and collected data. This was important because it would show a variety of methods by which I could, in my own study, access a sample of participants and collect my data. The most widely method of recruitment for quantitative studies was through the Internet, with email lists provided by LGBT organizations, online message boards and web-based communities and groups proving popular. Combined with snowball sampling and, in some cases, a small incentive, these techniques can provide a large amount of participants for surveys and questionnaires. For qualitative studies, personal networks, combined with snowball sampling, was the most common recruitment method used. In the study presented in this thesis, a similar method was applied in order to reach the sample of participants, as outlined in Chapter 4.

Over one quarter (28% or 41) of the articles were conceptual, drawing together existing empirical research or introducing a previously unused conceptual framework (e.g. Degges-White and Shoffner (2002) and Velez and Moradi (2012) tested the theory of work adjustment with LGB employees). Of those that contained empirical research, there was an almost even divide between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (48% and 52%, respectively). Table 1 provides an overview of the data collection methodologies used in the reviewed empirical articles (95 out of the 136 total).

Table 1. Methods of Data collection used in empirical research articles.	
Method	*No. of Publications*
Survey	46
Semi-Structured Interview	34
Case Study	8
Psychological Field Test	2
Other	5

The number of papers excluded at this point was 75, leaving a remainder of 59 papers that make up the review that makes up the rest of this chapter.

Keeping the Review Up to Date.

To ensure the literature review was kept up to date, a Google Scholar Alert was constructed using the search string identified in the initial systematic review. Emails containing literature that had these search terms were sent regularly, and I reviewed them and highlighted ("starred") those linked to relevant articles. Towards the end of the PhD, I added those that were relevant to the review, and cited a number throughout the thesis.

2.3 Major Themes

The literature was characterised by a number of major themes within the area of LGBT careers and workplace experiences. Each article represented one or two themes and were identified as such using open coding on their titles and abstracts. The themes recognized and the number of publications within each is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Major themes within the literature	
Theme	*No. of Publications*
Identity Management	25
Identity Development	8
Career Development	41
LGBT Youth Issues	7
Organizational and Human Resources Perspectives	23
Discrimination	27
Social Issues and Experiences	24

The following sections describe these major themes in more detail. Discrimination, which underpinned much of the discussion in articles, is explored first.

Discrimination

Discrimination was a very salient issue in the literature on the careers and workplace experiences of the LGBT population, and it is therefore not surprising that this emerged as one of the larger overall themes from the literature. Even in articles not categorized within this theme, the fear and experience of prejudice was at the forefront of many participants' minds. Articles here directly relate to discrimination (Brenner et al., 2010; Ozturk, 2011); exploring antecedents to and consequences of workplace discrimination and heterosexism (Day & Schoenrade, 2000), the strategies used by the LGBT population to mitigate or cope with this (Bowleg et al., 2008; Button, 2004), the different types of discrimination that can occur (Chung et al., 2009), and the effects on an organizational level of LGBT workplace discrimination (Brenner et al., 2010). Formal discrimination relates to prejudice against people within formalized contexts, such as job applications interviews, promotions,

performance appraisal and employment termination. Tilcsik (2011) finds that signalling one was LGBT on a job application meant that in many American states one was significantly less likely to receive a positive response, while Dispenza, Watson, Chung & Brack (2012) report discrimination against transgender job applicants. While in these contexts it was easy to observe that formal discrimination was taking place, in many cases an LGBT person may not be so sure that their sexual/gender identity was the underlying cause of a negative formal workplace process.

Informal discrimination refers to discriminatory incidents on an interpersonal level, and may relate to malicious jokes, snubs, exclusion or harassment. While more subtle than formal discrimination, it can have just as large an effect on the individual. Silvershanz et al. (2008), building on research from Meyer (2003), Harrell et al. (2003), and Williams et al. (2003), show that homophobic harassment can have a negative effect on the psychological well-being of LGBT employees within academia. Waldo (1999) found that experiencing heterosexism was related to adverse psychological, health, and work-associated outcomes. Additionally, LGBT co-workers on the periphery of homophobic incidents, where homophobia is being directed at or about another, can experience discomfort and an increased focus on identity management strategies, which, as discussed below, may cause a distraction from workplace tasks.

Stigma (Goffman, 1963) was a recurring concept running through many papers in the discrimination and identity management themes (e.g. Creed & Scully, 2000; Roberts, 2011). Stigma is a characteristic of an individual that can reduce them from "a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" from the perspective of other people

(Goffman, 1963: 2). Goffman (1963) differentiates between the visible stigma and the concealable stigma, the former referring in his analysis to characteristics like leprosy or disability, and the latter to those like alcoholism, mental disorder, and (of relevance to this study), homosexuality. Although Goffman's concept of stigma was not ultimately used in this study, there are many similarities between this concept and that of the Stranger (Simmel, 1908), which was ultimately chosen for inclusion in the theoretical framework. Given the relatively large amount of research conducted on discrimination, exclusion and marginalization, it was unsurprising that it was found to be a major factor in this research; it is explored in more detail in Chapter 6.

Identity Management

Identity management was a highly pertinent factor in the experiences of the participants interviewed in this research. Articles within the identity management theme of the systematic literature review discussed how LGB employees withhold or discuss information about their sexual/gender identity in the workplace; the different strategies that are used in doing this, singularly or in combination, throughout one's careers (Button 2004); the reasons why a person may or may not disclose their sexual/gender identity (Ragins 2008); reactions from heterosexual co-workers (Bernstein & Swartout, 2012; Blackwell, 2008); the psychological, cognitive and social effects of hiding or revealing one's sexual identity (King et al., 2008; Madera, 2010).

A review of the literature shows that there are a number of identity management strategies that may be used by a gay or lesbian employee in the workplace. Supporting and extending earlier research (Shallenberger, 1996; Woods, 1993), Button (2004)

identifies these strategies as counterfeiting, where a false heterosexual identity is created and maintained; avoidance, where the subject of one's sexual identity is completely avoided, but a heterosexual identity is not actively created; and integrating, where one reveals their sexual identity and attempts to deal with any consequences that may arise. The study showed that a number of these strategies may be used in combination, at the same time or throughout one's career, for example by disclosing one's sexual identity to a limited number of people but maintaining a false heterosexual identity with all others.

Clair et al. (2005) delved deeper, identifying different ways of *passing* or *revealing*: in the former, one may fabricate a false heterosexual identity, actively conceal information about themselves, or dodge questions about their sexual identity. With the latter, one may signal that one is LGB (e.g. by bringing up particular conversational topics), revealing their LGB identity and attempting to normalize it by making it seem ordinary, or by differentiating, a strategy where one openly presents their identity and highlights their difference. Chapter 8 of this thesis also explores how the interview participants managed their LGB identity in the workplace, and draws from this literature to help categorize the different strategies they use.

Ragins (2008) constructs a model of antecedents to stigmatized identity disclosure in both work and non-work domains. Disclosure decisions are affected by many factors, including the desire to be seen by others as one sees oneself; the anticipated consequences of disclosure, both positive and negative; the environmental support one's feels they have for their stigmatized identity; characteristics of the stigma itself; and the presence of other people with this identity, as well as allies and supportive relationships. Similarly, King et al. (2008) explore positive aspects and negative

aspects of coming out in the workplace, and also implicate the timing and method of disclosure, and the organizational climate, as factors in the success of disclosure decisions. The findings chapters (6, 7, 8 and 9) explore other influences on identity management.

It is clear from this research that identity management in the workplace is much more complicated than choosing whether to disclose or not disclose one's hidden sexual/gender identity, and so identity management processes may therefore take up a larger amount of psychological resources than first expected. However, the literature surrounding identity management also highlights the negative consequences of hiding one's sexual or gender identity, and the positive outcomes of coming out. Madera (2010) discusses the large cognitive toll concealing an LGBT identity can have, possibly interfering with day-to-day work, while Day and Schoenrade (1997) show that workers who are open about their sexual identity have higher affective commitment, higher job satisfaction, higher perceived top management support, lower role ambiguity, lower role conflict, and lower conflict between work and home. There are implications for organizations, therefore, in ensuring that they openly support employees coming out in the workplace, and that employees can feel comfortable doing so in that environment.

Identity management is an on-going issue for every lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender person. The assumption that one is heterosexual is ubiquitous and the LGBT person must therefore choose in each situation whether or not to disclose their sexual or gender identity. For many, this may be easy, but for others may prove difficult.

Identity Development

Identity development refers here to the formation of a positive lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender self-identity. Having been researched since the 1970s, it is represented in a number of models (e.g. Cass, 1973; Coleman, 1982; Troiden, 1989) that seek to plot the social, psychological and cognitive processes involved. Crucially, these models mention the differing attitudes to one's self and one's sexual orientation, the increased psychological resources that are used, and the evolving views and perceptions of heterosexuality during this time. These changes in perception and focus may have an impact on the LGBT person's career development, interpersonal relations, and the success of diversity initiatives within organizations. For example, Boatwright et al. (1996) find that lesbian women went through a "second adolescence" during the process of coming out, and this period was marked with delays, disruptions and in some cases derailment of the career development process.

Unfortunately, the intersection between career development and LGBT identity development has not been studied in any great detail within the literature, with only three of the 136 articles (Boatwright et al. 1996, Lyons, Brenner & Lipman. 2010, Tomlinson and Fassinger 2003) dealing specifically with the topic. Prince (1995) criticizes the lack of research on this topic, while Chojnacki and Gelberg (1994) suggest that career counsellors use the sexual identity development framework as a background to help understand the interaction of sexual identity and career.

The theme of identity development is somewhat present in a much lesser context within parts of the literature, particularly with the related, but different, themes of identity management, strategies of which may change as one's LGB identity develops; and youth issues, which deal with adolescents and college students who

often are only just beginning to fully explore their sexual/gender identity. The implications of coming out within the workplace and the consequences of a burgeoning LGB identity within teenage years are well documented (e.g. Hetherington, 1991; Madera, 2010; Ragins, 2008; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Schmidt & Nilsson, 2006), but the management literature has yet to track the development of one's LGB identity within the context of the workplace, or explore the work-lives of those who do not internally identify as LGBT until later in life. This research looks at the interplay of LGB identity with one's work identity more explicitly, filling a gap in the knowledge about this process, and providing data for improving current diversity and inclusion policies within organizations.

Career Development

This theme was characterized by articles that focused on the interplay of an established LGBT identity with one's vocational aspirations and occurrences. Career development was the most well represented theme in this review, with over 30% of the articles reviewed associated with it. Many of these included discrimination, the fear of discrimination, and identity management strategies influenced largely by discrimination, as key issues affecting the career development of LGBT workers (Dispenza et al., 2012; Velez & Moradi, 2012; Adams, Cahill & Ackelind, 2005), but a number of other factors were also found to be important in the careers of LGBT people.

Networking and interpersonal relations are found to be more difficult for LGBT workers (O'Ryan & McFarland, 2010; Parnell, Lease & Green, 2012). Parnell et al., (2012) theorize that this may because of the existence of a "good ole' boy network"

maintained exclusively by heterosexual men within organizations, and the experience, or fear, of interpersonal discrimination, leading to a loss in confidence. O'Ryan and McFarland (2010:74) cite identity management and disclosure issues as important in this respect, with lesbians and gay couples hesitant to build networks because of "the decisions about what to say and what not to say, and when to disclose, when to push it and when not to push it". A lack of confidence in relation to networking and building good workplace relationships may lead to LGBT workers being perceived by co-workers and managers as unfriendly or hostile; which could have implications for performance evaluations, interpersonal relations and overall career development. Chapter 6 of this research dissertation outlines how those interviewed sometimes felt excluded, marginalized or stigmatized in the workplace, drawing clear parallels between this project and the findings of other authors.

The importance of one's sexual/gender identity within the workplace was demonstrated in many articles, with participants experiencing decreased job satisfaction in heterosexist organizations (Lyons, Brenner & Fassinger, 2005; Parnell et al., 2012), an awareness for executives of their position as advocate and role model for other LGBT employees (Heintz 2012), and their conscious attempts to bring together this identity with other workplace identities (O'Ryan & McFarland, 2010; Rumens & Kerfoot, 2009). Articles within this theme show that sexual/gender identity is central to many LGBT employees' lives, and in many cases the career may be of secondary importance compared to being authentic to oneself (Heintz, 2012). This phenomenon is explored in the empirical sturdy, with regards to the identity management strategies employed by LGB employees in the workplace.

The interplay of sexual or gender identity with career choices was also a salient factor within this theme. Chung (1995) discusses the idea that certain occupations may be perceived as inappropriate, by both themselves and by heterosexuals, for lesbians and gay men. Discriminatory heterosexuals may believe that gay men and lesbians are inappropriate for positions in the teaching, healthcare or childcare professions, while gay men and lesbians, fearing religious intolerance, discrimination or other negative attitudes may choose to stay away from certain career paths (Chung, 1995). Ng et al. (2012) found that LGBT people, as part of a marginalized social identity, espoused more altruistic values as a way to protect themselves and the collective interest of the social group, and were thus more likely to choose to work in the non-profit sector, while their heterosexual control sample was more likely to choose to work in the private sector.

Scott et al. (2011) found that transgender students may experience difficulties in their career development during the transition process, as any former experience would be under a different name and gender presentation. To avail of references and recommendations, they would be forced to disclose their transgender status and risk discrimination. Similarly, Tilcsik (2011) found that mentioning previous experience in an LGBT campus organization would actually hinder the career development process in many parts of the USA, rather than help it. In scenarios such as this, sexual and gender identities can become entwined with the career development process, and the LGBT person must forgo mentioning a possibly beneficial aspect of their former career, or run the risk of discrimination, both formal and informal, when their LGBT identity is made known. Based on the extant literature shared here, the identity management process, its antecedents, the choices that LGB employees engage in during it, and its consequences, prove to be a topic of interest and importance for both

the employee and the organization, and is further explored in the empirical study outlined here.

LGBT Youth Issues

The study of the vocational processes of LGBT youths may be considered as part of the general career development theme. However, some factors may be unique or more important during adolescence, while common factors affecting LGBT people within the workplace, like identity disclosure or discrimination, might have not yet been experienced, but may still be a consideration in the career development process. A number of career development barriers specific to LGBT youth have been found in the literature. Nauta et al., (2001) found that the sexual orientation of a role model is an important factor for LGB youths; however, Fassinger (1996) theorized that lesbian and gay youths have fewer role models with whom to identify, because of the lack of visible lesbians and gay men. As well as lacking a relatable role model for career development purposes, lesbian and gay youth may not be able to see examples of the interplay between one's sexual identity and career, and thus valuable psychological resources may be taken up (within adolescence and at the beginning of one's career) in developing identity management strategies for the workplace (Schmidt and Nilsson, 2006). Additionally, Nauta et al. (2001) found that LGB college students felt less career guidance than heterosexual students. The existence of stereotypically "LGBT" occupations, such as the gay hairdresser or the lesbian truck-driver (Tilcsik, Anteby & Knight, 2015), may mean that some youths feel restricted in their vocational choices (Fassinger, 1996), or feel that these workplaces offer a "safe-space" in which they will not face discrimination (Morrow, 1997), in contrast to other non-stereotyped professions or workplaces.

Hetherington (1991) postulated that the process of sexual identity self-realization, usually occurring during adolescence, is so psychologically overwhelming that the LGBT youth may focus more on their personal issues, while concentration on career development is significantly reduced. The result is a "bottle-neck" or slump in the career development process. Schmidt and Nilsson (2006) support the bottleneck theory in their study of 102 lesbian, gay and bisexual adolescents. They found that LGBT adolescents who reported higher levels of inner conflict with their sexual identity had lower levels of career maturity and higher levels of vocational indecision. A slump in the career development process may have larger ramifications in adolescence than at any other point in the LGBT person's life, as further education or a career path may be chosen that will then be abandoned for another.

In this study, which relies on the narratives of the sample of LGB employees, past incidents which may have impacted on their identity management, and the timing thereof, in order to uncover the mechanisms underlying identity management decision-making.

Organizational and Human Resources Perspectives

Papers that related primarily to the position of the organization or the HR practitioner in dealing with LGBT issues in the workplace were categorized under this theme. Papers within this theme examined factors such as employee job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational citizenship behaviours and the disclosure of sexual identity in the workplace, and looking at how organizational support and workplace diversity can affect them.

Huffman (2008) examines the role of multi-level support in different aspects of an LGBT person's career, and finds that support from supervisors was related to job satisfaction, a finding related to Day and Schoenrade's (2000) finding that top management support of LGBT employees leads to increased job satisfaction. Huffman also finds that the presence of anti-discrimination policies is related with higher job satisfaction, while Rostosky and Riggle (2002) find that they are positively associated with the extent to which one is out at work. Similarly, Brenner et al. (2010) find that workplace heterosexism is associated with the level of workplace "outness" of LGBT employees, and that this is related to the amount of organizational citizenship that these employees perform. Colgan, Creegan, McKearney and Wright (2007) find that while organisations being inclusive has benefits for both the employer and employee, diversity and inclusion was in practice not implemented as well as LGB respondents hoped, in a proactive manner.

The literature within this theme presents a clear economic case for diversity within organizations and support of LGBT employees (e.g. Brenner et al., 2010; King & Cortina, 2010; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002). As well as having positive outcomes for employees (and thus indirectly for the company), and the moral and ethical responsibility that the employer has, the amount of employees that are out in the workplace will increase, which, as stated above, has major benefits for the organization, with racial and gender diversity associated with increased sales revenue, more customers, and greater relative profits (Herring, 2009). A number of authors (Colgan, Creegan, McKearney & Wright, 2007; Colgan, Wright, Creegan & McKearney, 2009; Correia & Kleiner, 2001; Day & Greene, 2008) discuss the "gay-friendly" workplace: organizations that facilitate a hospitable atmosphere for its LGB employees (Correia & Kleiner, 2001). Partner-benefits, non-discrimination policies,

LGBT networks and community outreach and support are signs of a gay-friendly workplace (Correia & Kleiner, 2001). Although Colgan et al.'s (2007) study of such workplaces finds that not all LGB respondents are out at work, having such benefits and policies, as well as the presence of LGB colleagues and seniors in the organization helped them to come out. However, the same study finds an "implementation gap" is perceived amongst the respondents who worked in these organizations, i.e. their workplaces were thought to be better at talking about diversity than actually bringing in concrete practices and policies.

However, other authors are critical about the construction of the "business case for diversity" and the idea of the "gay-friendly" workplace. Perriton (2009) finds that the former can disempower women by reproducing unequal gender relations. Litvin (2005) argues that the business case rhetoric does not create organisational change but instead just reinforces the status quo, and similarly Noon (2007) argues that diversity as a concept is flawed and individualising, while the business case itself had logical flaws. O'Leary and Weathington (2006) question the need for a business case to justify diversity, considering the amount of diversity already in most workplaces already. The business case for diversity is built on the perceived economic benefits an organisation can get from promoting diversity, but authors (e.g. Demunijnck, 2009; Lansing & Cruser, 2009) argue that a workplace has a moral obligation to promote inclusion and protect minority employees from discrimination, regardless of the business case. Rumens (2014) criticizes the term "gay-friendly" itself, discussing how, while it is prevalently used in the modern business discourse, quashes the inherent diversity of identities with the queer spectrum, by using "gay" as a short form of LGBT or LGBTQI+, and in doing so can have implications for our understanding of the complexity intersectionality that is present. Rumens &

Broomfield (2011) outline how typical "gay-friendly" workplaces are in fact heteronormatively constructing and constraining the roles that gay men perform in the workplace. Similarly, Williams, Giuffre & Dellinger (2009) examine how participants in their study that worked in supposed "gay-friendly" organizations still reported incidents and themes that show how the social and professional standards in these workplaces were bound by heteronormative ideals, with any non-normative gay or lesbian identities, expression or presentation subdued in the pursuit of "professionalism" or "normality".

One particular additional benefit (for both organisation and employee) from increased organisational LGB support is how it will influence how LGB employees feel they fit within the organization. *Person-organisation fit* (*P-O fit*), defined as "the congruence between employees' values and those of their workplace organization" (Velez & Moradi, 2012) has been used in studies of employees from marginalised groups previously (Lyons et al., 2005; Lyons & O'Brien, 2006; Velez & Moradi, 2012). Velez and Moradi (2012) find that an LGB-supportive workplace environment has a positive relationship with P-O fit; however, they were unable to find a link between a heterosexist (analogous to heteronormative) workplace climate and P-O fit, and subsequent negative relationship between P-O fit and turnover intentions, through the mediating influence of job satisfaction.

Part of the analysis presented in Chapters 7 and 9 focuses on the voice of LGB employees. Voice is used here in the same sense that Hirschman (1970) proposes in his Exit-Voice-Loyalty framework. It represents an employee's attempts to engender change in their organization in order to make one's work life more palatable (Bell, et al., 2011; Hirschman, 1970). For LGB employees, this could take the form of

engaging in activities, practices and the promotion of policies advocating diversity and the inclusion of LGB people within organizations (Colgan, 2016; Colgan & McKearney, 2012; King & Cortina, 2010). A number of different forms of voice and its antonymic counterpart, silence, have been identified, as well as the purposes that these forms have. Van Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003) synthesize and extend the work of Morrison and Milliken (2000) and Pinder and Harlos (2001) to categorize voice and silence; they can be *Acquiescent* and based on resignation or low self-efficacy, *Defensive* and based on fear and self-protection, or *Prosocial* and based on cooperation and aiding the organization. Felix, Mello and von Borell (2016) explore how voice and silence in an organization are experienced by gay and lesbian employees; while at the organizational level gay and lesbian voice may be promoted, at the micro-level a climate of silence may be encouraged. The authors show how gay and lesbian employees themselves can be active in constructing a culture that includes their voice, rather than passively accepting the organizational climate. For transgender employees, however, there is a distinct lack of voice in organizations (Beauregard, Arevshatian, Booth & Whittle, 2016), with the transgender population often subsumed, and thus silenced, within the large LGBT umbrella group.

The articles within this theme show the role of the organization and the HR function in the experiences of LGB employees, and how it can affect one's turnover intentions, identity management, voice, and job satisfaction. Articles within the next theme outline the role of less-formalized workplace factors, such as friendships and social relations, in LGB work experiences.

Social Issues and Experiences

This theme includes research on interpersonal, peer-to-peer, social and group issues, for example, Rumens' [2010a, b] research on the workplace friendships of gay men. These articles did not focus specifically on discrimination, which, as shown above, made up its own theme. Many articles here looked at how various social elements of the workplace may help create a positive LGBT identity, with Rumens (2010a) identifying friendships between men as empowering non-traditional sexualities in the workplace, and Fassinger (2010) examining the cross-section of leadership and LGBT identity.

Githens & Aragon (2009), Colgan and McKearney (2012), and Colgan (2016) explore LGBT networks, which are explored later in Chapter 9. Githens and Aragon (2009) present a framework for categorising these employee groups, their structures and their goals. They identify four approaches to organizing an LGBT network within an organization, according to how much they prioritise social change over organisational effectiveness, and order over chaos. Types of LGBT networks can include LGBT employee resource groups (the "Conventional Approach") and LGBT union groups (the "Organized Unofficial Approach), both of which strive for order but differ on emphasis towards social change or organisational effectiveness. Other types include informal networking or mentoring groups (representing the "Internally Responsive Informal Approach") and the subversive labour groups (the "Queer or Radical Approach"), which are both emergent and chaotic but again differ on emphasis.

Colgan and McKearney (2012) show LGBT networks can provide both visibility and a voice mechanism for LGBT employees, as well as a source of community for the members. Colgan (2016) shows the complexity of an LGBT network, considering the myriad of different identities and beliefs of its membership, which, despite sharing the

same "LGBT" acronym, is not always unified. Chapter 9 explores identity management in relation to LGBT networks, and explores, like these papers, different approaches to organizing a network, the functions for its members, and how LGB employees can differ in their perceptions of these groups.

Wright (2013, 2016) discusses how intersectional identities are lived in the workplace; for example, showing how while women often are the target of sexual harassment in the construction industry, out lesbians do not face such discrimination as much (2013). In male-dominated workplaces, norms based on traditional gendered ideals operate on both straight and lesbian women, while the latter also are the subject of heteronorms (Wright, 2016). Colgan (2014) also discusses the intersections of identities, namely LGBT employees who are Black and Minority Ethnic and/or disabled, and discusses how participants may conceal their sexual orientation in environments they feel to be hostile to their other, more visible minority characteristics.

Whilst broad, this theme highlights areas of future research potential and fills in many of the gaps that the other themes do not look at, with, for example, only a very small amount of research conducted on LGBT networks. The theme of social issues is present in many of the participant's stories. Its effect on identity management and the interplay of LGB identity with the workplace are explored during the empirical study and included in the interview guide.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the initial and important focus of this research project: LGB employees' experiences. A number of major themes were found to be important in the work experiences and careers of this employee subgroup, namely, discrimination, the perspectives of the organisation and HR, LGB youth issues, social issues and experiences, career development, identity development, and identity management.

The next chapter focuses more particularly on identity and its management. In order to outline what findings have been discovered concerning identity before, and to better situate this project within that conversation, this literature review, on identity, was conducted. The following chapter is made up of that review.

Chapter 3. Identity

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."

Oscar Wilde[iv]

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 outlined the literature on the careers and workplace experiences of LGB employees. As discussed, a major theme of the literature was identity management, a lot of which focused on coming out in the workplace, its antecedents, and its consequences. While the initial stages of this project were designed to be exploratory, as the focus on identity construction and management arose in the analysis, so too did the need for a concrete review on the literature on identity in general. While the literature on LGBT work issues provides a contextualized interaction with the identity literature, the narrow focus excludes concepts and topics that are of relevance to this study, which seeks to add a new perspective on LGB identity management. Thus, a second literature review, focusing on identity and the workplace, was conducted later in the research process.

This chapter presents an overview of the literature on identity within the business and management domains. Unlike the previous literature review, this review was not conducted in a systematic fashion (Pittaway et al., 2004; Tranfield et al., 2003). Rather, as the review was performed during the analysis stage of the research process, I was more specific in my search. I firstly used the articles from the identity management theme of the previous review as a starting point. This resulted in my finding articles not only in an LGBT context but also from the perspectives of other marginalized employees (women, racial minorities, etc.). However I felt this still limited the conversation to a certain aspect of the identity literature however, and so I deliberately sought out more general articles on identity in the workplace, as well as "core" or "quintessential" readings in the area. This was helped my membership of the Identity special interest group of the British Academy of Management; taking part

in these sessions and conversations allowed me to identify articles and readings important to the identity conversation. I was therefore able to include research on identity in the workplace that was not specific to LGBT or marginalized employees; this, I believe, allowed me to take a fresh perspective when analysing my data, and also showed how some aspects of this research and its findings can be extended to other marginalized groups. Below, I start this chapter with a discussion on terminology and definitions; *identity* can sometimes come across as a vague concept, and I clarify how I am interpreting it in this research project. After, I discuss how identity overlaps, integrates and is part of the workplace. An overview of the identity literature that is specific to marginalized employees follows. The chapter finishes by showing how identity is a key concept in this study, and how it is applied.

3.2 Definitions – What is an Identity?

There are many different approaches to understanding and conceptualizing identity (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Research within the psychology domain (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1991) usually characterizes identity as a part of one's self that gives meaning to oneself and one's self-image. Conversely, sociological research conceptualizes identity as one's role or position within society and investigates how that position influences one's self-concept (Jung & Hecht, 2004). Identity, put simply, is a way for individuals to define themselves in relation to others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and represents one's answer to the question "who am I?", or a collective's answer to the question "who are we?" (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Albert, Ashforth and Dutton (2000: 13) note, "whether an organization, a group, or person, each entity needs at least a preliminary answer to the question 'Who are we?' or 'Who am I?' in

order to interact effectively with other entities". Identity is "our understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us)" (Jenkins, 2004: 5). Identity can be seen as both inherent and anchored to the individual (Carbaugh, 1989), as well as created by and existing between people (Burke & Reitzes, 1981).

Although there appears to be a shared understanding of the basic concept of identity, different opinions appear when one focuses on the differing characteristics and dimensions of identity. The next sections focus on these dimensions, investigating how identity is comprised; if it is placed on one by others or exhibited and felt by oneself; if it influenced primarily by the immediate context or the overarching discourse; and if it is fixed and permanent or fluid and flexible (see Figure 3 for an overview).

Levels of Identity

A number of authors have attempted to show that identity is comprised of a number of layers or levels. Simon's (2004) Self-Aspect model of identity posits that it is made up of a number of "self-aspects", or cognitive concepts that help one to discern individual attributes and components of one's identity, such as personality traits, particular skills, behaviours, and membership of certain groups. These self-aspects are divided into one's individual identity (e.g. one is friendly, skilled at IT, and has blonde hair) and one's collective identity (e.g. one is Catholic, one is LGB, one is of Scandinavian descent). Conversely, Brewer and Gardner (1996), Hecht (1993) and Spencer-Oatey (2007) categorize identity into three distinct yet interweaving levels:
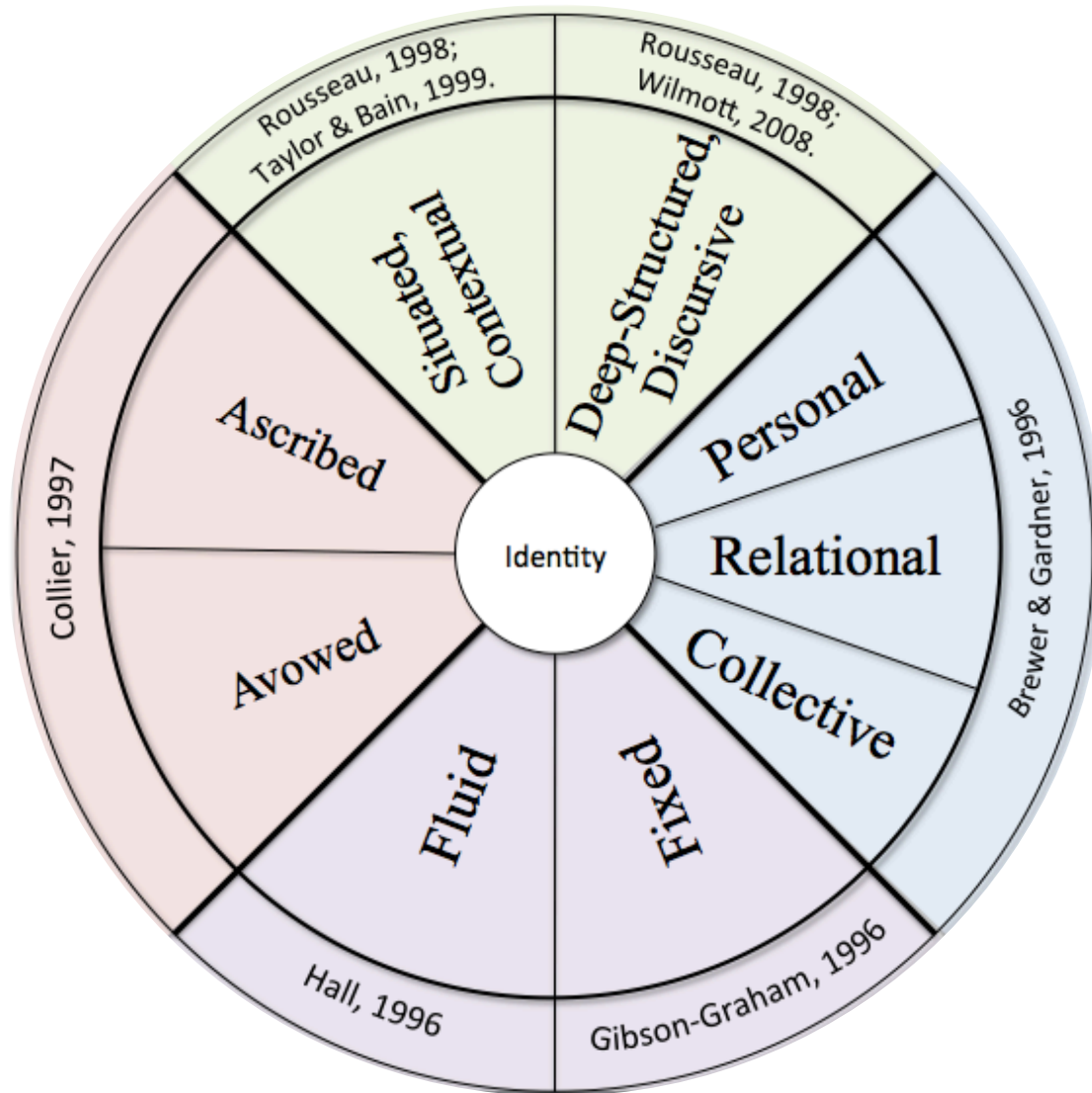
Figure 3. An overview of some major concepts, debates, and tensions within the identity literature, and the respective authors associated with them (not to scale).

the personal identity, the relational identity, and the collective identity (See Figure 3).

The personal identity is an individual's own concept of themselves, and one evaluates this through reference to traits or characteristics that differentiate them from others, and make up a unique combination that distinguishes them (Sedikides & Brewer, 2015). The relational identity is the self-concept one derives from their interpersonal interactions with others, and one establishes this identity level through reference to the relative role they play in their significant relationships, for example, as boyfriend

or father or friend. Below, the relational aspects of one's identity and how they affect identity management in the workplace are examined.

The collective identity is the self-concept one derives from their membership of a group, and is the basic unit of analysis in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1985, 1986), which makes up one part of the theoretical framework for this research project (outlined in Chapter 5). The collective identity is based on the bonds one has with others that are derived from common membership within a group. In the context of this research a pertinent example would be membership of the LGBT community, or being part of an organization.

While they can be identified distinctly, there are overlaps between these levels. Brewer and Gardner (1996) point out that being a member of an in-group has effects on all three levels, despite being most closely related to the collective identity. One's membership of an in-group allows one to reflect on one's individual identity more accurately, because the other group members provide a reference point with which to compare, and because one can gain confirmation of one's evaluation of one's own traits and characteristics through interaction with and feedback from the other group members (Pelham & Swann, 1994). It also allows one to make more accurate evaluations of one's relational identity and role through reference to other members of that in-group, rather than with reference to random people.

The literature does not always agree on how these levels of identity interact with one another. While Sedikides and Brewer (2015) believe all of the identities coexist separately within the same individual, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Haslam and McGarty (1994) believe that the differing levels of identity may sometime be incompatible or

dissonant. Conversely, Deaux (1992, 1993) argues that the relational and collective identities are part of the personal identity.

Ascribed or Avowed

The debate on whether one's identity arises from themselves or from others' perceptions of them is concentrated on research on intercultural communication, however some authors (e.g. Martin & Nakayama, 2007, Samovar & Porter, 2004) argue that this debate is pertinent not just for the study of cultural identities, but of communication between people of different ethnicities, different religions and different sexual orientations. It is included here because underlying this research is the influence of difference, namely that between LGB employees and their heterosexual colleagues.

Collier (1997) and Jackson (1999) discuss how identity can be seen as that which is *ascribed* and that which is *avowed*. An ascribed identity is one that is placed upon you by others, e.g. a member of a certain ethnic group; an avowed identity is one that you can claim through your actions and communication. This small body of research has implications for Chapter 8, which looks at how much an LGB person integrates their sexual identity into their workplace identity, in other words, how much they "avow" their LGB identity at work. It also has parallels with Jung and Hecht's (2004) findings, in that identity can be separated into that which is inherently felt and that which is enacted to others.

Contextualist versus Discursive

Jaros (2012) outlines two major streams of thought within the workplace identity literature, the Contextualist Approach and the Discursive Approach. The Contextualist Approach is epitomized by authors such as Taylor and Bain (1999) and Marks (Marks & Hallier, 2007; Marks & Locklear, 2004; Marks & Thompson, 2010). With Marxist roots and a critical outlook, these authors view contextual workplace details, such the layout of the work environment, the nature of the work, and the way it is organized, as important influences in the identities of employees (Jaros, 2012). They are sceptical about categorizing employees in broad terms, such as "managers" or "front-line employees", a position that "assume[s] homogeneity within occupational groups…ignoring their complexity and failing to account for the divergent experiences" (Marks & Scholarios, 2007: 98). Reflecting its Marxist roots, the Contextualist approach also looks at how employee identity, particularly in a collective form, can form resistance to management control. This idea is explored further in Chapter 9 on LGBT Networks, showing how a collective LGBT identity can help the individual's struggle against authority.

The Discursive Approach is represented by authors such as Wilmott (1990), Halford (2003) and O'Doherty (2005), and draws primarily from Foucault and post-modern theory. In contrast to the Contexualist Approach, which focuses primarily within the organization and how it affects identity, the Discursive Approach is concerned primarily with discourses upon a societal level and its effect on workplace identity. For example, Alvesson & Willmott (2002) discuss how a neo-liberal ideology operating in organisations regulates employees' identities to become more congruent with the objectives defined by the management. Similarly, Halford (2003) examines the role of the overtly masculinised and heterosexual discourse that is at play within

Western workplaces, and how it affects the identity management of workers within these spaces. In her analysis, it is the discursive masculinity that influences how workers act. This research includes analysis of hegemonic heteronormativity, a type of power discourse that places non-heterosexual identities and expression as discredited or deviant. Later in this PhD, the manifestation of heteronormativity in the workplace and its influences on LGB employee identity is further explored.

Fixed vs. Fluid

Another tension in the identity literature lies in whether the author believes identity to be fixed or whether they believe it to be fluid. Some feminist and Marxist traditions claim that there is some essential fixed identity common to each respective person (e.g. Gibson-Graham, 1996).

Conversely, post-structuralist traditions see identity as a fractured, fluid, on-going process of construction and reconstruction (Hall, 1996). Hall (1996:17) sees identities as:

> *"never unified, and in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation"*

Hall and others in the post-structuralist tradition hold that identities are created and re-created within discourses, and are thus affected by the specific historical, institutional, social, and power settings in which the person finds themselves. Unlike those who

believe there is some quintessential fixedness to an identity, these authors argue that an identity is by essence uniquely differentiated and individually constructed, representing the myriad differences that exist from person to person and setting to setting. Ashforth and Mael (1989) discuss how identity should not be seen in an "all-or-none" way, that is, as a fixed entity, but rather in the degrees to which one identifies with certain identities, suggesting more of a fluidity rather than fixedness.

Some authors (e.g. Halford, 2003; Gibson-Graham, 1996; Young, 1998) believe that a middle ground should be taken between the essentialists and the post-structuralists, arguing that, by focusing on the shared identity part, yet allowing for and celebrating differences, "strategic solidarities and alliances" (Gibson-Graham, 1995: 70) may be formed. This is of particular relevance in this research because as outlined below, a compromise between fixedness and fluidity of identity is used in analysing the identity management strategies of the participants.

The fluid versus fixed identity debate is also present in debate within and about the LGBT community. As outlined in Chapter 12 (see section on Postmodern Sexual Identities), many queer theorists believe that one's sexuality cannot be pinned to one label or another; they assert that one's sexual identity and gender identity is fluid, not fixed, and use the word *queer* to represent this impermanence. Conversely, the vast majority of discussion surrounding sexuality and gender identity tends to use specific labels to mark sexual and gender identities, such as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, suggesting a more fixed identity. This PhD explores the work experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and uses these fixed categories to identify them, but throughout this thesis, and in Chapter 8 in particular, I look at how identity is actively managed, moulded and shaped by the person and is, in this regard, a fluid

entity. In doing so I believe I draw from aspects of both the fixed and fluid camps, showing that a common fixed identity ("LGB") draws people together, but still highlighting the individual differences in how people actively manage this identity.

3.3 Identity Management

Identity management, related to *impression management* (Goffman, 1959)*,* is an important topic in this research, which looks at how LGB employees actively manage their identity in the workplace. As shown in Chapter 2, it was a relatively large theme within the literature on LGBT careers and workplace experiences, suggesting its centrality and importance to this topic. While the theme in the literature review refers mostly to how one's LGB identity is managed (i.e. by concealing it or disclosing it etc.), identity management in itself is a more general topic that refers to the management of all of one's identity/identities.

A related term, impression management (Goffman, 1959) is a process by which one consciously or unconsciously tries to control other peoples' perceptions of something (a person, event or object), but is usually used to refer to one controlling the impression that they themselves make. Impression Management is central to Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Every Day Life,* wherein his theory of Dramaturgy, a component of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 5, is first outlined.

In this research, I discuss two different identities: the LGB identity and the workplace identity, and how the two interact, co-exist and are managed distinctly. Elsbach (2004: 622), drawing from Social Identity Theory, a component of the theoretical framework shown in Chapter 5, defines workplace identity as "an individual's central

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and enduring status and distinctiveness categorizations in the workplace", and includes both personal aspects (e.g. "I am productive", "I am driven") and social categorizations (e.g. "I am a marketer", "I'm an executive"). It is in the latter component of workplace identity where I envisage one being lesbian, gay, or bisexual becomes part of the workplace identity when disclosed, where the collective level of one's identity becomes known (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). If it is hidden, the LGB identity does not interact with the workplace collective identity, but is instead a part of one's internal personal identity (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). In identifying the different layers of identity, as well as these two particular identities (workplace and LGB), we can see the nuances that can arise when one is deciding whether or not to disclose their LGB identity at work. Chapters 7 and 8 explore these nuances in more detail.

Chapter 7 also explores how LGB employees get accustomed to the workplace when they first join. *Onboarding* or "the process by which a new employee is introduced to an organization and its vision, mission, and values" (Graybill, Carpenter, Offord, Piorun & Shaffer, 2013: 200) is an activity that all many employees go through (Galvin, 2003) during this induction period. Both onboarding and the induction period are directly related to the concept of a workplace identity, in that it socialises the new employee from being an organisational outsider to becoming an organisational insider (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011), in other words, constructing their new workplace identity. In this induction period, there is a much-heightened risk of the new employee leaving the workplace because they feel they do not fit in (Hill & Trist, 1955). As well as dealing with this induction period, LGB employees face the additional pressure of "onboarding" their sexual identity, as well as in general. Chapter 7 discusses this is more detail.

In this research I use a combination of both the concepts of identity management and impression management; the former referring here to how the two identities (workplace and LGB) are managed in concert, while the latter refers to how one's overall "meta-identity" (the combination of workplace identity, LGB identity, and others) and the impressions that this makes are controlled. For example, while Chapter 8 is at first glance an exploration of identity management (i.e. the strategies by which LGB employees integrate or separate their LGB identity and their workplace identity), it also discusses impression management – how, after disclosing, one attempts to control the impressions that their LGB identity makes (normalizes it, differentiates it, or radicalizes it).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter presents an overview of the literature on identity, as it manifests both in and outside of the workplace. While a shared understanding of the term identity is present, there are fundamental disagreements as to the exact characteristics of identity, with some authors arguing that it based on the discourse and relatively fixed, others arguing that it is based on immediate context and fluid in nature, and still others in dispute about whether one's identity is a creation given by others or whether it stems from one's own actions. Different aspects from each side of these arguments are used to guide the analysis of this exploratory research; some quotes from participants and findings shown in this thesis may appear to agree with one particular argument (e.g. Chapter 6 focuses on how identity is affected by hegemonic heteronormativity, similar to the Discursive Approach), while others may be in line with the opposing argument (e.g. Chapter 7) explores different layers of identity

management and implicates the situational-dependent factors that influence it, reminiscent of the Contextualist Approach). Other findings may draw the two positions together in a middle ground, e.g. Chapter 8's discussion of identity management strategies assumes a relatively rigid LGB identity that is variable in its integration into the workplace, bringing together both the Fixed identity and Fluid identity arguments.

The next chapter outlines the main methodological considerations and choices that affect how this research project, including the philosophical influences, the research design, and an outline of the pilot studies. An overview of the context in which this research is situated is also given.

Chapter 4. Research Methodology & Design

"He wrote on a piece of paper with his pencil. 'Psychosis: out of touch with reality.'
Since then, I have been trying to find out what reality is, so that I can touch it."

Jeanette Winterson[v]

4.1 Introduction and Research Aim

This chapter outlines the methodological approach of this research project. The major philosophical influences that underpin and affect this research, namely Critical Realism, Feminist Theory and Critical Theory, are explained. The methods that were used to recruit participants, purposive, convenience and snowball sampling, and recruitment through organisational networks, are outlined. I then described the semi-structured interview method that was used to collect qualitative data, and the pilot studies and the changes that they inspired in the methodological design. Finally, the coding and analysis of the interview data is described. Firstly, however, the context within which this research is taking place is detailed.

4.2 Context of Research

Overview

This study takes place in Ireland, which is currently undergoing large changes with regard to public opinion, legislation and policies surrounding LGBT issues. This section gives an outline of Ireland and the unique research context it presents. While there has been a positive change in attitudes towards homosexuality over the last few decades, as confirmed by the passing of a referendum introducing same sex marriage (2015), Ireland is still on the "conservative side of the European average" (Fahey et al., 2005:226). This section outlines these two conflicting forces, of a traditionally traditionalist country with new, liberal laws and policies, a country full of, as Moncrieff (2015) remarks, "contradictory people". I focus first on the LGBT movement in Ireland, because this is the background in which many of the participants interviewed as part of this research grew up. As a major theme of this

thesis is on identity, and noting the discursive approach to analysing identity as outlined in the previous chapter, I believe it important to show the historical and social context in which their identities were formed and shaped.

The LGBT Movement in Ireland

Although Ireland is now identified as becoming a "post-Christian" society (Whyte, 2007:46), and an increasing trend towards atheism or non-Christian faith within the population has been noted (Irish Census, 2011), the Roman Catholic church still retains a large amount of control over many aspects of Irish society, most notably within the education and health systems (Whyte, 2007). While Ireland is becoming increasingly liberal in attitude, and is now one of the most LGBT-accepting countries in Europe (Eurobarometer, 2012), homosexuality was decriminalized only relatively recently in Ireland, in 1993.

The first LGBT public demonstration (see Figure 4) involved just 10 people, who staged a protest outside the Department of Justice and British Embassy in

Figure 4. The first LGBT public demonstration in June 1974, Dublin. Source: Irish Queer Archive

Dublin (Ireland's law that criminalized homosexuality was inherited from British laws). The first major event in the LGBT movement, a Gay Pride march, was held in June 1983. It was organized partly in response to the case of Declan Flynn, a 31-year-old gay man who was murdered by five teenagers in a Dublin park because of his sexuality. The judge gave each of the youths a suspended manslaughter sentence and they were released, prompting a massive backlash in the LGBT community. The first Pride march (see Figure 5) had only less than 200 people, in comparison to the most recent 2016 Pride march, which had tens of thousands of people.
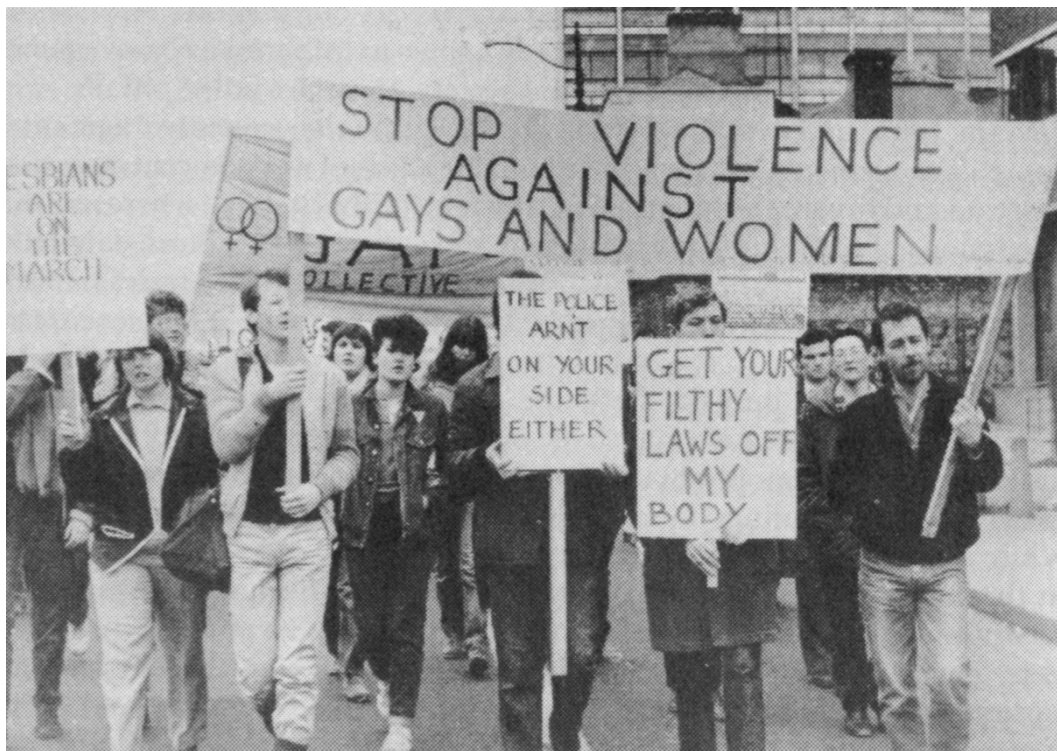
Figure 5. The first Gay Pride march in March 1983, Dublin. Source: Irish Queer Archive.

Decriminalization

The Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform, led by (now Senator) David Norris, campaigned for the decriminalization of homosexual activities in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1980 Norris, advised by Mary McAleese and later Mary Robinson (who

both would become President of Ireland) took a case to the Irish High Court on the grounds that the over 100-year-old laws were inconsistent with the Constitution of Ireland that had been in place since 1937. Norris lost his case and appealed to the Supreme Court of Ireland, which upheld the High Court Decision, specifically mentioning Christian morals in its judgment.

In *Norris v. Ireland,* Norris brought his case to the European Court of Human Rights, stating that, in criminalizing homosexual activities, Ireland was breaching Article 8 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which provides each citizen the right to respect for one's private and family life, home and correspondence. In 1988, the Court ruled that the Irish laws criminalizing homosexual activities did breach this convention, and awarded costs to Norris. In 1993, as a result of this ruling, the Irish Minister for Justice reformed the laws, and homosexual acts were decriminalized. Ireland's decriminalization in 1993 occurred late in the European context, compared to 1967 in the United Kingdom, 1979 in Spain, 1983 in Portugal and 1969 in Germany (see Figure 7 for the major social, political and legislative developments in Europe in the past 60 years).

All of the participants (the youngest was 23 at the time of interview) have therefore lived in a time where homosexual acts were illegal. Some participants were working at the time, and, those who were old enough to remember that time discussed the change in legislation and the effects it had. It is impossible to know beforehand how the cultural, social and historical context could affect the identities and workplace experiences of those interviewed, so a less rigid, more unstructured approach to data collection was needed, rather than, for example, a survey or a structured interview, which would not allow chances for the participants to direct the conversation to topics

that they believe are more pertinent to the discussion. As outlined later in this chapter, a semi-structured interviewing method was chosen and used.

Civil Partnership and Civil Marriage

In 2010, the Civil Partnership Act was passed by the Oireachtas (Irish legislature) and provided many rights to Irish same-sex couples. However, a large number of differences, including adoption rights and taxation issues, existed between civil partnerships and marriage. A large campaign, led by the organizations *MarriagEquality* and *LGBT Noise*, was specifically aimed at introducing full marriage rights for same-sex couples. The *March for Marriage*, separate from the more celebratory Pride parades, was held every year after the introduction of Civil Partnerships until 2015, and thousands attended in an attempt to pressure legislators to change the law.

A Constitutional Convention, comprised of both politicians and ordinary citizens, was set up to consider amendments to the Constitution of Ireland, including providing for same-sex marriage. Their recommendations led to the Government deciding that a referendum on same-sex marriage would be held in early 2015. In May 2015 the referendum was held, and over 62% voted in favour of introducing same-sex marriage. Figure 6 shows a breakdown of the voting; only one constituency recorded a majority "No" vote rejecting the amendment to the constitution (electionsireland.org, 2016).
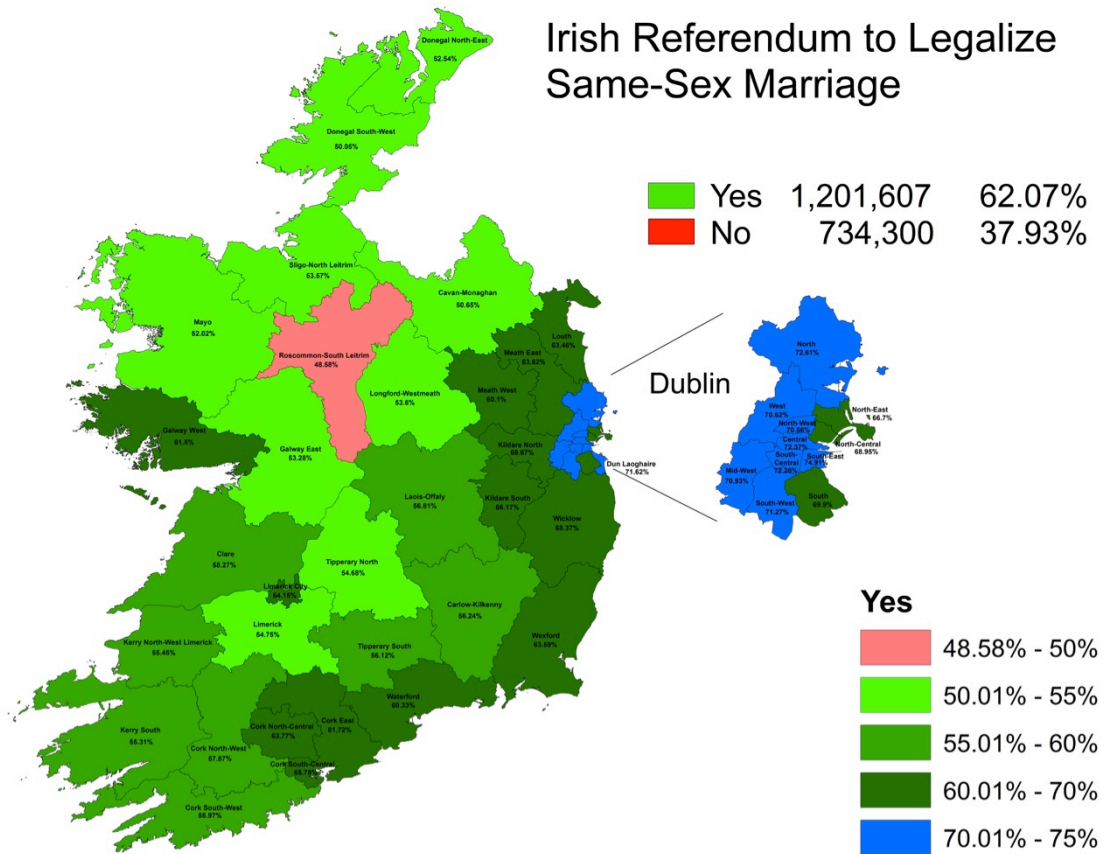
Figure 6. The breakdown, by constituency, of the result of the Same-Sex Marriage Referendum, May 2015. Source: www.mcimaps.com (date accessed 20 September 2016).

The data collection stage of this research project was conducted during the campaigning period in 2014 and 2015, during the referendum itself, and in the few months following it, and a number of the interviewees make reference to or discuss the referendum. The participants have lived through a time where LGB relationships and issues were debated on a national level, and many discuss how they had interpersonal debates about the issue with their family, friends and colleagues. This research project is therefore situated in a very specific social, temporal, and political context.

Irish LGBT Workplace Issues

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual people have state-wide legislative protection in the workplace under the *Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015*, and the *Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2015*, which forbid workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (See Appendix H for an outline of relevant legislation). Until 2015, however, there was an exception to the protective employment legislation. Section 37(1) of the *Employment Equality Acts*, which has now been now repealed, allowed organizations to take

> *"action which is reasonably necessary to prevent an*
>
> *employee or a prospective employee from undermining the*
>
> *religious ethos of the institution"*

This could have, for example, taken the form of an openly gay teacher in a Catholic school or nurse in a hospital run by a Catholic institute being dismissed on the basis of their sexual orientation. The recency with which this law was repealed highlights the relevance of this topic, and this research project, at the moment. Two of the participants interviewed as part of this research project are teachers, and they discuss the effects Section 37(1) had on their work experiences, particularly in how it discouraged them from coming out in the schools they taught in.

Discrimination against LGBT people in both religious and non-religious organizations, however, is still a salient issue in Ireland today, with cases brought to the Equality Tribunal in the past few years (Equality Tribunal, 2013, 2012), and a report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2009a, 2009b) stating that although there has been improvement in national legislation forbidding discrimination, Irish LGB people still face oppression. In a report sponsored by the

Irish Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), McIntyre and Nixon (2014) report that 34% of lesbians, 29% of bisexuals and 23% of gay men they surveyed had experienced discrimination in the workplace. These findings concur with those outlined throughout this dissertation: although there is substantive legislative protection for LGB employees, discrimination and exclusion does still exist. Chapter 6 in particular discusses how heteronormativity at play in the Irish workplace can lead to LGB employees being marginalized and excluded at work, and adds to these findings by showing the nuances involved in the discrimination.
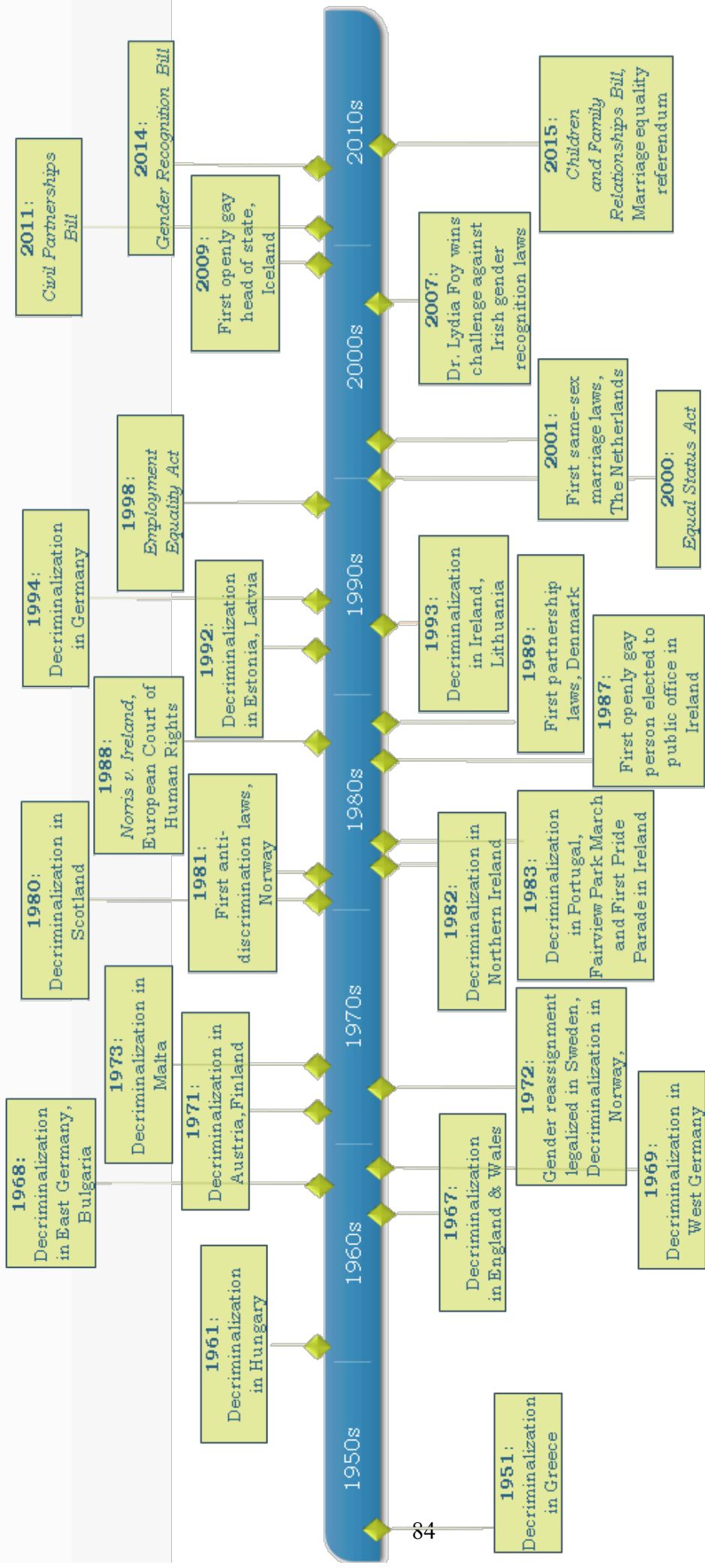
Figure 7. A timeline of major social, political and legislative developments in LGBT issues in Ireland and Europe.

Timeline decades: 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s | 2010s

1951: Decriminalization in Greece

1961: Decriminalization in Hungary

1967: Decriminalization in England & Wales

1968: Decriminalization in East Germany, Bulgaria

1969: Decriminalization in West Germany

1971: Decriminalization in Austria, Finland

1972: Gender reassignment legalized in Sweden, Decriminalization in Norway

1973: Decriminalization in Malta

1980: Decriminalization in Scotland

1981: First anti-discrimination laws, Norway

1982: Decriminalization in Northern Ireland

1983: Decriminalization in Portugal, Fairview Park March and First Pride Parade in Ireland

1987: First openly gay person elected to public office in Ireland

1988: *Norris v. Ireland*, European Court of Human Rights

1989: First partnership laws, Denmark

1992: Decriminalization in Estonia, Latvia

1993: Decriminalization in Ireland, Lithuania

1994: Decriminalization in Germany

1998: *Employment Equality Act*

2000: *Equal Status Act*

2001: First same-sex marriage laws, The Netherlands

2007: Dr. Lydia Foy wins challenge against Irish gender recognition laws

2009: First openly gay head of state, Iceland

2011: *Civil Partnerships Bill*

2014: *Gender Recognition Bill*

2015: *Children and Family Relationships Bill*, Marriage equality referendum

There has been limited qualitative academic research conducted on the work experiences of LGB people in Ireland. Their lived experiences and workplace stories, set against a background of religious tradition, increasing tolerance, and major recent changes in civil rights legislation, have not yet been studied, and provide an illuminating and useful source of data upon which to build theory.

4.3 Researcher Profile and Stance

Many aspects of the philosophical framework, outlined below, highlight reflexivity and the impact that a researcher's unique identity has on their research; their standpoint will inform and bias many decisions, not just in the analysis but from the beginning onwards: their choice of research question, the site of their investigation, and the execution of their data collection. It is prudent, therefore, to discuss the researcher's own profile in order to better explain methodological decisions; to forecast, where possible, any biases that may be encountered in the course of the research.

I am a member of the LGBT community in Ireland, the population being studied, an example of "insider status" (LaSala, 1998). Insider status refers to the benefits occurring in research when the researcher belongs to the same population, culture, community or social identity group that they are studying (Price, 2011). Although this insider-status gives certain advantages in this research project (described below), it also may lead to certain assumptions or biases. Being naturally biased in favour of the LGBT community could lead to casting participants in a more favourable light. While the researcher has encountered many of the experiences that the research participants have gone through (e.g. coming out, identity development), which may aid understanding and analysis, it may also lead to overstressed similarities or unqualified assumptions about the motivations or actions of the participants that are not rooted in their volunteered data. Bridges (2002: 373) argues that insider accounts of communities' experiences may be "riddled with special pleading, selective memory, careless error, self-centeredness, myopia, prejudice, and a good deal more". As LaSala (1998: 15) points out, having insider status may also lead to the researcher

failing "to notice what is unique and informative about their own group or culture". Although this is not an autoethnographic study, my insider status facilitated access to the LGBT community; however, I made sure throughout the process that I was not telling my own story, but was representing my participants. Although the bias arises from the profile of the researcher, the advantages of the "insider status" that an LGBT person researching LGBT issues has been well documented. Rapport between the researcher and the participant is said to be heightened when there is insider status (Meezan and Martin, 2003), and it has been suggested that these researchers bring privileged knowledge and understanding that aids both data collection and the analysis of the data (LaSala, 1998).

A number of steps were taken in the design of this particular research undertaking to ensure that biases were minimized, in order to collect data that represents as best as possible the lived experiences of the Irish LGBT worker. These steps are outlined below:

- This was not a covert study; participants were aware of the topic being studied.
- Interviews were semi-structured; that is, although a topic guide was utilized, participants were given the chance to discuss whatever specific issues they wished.
- The topic guide was developed initially from the systematic literature review conducted at the outset of the project, and contained themes that were found in previous research to be important to the research topic.
- Research participants are given the chance in each interview to add anything they felt was relevant to the research topic.

This chapter outlines in more detail the use of the semi-structured interview, but begins by outlining the philosophical assumptions that have led to the selection of these particular methods.

4.4 Methodology

This section focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of this research project, including my ontological and epistemological positions. The philosophical positions at the core of this research have been informed primarily by critical realism, with influences from feminist philosophy and critical theory. This study is influenced by the notion of the qualitative researcher as the *bricoleur*, one who uses a large variety of practices and positions in their work. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994:6) suggest, adopting a bricoleur's perspective in one's research is '...a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry'.

This research is primarily influenced, as outlined below, by a more critical and postmodern inquiry, as described by Rossman and Rallis (1998: 66):

> *"As the 20th century draws to a close, traditional social science has come under increasing scrutiny and attack as those espousing critical and postmodern perspectives challenge objectivist assumptions and traditional norms for the conduct of research. Central to this attack are four interrelated notions: (a) Research fundamentally involves issues of power; (b) the research report is not transparent but rather is it authored by a raced, gendered, classed, and politically*

orientated individual; (c) race, class, and gender are crucial for understanding experience; and (d) historic, traditional research silenced members of oppressed and marginalized groups."

In this chapter, the research profile, describing my own inherent biases, self-interests and positions is outlined above, with reference to how it affects this research. Two particular pillars of my philosophical position are concerned with power and marginalization, and this is echoed in later chapters, where LGB employees are understood to be managing their identity in a cultural hegemony that can exclude them, because of their sexuality.

The ontological and epistemological positions that make up my *bricolage* are described next.

Ontology and Epistemology

The following sections outline the ontological and epistemological basis for this research project. One's ontological position is the assumptions they make about the nature of reality, and is the study of being (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). One's ontological stance, which determines how they view reality, will naturally be related to how one believes they can access that reality, or, as Guba and Lincoln (1994) put it, how the researcher relates to that which can be researched. Epistemology is the study of the criteria by which we can know what does and does not constitute warranted, or scientific, knowledge (Johnson and Duberley, 2000: 2-3). One's epistemological stance(s) will have an impact on the design of their research.

Below, the ontological and epistemological influences that represent my view on what reality is, and how it can be researched – is outlined. Each component of the research paradigm is explored, and their respective impacts on the design of this research project are highlighted. To aid explanation, a glossary of terms is given in Table 3.

Critical Realism

Critical realism is a philosophy most strongly associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar (1975), in which *transcendental realism* is combined with *critical naturalism*. The former was developed as a counterargument to philosophies like Positivism, and divides the world into intransitive and transitive entities. The Intransitive entities are those objects which exist independently of human thought, observation or experience, for example, gravity would still exist and function regardless of whether someone was around to experience it; likewise the tree falling in the forest would still make a sound, regardless of whether someone was there to hear it fall. Transitive entities are those that are changeable and depend on observation and experience, like our knowledge, schema, theories and conceptualizations. For example, while ancient cultures held that the earth was flat, and we know since early Ancient Greek times that the earth is in fact round (our knowledge is a transitive entity), the shape of the earth has not actually changed; it existed outside of our observation and knowledge (an intransitive entity).

As Archer et al. (1998: xii) point out:

> *"Science is a social product, but the mechanisms it identifies operate prior to and independently of their discovery (existential intransitivity). Transitive and intransitive dimensions must be*

> *distinguished. Failure to do so results in the reification of the*
>
> *fallible social products of science"*

Critical naturalism contends that we can apply transcendental realism to the social world in the same way we apply it to the physical world; that is, there are transitive and intransitive entities in it also. However, the social world is by nature different than the physical world, because it changes more quickly, and social structures can be changed and influenced by actors.

Critical realism merges a realist ontology with an interpretivist epistemology (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson & Norrie, 1998). Interpretivist epistemology is characterised by the belief that knowledge acquisition is a product of social construction, and cannot be objectively determined (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001). Instead of maintaining an objective detachment from the phenomena being studied, interpretivist epistemology is concerned with showing how the researcher and the participants are interlinked, co-creators of knowledge (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988) and the complex multifaceted nature of reality means that having a prearranged, fixed research design is impossible; one instead must approach one's research with an open mind and let the research and the knowledge it seeks develop throughout the project. Fleetwood (2002: 13) explains the other element of the philosophy, the realist component of critical realism:

> *"to be a realist is to assert the existence of some disputed*
>
> *kind of entities such as gravitons, equilibria, utility, class*
>
> *relations and so on. To be a scientific realist is to assert that*
>
> *these entities exist independently of our investigation of them.*
>
> *Such entities,* contra *the post modernism of rhetoricians, are*

> *not something generated in the discourse used in their*
>
> *investigation. Neither are such entities,* contra *empiricists,*
>
> *restricted to the realm of the observable. To be a* critical
>
> *realist is to extend these views into social science"*

Critical realism also mends what Bhaskar (1997) calls the "epistemic fallacy", that is, the tendency to believe "that ontological questions can always be transposed into epistemological terms" (Bhaskar, 1997: 27). In other words, phenomena can and do exist as intransitive realities outside of our transitive systems and schema of understanding them. The limitations of our epistemology do not determine the nature of ontological reality. To address this more fully, I discuss the importance of stratified ontology below.

As mentioned above, I would position myself primarily as a critical realist. Critical realism influences this research undertaking in a number of different ways, because of its views on what reality is (ontology) and how one can obtain that knowledge (epistemology). As critical realism makes a differentiation between our knowledge of the world and what is actually in it, it thus has major ramifications for epistemology and ontology. This section outlines the major aspects of the philosophy pertinent to this research, and shows how they have influenced the design and execution of this project. The philosophy's major components include the belief that reality can be stratified into different layers or realms, and a view on causation that focuses on the complexity of reality.

Stratified Reality

The critical realist ontology is characterized by the belief in three distinct realms of reality: the *Real*, the *Actual* and the *Empirical* (Bhaskar, 1975), represented in Figure 8. Elder-Vass (2010:44) describes the realms as follows:

> "*the empirical domain includes those events that we actually observe or experience and the actual is the domain of material existence, comprising things and the events they undergo. The real also includes 'structures and mechanisms' that generate those events*"

The Real realm consists of:

> "*whatever exists, be it natural or social, regardless of whether it is an empirical object for us…[it] is the realm of objects [that] have certain structures and causal powers, that is, capacities to behave in particular ways, and causal liabilities or passive powers, that is, specific susceptibilities to certain kinds of change*" [Sayer, 2000: 11).

The real realm is comprised of the intransitive entities discussed above, those that are enduring and can (and do) exist outside of our knowledge about them. These entities have capacities and powers that can (but don't always) cause effects and events; these powers are known as *generative mechanisms* (Bhaskar, 1998):

> "*The real basis of causal laws are provided by the generative mechanisms of nature. Such generative mechanisms are, it is argues, nothing other than the ways of acting of things. And*

causal laws must be analysed as their tendencies. Tendencies may be regarded as powers or liabilities of a thing which may be exercised without being manifest in any particular outcome." (Bhaskar, 2008: 3)

The *Actual* dimension is concerned with events and actions, what happens if and when the powers and abilities of the Real dimension are exercised, what these powers do and what occurs as a result of this exercise of power (Sayer, 2000). To continue with the example above, the Actual dimension would consist of what happens when one begins actively managing their identity in the workplace. When one pretends that they are heterosexual in order to avoid stigmatization, such as seen in Button's (2004) *fabrication* strategy as outlined in Chapter 2, they are actively using their power to manage their identity (in this example, by hiding it). This event that occurs as a result of one's power, and indeed the entire catalogue of events that makes up the process of identity management, is therefore resident in the Actual realm.

The final realm is the *Empirical,* and refers to the human experience and perspectives of the events that occur as part of the Actual realm. In the above example, thoughts and experiences that occur as a result of managing one's identity would reside in the Empirical realm. For example, one may feel shame about using the fabrication strategy and not being authentic to oneself, while another could be happy to do so.

One may also postulate that the Empirical realm is affected by the temporal, social, and historical context; as described above, data collection in this project took place at a time of great change and discussion regarding the LGBT community in Ireland. It is quite possible, therefore, that the participants' perspectives about their work

experiences would be different if they were to be interviewed at another time, for example, in ten years time or at some time in the past.
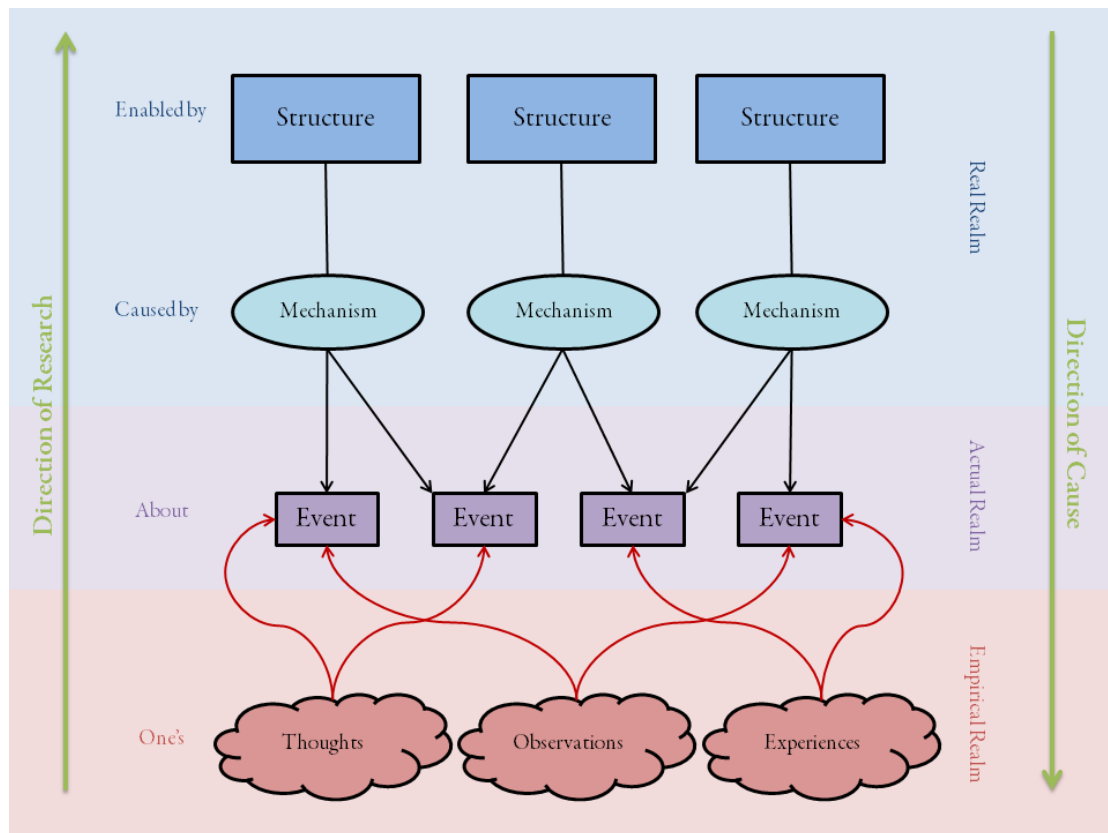
Figure 8. The layered ontology of Critical Realism (adapted from Sayer, 1992).

As mentioned above, the critical realist perspective on stratified reality affects the design of this research project. Firstly, the stratification of reality that characterizes critical realism has implications for data collection. As previously described, the Empirical dimension is concerned with the respondent's subjective experiences and perceptions of these events. Semi-structured interviews represent an appropriate research method for capturing these experiences. The Empirical dimension is naturally fallible (Bhaskar, 1975); the interview data collected may only represent one part of the picture, or may not represent real causes of actions, but without talking with the actors, we cannot gain true insight into actions (Smith & Elger, 2012). By

tallying and analysing the interviews with various respondents, we can garner knowledge about mechanisms and tendencies that point to the existence of objects and structures in the Real Realm. These causal mechanisms are described next.

Table 3. Glossary of terms related to Critical Realism	
Term	**Meaning**
Critical Realism	The philosophy originating in the writing of Roy Bhaskar, which combines transcendental realism (the division of the world into transitive and intransitive entities) and critical naturalism (which focuses on the social world and how it also contains transitive and intransitive elements, but is fundamentally more changeable).
The Real Realm	The domain of reality comprised of structures and objects, physical and social, which have powers and capacities called *generative mechanisms* (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011).
The Actual Realm	The domain of reality wherein events, triggered by the generative mechanism, occur (Bhaskar, 1997). These events can be observed or not.
The Empirical Realm	The domain of reality consisting of observations and experiences surrounding the events of the actual realm.
Generative Mechanism	Causal powers belonging to the objects and structures of the real realm. Usually not observable, e.g. the free market mechanism, which affects the price of goods (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011).
Intransitive Entities	That which is independent and does not depend on human activity, e.g. the process of natural selection (Bhaskar, 1997)
Transitive Entities	That which is produced and shaped by human activity, e.g. Darwin's theory of natural selection (Bhaskar, 1997).

Critical Realism and Causation

The typical positivist perspective on causation is that of Hume (1739), that is, of the succession of an interconnected cause and effect that is replicable, usually within closed systems. While empiricists would look at events and imply causal meaning from them, critical realism is concerned more with the *mechanisms* of causation and its underlying *conditions*, how they work, and if they have been activated. Mechanisms have been defined as "causal powers and liabilities of objects or relations" (Sayer, 2010), and "the possibilities that structures and relations between structures offer", but importantly, "without suggesting deterministic outcomes" (Wynn et al., 2013). As Bhaskar (2008: 3) observes when discussing generative mechanisms:

> *"The kind of conditional we are concerned with here may be characterised as normic. They are not counter-factual but transfactual statements. Normic universals, properly understood, are transfactual or normic statements with factual instances in the laboratory (and perhaps a few other effectively closed contexts) that constitute their empirical grounds; they need not, and in general will not be reflected in an invariant pattern or regularly recurring sequence of events"*

Bhaskar is essentially pointing out how complex and multifaceted life is; the mechanisms that trigger events do not operate on an 'A leads to B', directly causal basis. The critical realist world-view essentially rejects the Humean view on deterministic causation; if there exists some objective world outside our

consciousness, and potential powers and structures that remain as yet unknown, then reducing a social phenomenon to a single cause and a single effect is to ignore the conditions and context with which it occurs. This reductionism would involve the creation of closed system conditions that may rarely, if ever, be replicated within the social sphere.

A crucial aspect of the Critical Realist ontology is that our experiences and observations about causality (which are part of the Empirical realm) may be incorrect, and we may not know (but don't necessarily *have* to know) the mechanisms (the Real) that caused an event to happen (the Actual). Instead we can postulate based on our observations (Empirical realm) of the events that have transpired (Actual realm) as to the underlying mechanisms (in the Realm realm); as Sayer (2000: 12) writes, "a plausible case for the existence of unobservable entities can be made by reference to observable effects which can only be explained as the products of such entities". Chapter 11 discusses the Contributions that this research makes to knowledge, with regard to theory, methodology and practice. One such contribution that is outlined is the role of power in the identity management of LGB employees. Power is identified as an underlying mechanism, resident in the Real realm, that influences (but does not necessarily *cause*) the manner in which LGB people shape, view and manage their identity; the consequences of having that identity; and the actions they take in addressing these consequences.

The critical realist perspective on causation is influential in this project, in that it highlights the complexity of social phenomena, and moves the focus of the analysis from the end product of the identity management process (i.e. the identities of LGB

employees in the workplace) to the mechanisms underlying identity management in itself. As Bhaskar (1989: 2) points out:

> *"we will only be able to understand – and so change – the social world if we identify the structures and discourses ... These structures are not spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events; they can only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences"*

The literature review undertaken (see Chapter 2) shows sexual orientation and gender identity to be salient influences in many of the careers and workplace experiences of LGBT people; from internal processes concerning identity development and management, to social issues that surround that identity. Critical realism, however, would unpack the notion of 'influence' in itself. While some authors identify the participants' sexual/gender identity to be a major influencing factor in their careers, critical realists would point out that it is never quite so simple as a direct Humean A → B causal relationship, as described above, instead positioning it as a 'tendency', rather than a 'cause'.

To take a relevant example, discrimination was a major theme emerging from the systematic literature review, many LGB people have either experienced it or know someone who has, and it is at the background of many other factors within their lives, such as the decision whether or not to disclose their sexuality in the workplace. Within a positivist paradigm, it would be correct to say that workplace discrimination can lead to reduced workplace morale (Ragins and Cornwell, 2011), lower organizational commitment (Day and Schoenrade, 1997) and lessened chances that

one will come out at work (Day and Schoenrade, 2000). However, critical realism would argue, not only that this is *tendency* rather than a direct cause, but that it is not just outright discrimination but also *perceived* discrimination that has these effects. Interpersonal discrimination would belong to the fallible, Empirical realm, where labelling it as such is constituted on a person's understanding of the mechanisms of discrimination, the context of the situation, and what has transpired. Therefore, one person may perceive an action to be discriminatory where it was not, or, conversely, not recognize a case of discrimination as such. Building on this, one may assume that what is perceived to be discrimination differs from individual to individual, but the effects of this perception may nonetheless be the same.

In other cases however, discrimination may exist solely within the Real dimension (or appear that way, if we cannot see manifestations in other dimensions), for example where there is structural or systemic discrimination. It can also exist in the Actual dimension, for example when those within positions of power have the ability to discriminate. Critical realists realize that, rather than rely purely on observation in identifying what exists, one may claim the existence of unobservable objects by referencing observable effects that could only have been caused by this object and its interactions (Sayer, 2000).

Critical Realist Ontology and Epistemology in this Research

The critical realist ontology, outlining the stratified nature of reality, and the subsequently complex nature of causation, is well suited to this research study, which looks at the complex and multifaceted lives and identities of LGB employees, and does not seek to find causal relationships, but to be more exploratory, and looks

instead for 'tendencies'. The specific wording of the research question reflects the fact that the social world, and the people that make up it, are too complex to be reduced to a set of resolutely-defined prototypes, but rather will act differently according to an impossibly convoluted myriad of influences.

The critical realist epistemology is concentrated on finding the generative mechanisms that underpin events, and is characterized with the belief that not all events or mechanisms will be observable, and can exist outside our consciousness of them. Therefore, it is not possible to make findings that we are entirely certain to be correct – instead we can only speculate, with the aid of data and analysis, as to the nature of the generative mechanisms that trigger the events we observe, and as, Maxwell (2003: 4) points out, 'all theories about the world are seen as grounded in a particular perspective and worldview, and all knowledge is partial, incomplete, and fallible'. As outlined above, critical realism is epistemologically interpretivist, because our understanding of reality and the world is a construction that is based on our own perspectives and standpoint. This interpretivist epistemology, which also highlights the complexity of the social world, means that it was not possible, at the beginning of this research, to isolate one phenomenon to study; instead the design of the project was influenced in such a way that it remained open and exploratory. Other researchers, from a different perspective and using different methods, may come to different conclusions if same methods were used, however, I concur with the interpretivist belief that it is impossible to detach oneself from one's viewpoint. I therefore do not seek 'validity' in the positivist sense, through replication and controlled trials, and furthermore do not believe it to be possible, given the complex open and non-replicable nature of the social world, as put forth by the critical realist world-view. Although this is not a grounded theory study (but rather, abductive), it

shares with grounded theory, through its critical realist world-view, a disbelief that repeated tests within closed system are the sole means of generating theory, but rather, highlights and embraces the complex open system we live in. With this in mind, I thus refer to grounded theory's criteria for judging the validity of research in critiquing my own research project and its findings. Glaser (1998: 18) identifies these criteria as:

- *Fit*, or how well the theories constructed fit with the data that it represents;

- *Workability*, or how well the theories constructed help explain the phenomenon and identify its key dimensions;

- *Relevance*, or how engaging or important it is to people, who feel compelled to offer their own ideas and examples concerning the theory;

- *Modifiability*, which relates to the complex nature of the world, and is concerned with how the theory can be changed to retain its validity.

These criteria help me to judge the validity of my research and so have an impact on the analysis and the findings, which have sometimes been revisited or expanded to reach these goals.

While other philosophical stances, like social constructionism, could have been used in this type of study to good effect, the choice to invoke the critical realist world-view arose primarily from the fact that it was best aligned with the nature of the research undertaking, and with my own philosophical underpinnings. Social constructionism has previously been used in several articles focusing on the workplace experiences, and particularly the identities, of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the workplace (e.g. Aaron & Ragusa, 2011; Rumens, 2010; Rumens and Kerfoot, 2009). Indeed the findings in this dissertation on identity show how it is in part constructed by the LGB

person. Although this philosophy was a viable option and was almost chosen, it was ultimately decided that critical realism would help me unpack my particular research questions better, as well as being more closely suited to my own philosophical worldview. The research questions acknowledge the complexity of the social world and the myriad of factors (both transitive and intransitive) that could influence the identity management of LGB employees, and critical realism, more than any other stance, highlights these beliefs. As a former student of biomedical science I believe in the existence of a reality 'out there' (or what critical realism calls the real realm), and am also aware that our knowledge about it is merely a series of constructions that may not be any better or any representative than other constructions. Furthermore, social constructionism does not have as one of its aims, like critical realism, the search for those generative mechanisms that underlie all of our experiences, and exist regardless of our knowledge of them. Many social constructionists would argue that these mechanisms cannot exist outside of our conception of them, and this is, I believe, the crux of why I did not take that philosophical position in this research. While the construction of identity could be viewed both through a social constructionist lens and through a critical realist lens, I believe it is the latter that probes further into searching for how and why these constructions take place. Although it is used in conjunction with other philosophical stances, outlined below, critical realism is better suited to this particular research study than social constructionism, or other major world views.

Table 4. Critical Realism's Epistemological and Ontological Beliefs		
Component	**Description**	**Contentions**
Ontology	Realist	• Entities can and do exist outside of our knowledge or conceptualization of them. • These entities are not always observable. • These entities are both physical and social.
Epistemology	Interpretivist	• Knowledge is socially constructed, not objective • Researcher and participants are interdependent • Focused on explanatory power, not predictive power

Feminist Epistemology

Feminist theory is also influential in this research, namely in the design of the research project, its aims and in the analysis of the data. Here, the tenets of feminist theory pertinent to this study are explained, and an outline of how it affects and suits this research project is given.

Feminist authors argue that, far from being value free or objective, research is always affected by the moral and social biases of the era in which it is carried out (Harding, 1991). Social research brings with it widely-accepted morals and principles of the day, and in doing so, silences women's voices and presented them as "passive objects rather than subjects...acted upon rather than actors" (Eichler, 1988: 5). Truly objective research is said to be disengaged, with the active separation of the researcher from the

researched (May, 2001). The researcher is homogenized and any personal history, characteristics or membership of a social category is ignored. However, Stanley and Wise (1990: 39) argue that:

> *"all knowledge, necessarily, results from the conditions of its production, is contextually located and irrevocably bears the marks of its origins in the minds and intellectual practices of those lay and professional theorist and researchers who give voice to it"*.

This is similar to how critical realists point out that, while intransitive entities exist, one's theories, knowledge and opinions about it are transitive and fallible; "science is a social product" (Archer et al., 1998: xii).

The feminist philosophical perspective is appropriate for this study because it places centre stage the traditionally marginalized and silenced populations, takes the researcher's history and identity into consideration, and scorns the "mythical aim" (May, 2001) of staying detached and uninvolved in the research process. The "insider status" and advantages that I, as a member of the LGBT community, enjoy with regard to sampling methods and rapport-building in the interviews, are outlined below. It would be remiss to suggest therefore, that the I am "outside" of this research project – detachment is not possible when researching and discussing topics, scenarios and factors that are present in almost every aspect of the researcher's own life. A particular trend within feminist theory is that of feminist standpoint, outlined below, which is also of relevance to this research project.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Standpoint theory argues that a person's experiential knowledge is the most important factor in determining their perspective on the world (Smith, 2005). The feminist standpoint epistemology holds that there is certain knowledge, or a different type of knowledge, that only women can know, because women's lives and roles are significantly different from men's in nearly every aspect. Standpoint theory is often extended to other marginalized or less powerful groups, such as ethnic and racial minorities, sexual minorities, the working class and those with disabilities.

A key proposition of standpoint theory holds that marginalized groups enjoy an "automatic epistemic privilege" (Rolin, 2009), in that their status and position within society means they are more aware than those who are non-marginalized (Bowell, 2011). Someone at the margins of a dominant culture is in a better position to critique it because they must attempt to blend in in order to survive, and with this awareness comes heightened knowledge of the prevailing culture. One can then argue that, by making those that are marginalized or hold the least power the site of investigation, a researcher can better understand a context or phenomenon than if they were to research those in a powerful position.

This is relevant and suitable for this research, in that the LGB workers themselves are sampled, and their experiences explored directly, not circuitously through their managers or others. This study is concerned with the lived experience of LGB workers in Ireland *directly*. Standpoint theory holds that there is nothing to be gained from interviewing third parties; as well as taking into account possible social desirability bias and the 'company line', it is most likely that they are not in a position to add value to this research, which seeks the directly-told experiences of LGBT

workers. By interviewing those who are on the margins of the culture, one gains a better and truer understanding of its inner workings.

Standpoint theory has many implications for this research. Firstly, it supports the argument, outlined in Section 4.3, of my "insider-status" (LaSala, 1998) and the advantage that it can afford in this context. Although my standpoint is not exactly the same as those that are interviewed, there are some commonalities of experiences and context that grant me a better intuitive understanding of some phenomena (e.g. the coming out process, identity development and sexual orientation discrimination) that a non-LGBT researcher would not have. Secondly, standpoint theory naturally draws attention to the power relations inherent in everyday life, and forces me as the researcher to bear them in mind, and to use them, as I have, as a theoretical lens in the analysis of data. Power in the context of this research arose in the form of hegemonic heteronormativity, and is similar in origin, function, scope and reach to the patriarchal power that much feminist research explores. The role of the researcher is often discussed within feminist epistemologies, and the relative power differential between the researcher and the researched, in this context the interviewer and the interviewee, is highlighted, and has guided the design of the research method, as outlined in Table 5.

Critical Theory

Critical theory is the third philosophical influence on this research project. Critical theory arose in management as a result of disillusionment with the modernist approach to management that emphasized control – of consumers, workers and society as a whole (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006). It is concerned with critiquing society,

mass culture and structures of authority (Jay, 1973), and holds that research should focus on improving the quality of life for marginalized social groups (Murray & Ozanne, 1991). At its most general level therefore, *critical management studies* is concerned with uncovering and rectifying issues of asymmetric power relations, exploitation, unfairness, repression, taken-for-granted assumptions and ideologies in the workplace and in organizational life (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1992; Alvesson & Deetz, 2006).

Critical theory is influential in this research project in a number of ways. Firstly, it draws attention to politics inherent in many organizational practices and discourses (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1992); policies and procedures are often the result of the privileged decision-making power of the elite top management. By highlighting and challenging these hegemonic practices, critical theory seeks to mitigate the disadvantages faced by groups other than the managerial elite in deciding organizational practices and discourses (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1992). This research project concerns LGB workers directly and LGB workers are therefore the only participants in the data collection stages of the research. Managers, HR officers, or any other organizational representatives are deliberately excluded from this study, so as to combat the influence of dominant managerial ideologies. Any research products are therefore the result of the input of LGB workers directly, and the input of any other voices is minimized. While feminist standpoint theory (above) also argues that LGB workers are the only sample that need be interviewed because of their "automatic epistemic privilege" (Rolin, 2009), critical theory would hold that this groups should be the only sample interviewed as doing so mitigates the influence of organizationally dominant discourses influencing the data being collected; in other

words, representatives who may be motivated to make their organization look good (or better than it actually is) are avoided.

Secondly, critical theory aims to counteract "discursive closure" (Alvesson &Wilmott, 1992), the promotion of certain privileged discourses through the elimination and marginalization of any alternative views. Certain organizational stances and perspectives may be perpetuated through any communicative act (Prasad, 2005), and, as described above, can stem from political motives. This was evident in the analysis of the interview data which shows that a particular privileged discourse, namely heteronormativity, was present in many of the participants' workplace. Being aware of the influence of discursive closure also tasks the researcher with questioning and destabilizing taken-for-granted assumptions inherent in the workplace and society in general, and encourages a 'back-to-basics' approach when analysing data. The use of open coding allows an abductive, exploratory approach to data analysis and fulfils this aim of critical theory.

Finally, critical theory has as its goal the emancipation of marginalized social groups, which is achieved through praxis (Prasad, 2005), defined by Freire (1970: 89) as "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed". Critical realist research is characterized by a search for generative mechanisms and the underlying structures; in having critical realism as the primary philosophical influence along with critical theory, this goal of the latter becomes more central and influential. The emancipatory goal has implications for the final write-up and products of this research project. Although a completed and successfully defended thesis would fulfil the requirements of a doctoral degree, unless it has actionable potential it would, in the eyes of critical theory, be deficient. In writing up, recommendations were formed for

HR practitioners and LGB people to better understand the identities of Irish LGB workers, fulfilling both the emancipatory and praxis aims of the critical tradition.

Summary of Research Paradigm

The research paradigm that defines my research undertaking, and me as a researcher, as shown in Figure 9. includes the different methodological influences in this research. A research paradigm is "a cluster of beliefs...which…influences what should be studied, how research should be done [and] how results should be interpreted" (Bryman, 1988: 4). Not all elements of each of these beliefs frame this study, but rather only those that are of relevance to this research have been shown here. In keeping with Watson's strategy of 'pragmatic pluralism', this research:

> *"draws elements from various disciplines or perspectives to produce what amounts to their personal paradigm– with its own ontological, epistemological and methodological integrity – to stand as the conceptual foundation of that particular piece of research"* (1997:6)

As shown in Figure 9, I am primarily a critical realist, influenced by elements of feminist theory and critical theory. The research questions, which look at the multiple influences on identity management in the workplace, are designed around and complemented by these philosophical perspectives. These influences have implications for research foci, the data collection and analysis stages of this research project, as shown in Table 5. In this research, I believe that some aspects of reality are particular to the person perceiving them (the Empirical dimension of reality), while other aspects are independent of
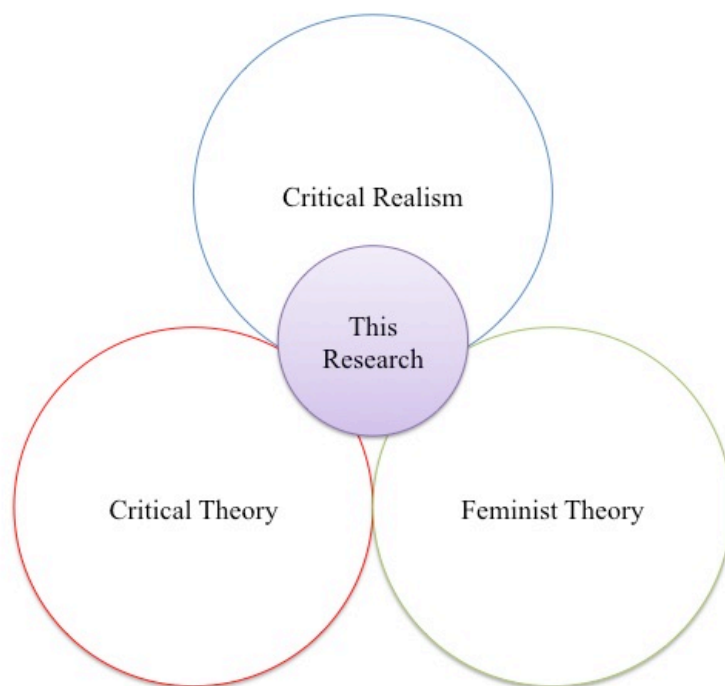
Figure 9. Primary philosophical influences on this research project.

consciousness (the Actual and the Real dimensions). By involving critical realism as the primary philosophical influence, and in particular its characteristic propositions

surrounding stratified reality and generative mechanisms, one is encouraged to examine a phenomenon at multiple layers, and under a number of different lenses.

Critical theory in management research is characterized by a deep scepticism "regarding the moral defensibility and the social and economic sustainability of the prevailing forms of management and organization" (Adler et al., 2007: 210), which is suitable for the research question, which explore issues of inequality and hegemonic power as some of the underlying mechanisms influencing the identity management of LGB employees. Feminist theory is drawn upon primarily for how it treats issues of power and inequality (affecting research focuses) and its stance on researcher reflexivity and subjectivity (affecting research design and execution). Both feminist theory and critical theory also have an emancipatory aim, a will to reduce inequality and aid those who are marginalized or without power, which is one of the aims for this research project, by examining the identity management of LGB workers in Ireland.

Table 5. The major philosophical influences and how they affect different stages of the research project.

Philosophy	Influence on Research Foci	Influence on Data Collection	Influence on Analysis
Critical Realism	• Differing dimensions of reality • Complex mechanisms and conditions of causation	• Argues that the recorded experiences and observations of the participants are fundamentally grounded in their own standpoint, as well as the researcher's analysis of these	• Highlights complexity of social phenomena • Rejects simplistic views of causation • Focuses on the power of generative mechanisms
Feminist Theory	• Inequality • Context	• Samples LGBT workers only, due to their automatic epistemic privilege • Interviews are semi-structured to maximize participant voice • Researcher reflexivity	• Power as a theoretical lens • Contextually located knowledge
Critical Theory	• Asymmetric power • Dominant ideologies • Politics in organizations	• Samples LGBT workers only, combating interference from hegemonic discourses or organizations not representing the truth accurately	• Questioning and destabilizing taken-for-granted assumptions • Highlighting power and politics

4.5 Methods Overview

This research project uses semi-structured qualitative interviews, which provide rich, in-depth data for analysis. This section outlines why and how this method is being used. The choice of methods arises as a consequence of identifying my epistemological and ontological beliefs; the nature of reality and how one experiences it advises the manner in which one researches a phenomenon. Firstly, I outline why I chose a qualitative approach in examining LGB workplace experiences. Then the recruitment and sampling choices I took in reaching the people I interviewed are outlined. Next, the data collection process, i.e. the semi-structured interview, is described. Then, I discuss how I analysed the interview data using qualitative coding software, before finishing by outlining the ethical issues I took into consideration throughout this project.

Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

A core choice facing a researcher is the manner in which they will collect their data and structure their research design. Broadly speaking, the methods to be used can be divided into either a qualitative, quantitative or mixed-quantitative/qualitative approach. This research takes a qualitative approach.

Qualitative research is, at its essence, concerned with obtaining a richly descriptive dataset, from which to draw interpretations and understanding of that being studied. Qualitative research "refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things", whereas quantitative research is concerned with "counts and measures of things" Berg (2001: 3). In this case,

qualitative research explores the workplace experiences of LGB employees in Ireland. A semi-structured interview design, explained in more detail below, is a typical qualitative method, and allows the research participant to describe their lived experiences, to a greater depth than they would be able to with other methods. The data that is extricated using this method is rich and nuanced, describing the meanings and concepts that make up an LGB person's work life.

4.6 Inductive, Deductive, and Abductive Research

Abductive research (Huff, 2008; Peirce, 1955) represents a different approach, compared to traditional deductive and inductive reasoning. Instead of deductively testing research hypothesis with experiments, or inductively creating new theory from data, abductive research seeks to modify and extension of existing concepts and theory, and find explanations for observed facts (Richardson & Kramer, 2006).

As Reichertz (2004) points out, inductive research that aims to explain actions through the application of grand theories and the reconstruction of the relevant social order does not take into account the contextual complexity of social life; she thus advocates using abductive research as a solution:

> *"this kind of order can no longer be derived from prove grand theories, first because these are, as a rule, not sufficiently 'local', and secondly because they have frequently already been overtaken by constant social change. Because this is the case, 'fitting' new views of the make-up of social order must constantly be generated" (Reichertz, 2004:160)*
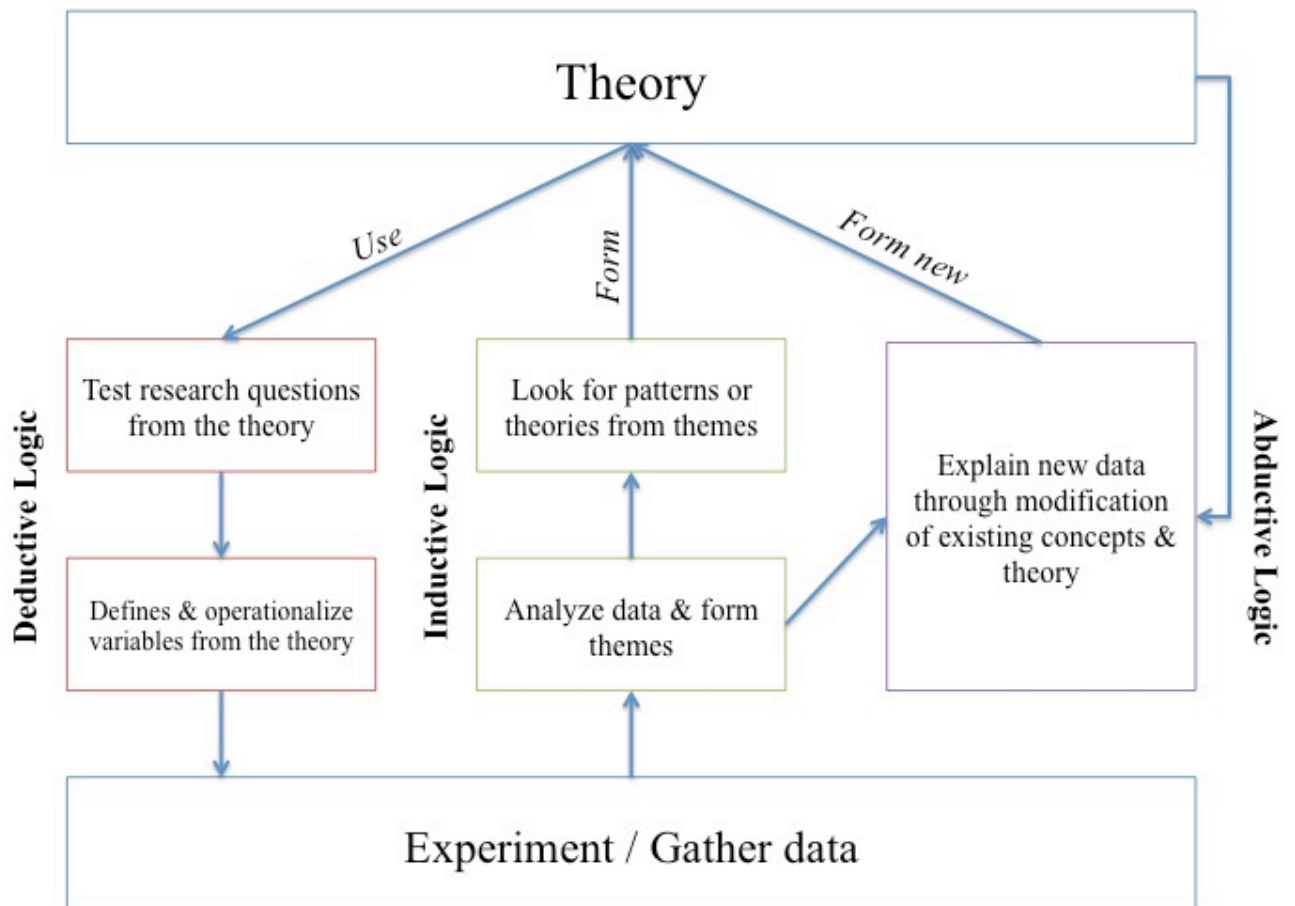
Figure 10. The different processes of deductive, inductive and abductive research. Adapted from Kovács and Spens (2005) and Huff (2008)

Abductive reasoning is used in conjunction with grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to explain a new phenomenon or new theory with reference to other concepts, theories or knowledge:

> *"The special benefit of abduction in grounded theorizing is that it helps…to explain new and surprising empirical data through the elaboration, modification, or combination of pre-existing concepts. Within this context, the theoretical*

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*knowledge and pre-conceptions of the researcher must not be
omitted. Nevertheless, this knowledge can be used much more
flexibly than with hypothetically-deductive research:
theoretical knowledge and pre-conceptions serve as heuristic
tools for the construction of concepts which are elaborated
and modified on the basis of empirical data." (Kelle, 1995: 34)*

While this research project takes a grounded theory approach in that it forms new categories and themes inductively from the data, the semi-structured interview topic guide used as its reference the systematic literature review conducted on the careers and workplace experiences of the LGB population. The research is therefore abductive (Huff, 2008) because it takes into account the theoretical knowledge that I have whilst I collect and analyse the data, and the findings are not replications of existing theory in a new context, but rather a complete modification of the existing theory in order to best explain what has been observed. In the findings chapters of this dissertation the pre-existing concept of identity management is used as a base concept upon which to build my analysis of the interview data, but this concept is modified and combined with other concepts to form new theory.

4.7 Sampling and Recruitment of participants

Gaining access to the LGB community can, such as with any "hidden population", prove hard for the researcher (Berk, Boyd, & Hamner, 1992; Gay and Lesbian Equality Network [GLEN], 1995; Herek, 1989). The literature review presented in Chapter 2 shows that quite a prominent problem reported within the research

methodologies is the difficulty in accessing a non-purposeful representative population of LGBT participants (e.g. Day & Schoenrade, 1997). As noted by Kwon and Hugelshofer (2010), a large number of authors involved in research like this use purposeful or snowball sampling, utilizing their personal networks and local groups or organizations. I have access to a relatively large sample of LGB people, and so snowball and purposeful sampling were possibilities. However, in using purposeful or snowball sampling, there is the danger of recruiting only those in the same socio-economic and geographic spheres, thus representing only a particular section of the LGB community. This led to purposive sampling supported by recruitment methods that ensured a broad sample of people, of differing backgrounds, ages, career stages and industries.

The sample size was influenced by the level of data saturation, and was not predetermined. As outlined by Mason (2010), data saturation is achieved when the researcher feels that further interviews will not result in any new information, themes or findings. In this respect, the level to which data saturation has been achieved is an individual's decision rather than an exact science, because, as Fusch and Ness (2015) point out, study designs differ wildly. However, the total number of interviews was 30, which is, according to Mason (2010), one of the most common sample sizes in qualitative PhD studies. In this study, I felt that very little novel information or themes were arising after (approximately) the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth interviews, but I continued with the remaining interviews to be certain of this.

Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling technique, uses the judgment of the researcher in selecting participants, "based on a specific purpose rather than randomly" (Tashakorri & Teddlie, 2003: 713). In this case, LGB people who have some experience of working is the sample being sought, so recruitment focused on this group.

Purposive sampling may also be used where it would be useful to demonstrate a large range of experiences and factors to fully enhance the understanding of the "lived experiences" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 55). In using purposive sampling in this latter regard, one will then be able to see how this particular person's experience relates to that of the average participant, and build a fuller understanding of the factors affecting LGB workplace experiences.

Convenience sampling as a form of purposive sampling

In some cases, recruitment of participants resulted primarily from those that were easy to access, because of a personal or professional relationship with the researcher (Roberts, 2011); a form of *convenience sampling* (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). In this project I interviewed three people from my personal network. These people also served as some of the pilot studies; because of the familiarity with them it would have been easier, if necessary, to re-interview them to gather data not found during the practices of the interviewing method, a benefit that may not have been available with other participants. However, I did not re-interview these people, as their original interview sufficed in providing a lot of rich, multifaceted and descriptive data for analysis.

Snowball sampling

In this sampling method, the initial participants of a study (in this case, those recruited using the aforementioned purposive sampling) are instrumental in recruiting more participants who share the characteristics of interest (here: LGB and employed/formally employed), by using their own personal networks (May, 2001). This allows the researcher to reach people with whom they have no personal or professional connection, but rather some mutual acquaintance. Snowball sampling has previously been used in research with LGB participants (e.g. Connell, 2012). An established recruitment method, particularly in sociological research (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981), snowball sampling is praised as being particularly useful for researchers in accessing a statistically small or particularly hidden population, or one which has as the focus of study characteristics of a sensitive or stigmatized nature (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981), such as the LGB population, members of which may, depending on individual circumstances, fit all three categories. Berg (1988) praises the use of snowball sampling in cases where alternative sampling methods would not be effective in gaining a sufficient number of participants, and where the depth of data, rather than the frequency of phenomena, is of importance. Snowball sampling is used in conjunction with the other sampling methods outlined here. Snowballing primarily allows a greater number of participants, but also helps to gain access to those people whom one would never have reached through other means (Lee, 1993) – in the context of this research, those who have not yet "come out of the closet" in their workplace (i.e. disclosed their sexuality).

The use of snowball sampling may run the risk of providing only a homogenous sample of participants, and while it prohibitive and impractical to expect a truly statistically representative sample (and this is also not the aim of this research), it is

nonetheless an aim to reach some threshold of generality by researching across industries, ages, career stage and location.

4.8 Recruitment

Recruitment through Organizational Networks

Many larger organizations, particularly multi-nationals, have a workplace LGBT network, where LGB members of the organization and "allies" (i.e. non-LGB people interested in supporting LGBT initiatives) can meet (HRC, 2015). The reasons for, and methods why, these networks are set up in organizations vary: some are management initiated, others are "grass-roots" organized; some groups act as a social circle while others have political goals (Githens & Aragon, 2009). At the recruitment stage of this research, organizational LGBT networks also represented a good site to target when looking for research participants; indeed, these groups have been used in similar research (Chrobot-Mason, Button & DiClementi, 2001). Gaining access to these networks can be over email with the network chairperson or a HR manager; in one case a letter of introduction from my supervisor was needed to ensure my credibility as a researcher (see Appendix F). Through snowball sampling it is possible to recruit other members of the network.

An unforeseen advantage of this recruitment method was the additional data I gained about LGBT networks, an under-researched topic in the business and management domains. From my conversations with people recruited through networks, I was given the chance to discuss how these groups interacted with the participants' identity management, what they represented to the participant, and the functions they played at both the individual and the organizational level.

This sampling method does have its disadvantages, however. Many of the organizational network members interviewed so far acknowledged that many LGBT people within their organization have not joined the group. Some were simply not interested in taking part while others had not come out at work, and believed that joining would reveal their sexuality. Although snowball sampling is supposed to address this latter reason (i.e. the more "hidden" population of those who have not disclosed their sexuality are reached through other participants), those who do not join because of the former may not be interested in taking part in research of this nature. It must be acknowledged therefore, that while organizational networks do represent a valuable resource for this research, they may attract only those who have disclosed their sexuality at work and who are interested in LGBT initiatives.

Recruitment through Groups

Many LGBT community, support, and social groups (e.g. Cork Gay Project, Transgender Equality Network Ireland, OutWest) exist across Ireland, in both urban and rural areas, and similar groups have previously been used as recruitment sources in similar research (e.g. Adams, Cahill & Ackerlind 2005; Dietert & Dentice, 2009; Heintz, 2012). Because of the non-specific nature of the group's membership (i.e. all ages, professions etc.), these groups represent a valuable site from which to recruit a varied sample of participants and, through snowball sampling, others in their social circle. In this research project, one participant was contacted through a group that she belonged to. That participant subsequently recruited three others in that group to be interviewed also.

Recruitment through social media

The Internet and online social media have previously been used to recruit LGB participants for similar research (Chrobot-Mason, Button & DiClementi, 2001; Özturk, 2011; Velez & Moradi, 2012). Social media was a valuable resource from which to recruit participants in this project. On LinkedIn, the professional networking website, and Facebook, the social networking site, it was possible to use LGBT groups as potential recruitment sites. For example, an "Irish LGBT Professionals" group is present on LinkedIn and has garnered a number of participants to date (see Figure 11 and Appendix C). Other dedicated groups, such as the Irish National Teacher's Organisation's LGBT Teachers Group, also have Facebook pages

To recruit participants, I contacted each social media group over private message and gave an overview of myself and the research project I was conducting. I then asked if anyone in their group would like to participate, and if they would like to post the call for participants on their group's social media page or over email. My own social media page was used when contacting these groups. One advantage of this method is that potential participants are able to easily to determine who I am, and establish my credibility by looking over my social media profile.

This sampling method suffers from the same primary drawback as sampling through organizational networks: namely, those who have not disclosed their sexuality are unlikely to join an LGBT group on social media. However, while active membership of the organizational networks require one to come to meetings and social functions, it is relatively easier to "join" a group on Facebook or LinkedIn – in sampling terms this may mean that a broader range of people is reached, not just those actively interested in being directly involved in LGBT organizations.

4.9 Pilot studies

Eight of the 30 interviews were pilot studies, that is, they acted as a testing ground upon which the interview style, question structure and other particularities related to the semi-structured interview method were practiced (Seidman, 2013; Turner, 2010). I felt there were no differences between the data collected in the pilot studies and that collected in the non-pilot studies, so the former data was analysed alongside the other data. A number of themes, shown in Figure 13, arose during the pilot interviews. As shown in the figure, some of these themes emerged from discussion surrounding the topics that were identified in the systematic literature review, some arose from thinking generally about LGB careers and workplace experiences, and some themes evolved primarily from the interviews themselves.

The data collected did not change very much from the pilot interviews to the non-pilot interviews. The major amendments that took place related to the development of the topic guide and the style and structure of the interviews, as described below. A topic guide (Appendix D) was developed to provide some structure to the interviews. The systematic literature review was first used as its basis for the topic guide, but, as King (2004) points out, "the development of the interview guide does not end at the start of the first interview". The topic guide developed somewhat as the pilot interviews took place, but still retained the major themes from the systematic literature review. For example, in some of the interviews, the participant would mention that they thought about what they would say before coming to the interview – it became clear that the participants themselves had some "topic guide" in mind before the interview. To address this, an extra interview question – "Do you have anything to add that you think may be relevant to the project?" – was included in the topic guide. This allowed

the participant to add anything they had previously thought was important to the discussion and empowered them to mention it, rather than following the interviewer's prompts.

In addition, the structure of the interview was changed somewhat to allow a better flow and rapport. While in earlier interviews I asked the participants first about their identity development ("When did you first realize you were L/G/B?") and then asked about their career, with a chronological order in mind, it became clear throughout the pilot interviews that this order took participants by surprise. As the focus of the interview was on their workplace experiences, they assumed that the initial questions would surround this topic. As a result, the first few questions in the pilot studies led to rather stilted, short answers. To address this, I changed the order of the questions being asked. I firstly began each interview with the general "Tell me about your career". The participants seemed more at ease in answering this question first, whether it was because they had anticipated and pre-prepared an answer to a question like this, or because it was a less sensitive topic compared to queries about their early identity development. These latter questions were moved closer to the end of the interview; at this point I feel that trust and rapport had been built and that the participants were more comfortable in talking about this topic.

One of the pilot studies, by necessity, was conducted later in the research process. This interview was a pilot not because it was used, like the others, to test the method being used, but rather in the sense that it was the first transgender person interviewed. As described above, the project was initially envisaged to explore *LGBT* work experiences, including those pertaining to the transgender community. Because of this, an effort was made to recruit transgender participants, a task which is difficult

(McFadden, 2015), given the population's relatively small number (Flores, Herman, Gates & Brown, 2016). As the topic became more focused, however, it became apparent when carrying out and analysing the interview with the transgender participant that the experiences and factors involved in their identity management very much differed from the LGB participants interviewed previously. These differences, it was felt, were not just attributable to the natural variety of human experiences, but were linked rather to fundamental disparities in the manner by which transgender people develop, disclose and manage their identity, as outlined in Chapter 1. Although in total 30 interviews took place in the data collection phase of this research, only 29 are included in the final analysis presented in this dissertation, as the interview with the transgender participant was subsequently removed due to the innate differences in the identity management processes involved, as discussed in Chapter 1.

The data from the pilot study was added to and analysed along with the data collected from the other interviews. While in quantitative research, pilot studies are often excluded from the final analysis because the data collection instrument is being perfected (and is thus not final), qualitative research often includes this type of data (Holloway, 1997). In this study, the interview guide and style of interviewing did not change significantly between the pilot studies and although, as noted above, participants may have had more to add if they'd been given a final open question, they still provided a lot of rich, descriptive data in response to the other questions they had been asked. As well as to see if any problems may arise with the method, the pilot study was used to test the viability of the semi-structured interview as a method to collect data to answer the research question being posed, and from the preliminary

analysis it was decided that it was indeed an effective method. For these reasons, the

data obtained from the pilot studies was kept.

Figure 11. Facebook page for the Irish National Teachers' Organization's LGBT Teachers' Group and LinkedIn LGBT professional networking group.

4.10 Data Collection

This study uses the semi-structured interview, designed to obtain the rich qualitative data about the lived experiences of the participants, as the primary method of data collection. The next paragraphs discuss semi-structured interviews and how it was used in this project in more detail.

Semi-Structured Interview

The semi-structured interview is a compromise between, and enjoys the benefits of, the structured and unstructured interview (May, 2001). The structured interview is comprised of a well-defined pattern of communication between the researcher and participant, and the clear delineation between topics allows the researcher to more easily draw comparisons across participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). However, questions, topics and interview format are decided by the researcher from the offset, and so the voice of the participant may be altered or lost – they may for example have additional comments or stories that would provide rich data, but be disinclined to do so, in case it upsets the structure or current focus of the interview. The unstructured approach provides the participant with the power to bring the interview in whatever direction he/she decides, and in doing so, data will be more of their creation, and perhaps truer. Using this unstructured approach however, runs the risk of obtaining a large amount of irrelevant data that is of no use to the research, and makes it more difficult for the researcher to draw comparison across participant accounts (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

The semi-structured interview aims to remedy the faults of these two approaches while enjoying the benefits of both. Like the former approach, an interview guide,

which outlines the main topics of conversation and offers introductory questions, but not a detailed prescription, is constructed which will provide structure to the interview and result in more relevant and comparable data across a series of interviews. However, the guide is much less exhaustive, and contains more of a topic overview than a detailed list of questions. Thus, the participant can, if they wish, volunteer extra information and anecdotes that they believe to be of relevance, and not feel that they are upsetting the flow of the interview (May, 2001). Likewise, a researcher is freer to ask more questions and enquire more about details, in a way that would disrupt structured interviews and their analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As a result, the data is richer and requires less interpretation on behalf of the researcher. The topic guide used in this research can be found in Appendix D.

The systematic literature review conducted in the first year of this research project, presented in Chapter 2, provided a number of topics that the cohort of authors reviewed found to be relevant to the topic of LGBT workplace experiences and careers. These topics, e.g. discrimination, identity disclosure and identity formation, then formed the basis of the interview guide which is used in the semi-structured interview. A topic is introduced into the discussion, if necessary, with an open-ended question, and from there the interview is similar to a conversation. If the participant becomes overly sidetracked with another topic, the interview can be gently steered back to relevant territory with reference to the interview guide (Seidman, 2013).

In total, 30 interviews with members of the LGBT community were undertaken (see Appendix C for details of those interviewed), with the interviews lasting an average of 45 minutes.

In transcribing the interviews, care was taken to ensure that the participants' verbatim responses were written. Similarly, the quotations from the participants that appear throughout this thesis are mostly taken verbatim from the interviews, shortened, concatenated or including small explanatory insertions (in square brackets) to aid the reader's understanding, but keeping the vernacular language. This was chosen for reasons similar to those identified by Corden and Sainsbury (2006), in their report on researchers who use verbatim quotations in their publications. Doing so:

- Allows the quotations to provide evidence for the researcher's interpretation; i.e. to allow readers to make their own judgements as to the accuracy of the researcher's analysis,

- Allows the researchers to use the quotations to better explain complex events, feelings or phenomena; i.e. the participants themselves were able to explain more clearly the topic under discussion,

- Gives deeper meaning and understanding to the phenomena under investigation. E.g. one participant in this research (Claire) was angry and hurt about an incident of discrimination that she faced; her quotes help to show the depth of her emotions about what happened, to a better degree than my simply saying "she was hurt and angry".

- Gives the participant more voice in the research. As noted above, feminist philosophical perspectives show the importance of including the voice of the interviewee in the research, and lessening the relative power of the researcher in reporting the findings.

4.11 Analysis and coding

All of the interviews were transcribed in full, with the average interview transcript amounting to approximately 6,000 words. This resulted in over 167,000 words of transcripts, or twenty hours of audio recordings. The transcripts were coded openly using Max QDA qualitative coding software (version 11). The Max QDA software allows computer-assisted analysis of data, including qualitative coding, and is widely used in qualitative research (e.g. Brown et al., 2013; Silva et al., 2013).

As outlined in Chapter 2, a systematic literature review was conducted on the careers and workplace experiences of LGBT employees, prior to the data collection. At the coding stage, firstly, the topics that were identified in the literature review were used as the preliminary themes under which the codes would be placed. This is similar to what Miles and Huberman (1994: 58) refer to as a "start list": While this "start list" provided some initial structure, it was recognized that the list of codes was a living document that changed over time. The "start list" was always intended to be just that: not an inflexible, definite categorization but simply a starting point from which to build the analysis, and provided some initial structure. The start list did not represent everything that was discussed, and new themes emerged as a result of the coding; for example, LGBT networks, which are not discussed much in the Business /Management literatures. As outlined in Chapter 4, the analysis is therefore abductive, using a pre-selected structure upon which to build more open, inductive coding.

As noted by Saldaña (2012), coding is a cyclical and repetitive process, with each iteration of coding highlighting different topics and adding new concepts. Over time the number of codes grew until no more codes were added in the last iteration. One line of text could represent a number of different things (see Figure 12, an excerpt

from Claire's interview, for an example of quotes like this). This shows the richness and depth of the data collected during the semi-structured interviews. MaxQDA, as a tool, supported the development of open coding into broader headings and meta-categories (9 in total) throughout the analytical stage of the research project. With that in mind, some quotes will be used more than once in the analysis and throughout this thesis, because of their rich and nuanced detail which allows them to be analysed using different lenses.

Some codes were subsumed or formed together, because of similarity or redundancy. At the end of each iteration of coding, the codes were assigned to one of the major themes or, as in the case of discussion on LGBT networks, formed a new distinct theme. Through coding and re-coding, the researchers reflected upon the experiences of the participants in their identity construction and management in their organization.

Focus on Identity

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this project was initially intended to be broad and exploratory, highlighting the many different influences on an LGB person's career. Because of this, the interviews held were broad ranging and were not limited to one topic; the topic guide, combined with the semi-structured format, allowed (and did result in) deviation from a singular focus.

Although the interviews did not focus solely on identity, the broad nature of the discussions helped to contextualize and provide greater meaning and understanding to the parts particularly specific to identity. For example, in one participant's case, discussion on the workplace and the subtle discrimination allowed insight into her internal identity management processes. Another's discussion on her family served to

better explain why she was hesitant about coming out at work. While more focused interviews on identity may delve deeper into the particular processes and each internal decision, the broader-focused interviews conducted in this study allowed a more nuanced evaluation and overview of LGB identity management in the workplace.

4.12 Ethical issues

There are possible ethical issues and risks associated with research of this nature. Those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender and have not disclosed their sexual/gender identity to others may be at risk of discrimination, exclusion or both, at an interpersonal level and a formal level within the workplace. Participants may also become stressed by relaying data of a personal nature. The Maynooth University Ethics Committee carefully reviewed my research proposal and discussed any potential areas where ethical concerns may arise. To prevent any possible incidents of discrimination or stress, certain precautions and practices were taken, in line with the Sociological Association of Ireland's (2016) code of ethics:

- Participants were assigned pseudonyms throughout all audio recordings, notes, and write-up of findings. Similarly, any publications that may arise from this study will only use pseudonyms to mask the respondents' identity.

- The interviews took place at a location of the participant's choosing. In cases where the participant had not disclosed their sexual/gender identity, it was possible for respondents to request that the interviews were held in private, away from their workplace.

- Researcher confidentiality was and will be maintained at all times.

- Participants were assured that they did not have to answer a question if they did not want to.

- Participants were informed of the nature of the research, into exploring their workplace experiences, and that the data would be used in my PhD (that is, the research was an overt research study).

- From the very outset of the study, the potential respondents were assured of their anonymity.

These steps were taken to ensure that the voice and anonymity of the participant was given top priority throughout the research project. Appendix G consists of the ethical approval granted by the Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee for this project. The next section outlines some of the preliminary themes arising from the interview analysis, which are unpacked in more detail in the following Findings chapters.
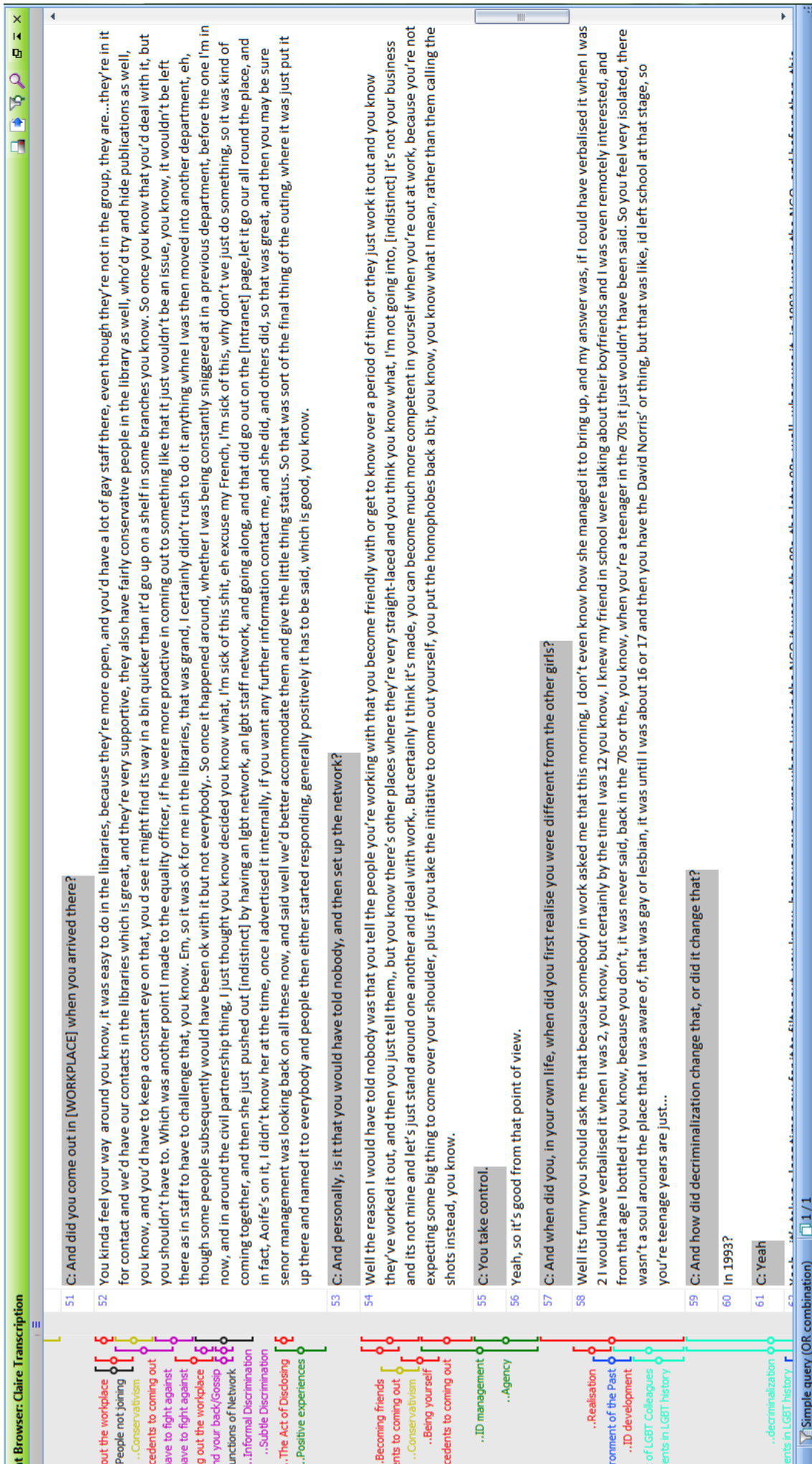
Figure 12. Example of qualitative open coding in Max QDA, highlighting the rich, multifaceted descriptive data.

51 C: And did you come out in [WORKPLACE] when you arrived there?

52 You kinda feel your way around you know, it was easy to do in the libraries, because they're more open, and you'd have a lot of gay staff there, even though they're not in the group, they are...they're in it for contact and we'd have our contacts in the libraries which is great, and they're very supportive, they also have fairly conservative people in the library as well, who'd try and hide publications as well, you know, and you'd have to keep a constant eye on that, you'd see it might find its way in a bin quicker than it'd go up on a shelf in some branches you know. So once you know that you'd deal with it, but you shouldn't have to. Which was another point I made to the equality officer, if he were more proactive in coming out to something like that it just wouldn't be an issue, you know, it wouldn't be left there as in staff to have to challenge that, you know. Em, so it was ok for me in the libraries, that was grand, I certainly didn't rush to do it anything whne I was then moved into another department, eh, though some people subsequently would have been ok with it but not everybody.. So once it happened around, whether I was being constantly sniggered at in a previous department, before the one I'm in now, and in around the civil partnership thing, I just thought you know decided you know what, I'm sick of this, eh excuse my French, I'm sick of this shit, why don't we just do something, so it was kind of coming together, and then she just pushed out [indistinct] by having an lgbt network, and going along, and that did go out on the [Intranet] page, let it go our all round the place, and in fact, Aoife's on it, I didn't know her at the time, once I advertised it internally, if you want any further information contact me, and she did, and others did, so that was great, and then you may be sure senor management was looking back on all these now, and said well we'd better accommodate them and give the little thing status. So that was sort of the final thing of the outing, where it was just put it up there and named it to everybody and people then either started responding, generally positively it has to be said, which is good, you know.

53 C: And personally, is it that you would have told nobody, and then set up the network?

54 Well the reason I would have told nobody was that you tell the people you're working with that you become friendly with or get to know over a period of time, or they just work it out and you know they've worked it out, and then you just tell them,, but you know there's other places where they're very straight-laced and you think you know what, I'm not going into, [indistinct] it's not your business and its not mine and let's just stand around one another and ideal with work,. But certainly I think it's made, you can become much more competent in yourself when you're out at work, because you're not expecting some big thing to come over your shoulder, plus if you take the initiative to come out yourself, you put the homophobes back a bit, you know, you know what I mean, rather then calling the shots instead, you know.

55 C: You take control.

56 Yeah, so it's good from that point of view.

57 C: And when did you, in your own life, when did you first realise you were different from the other girls?

58 Well its funny you should ask me that because somebody in work asked me that this morning, I don't even know how she managed it to bring up, and my answer was, if I could have verbalised it when I was 2 I would have verbalised it when I was 2, you know, but certainly by the time I was 12 you know, I knew my friend in school were talking about their boyfriends and I was even remotely interested, and from that age I bottled it you know, because you don't, it was never said, back in the 70s or the, you know, when you're a teenager in the 70s it just wouldn't have been said. So you feel very isolated, there wasn't a soul around the place that I was aware of, that was gay or lesbian, it was until I was about 16 or 17 and then you have the David Norris' or thing, but that was like, id left school at that stage, so you're teenage years are just...

59 C: And how did decriminalization change that, or did it change that?

60 In 1993?

61 C: Yeah

Figure 13. Preliminary themes emerging from interviews

Legend

Source of Topic

Major Topic

Preliminary Theme

Systematic Literature Review

Org./HR Perspectives

Identity Development

Irish Context

(De-)criminalization

Criminalization affected self identity. Decriminalization did not lead to overnight change in social relations or cultures

Identity Management

Affiliation and Belonging
Feelings of affiliation to other LGBT people/ colleagues, compared to straight people

No "Ceremonies"
Participants did not want a "ceremony" when they came out, preferred to normalize – contrary to literature

Being Outed/ Loss of Agency in Coming Out
Many participants losing agency in coming out – contrary to literature

Discrimination

Othering
Perceived subtle, covert discrimination common, feelings of in-groups/out-groups

Org. LGBT Networks

Pilot Interviews

Aims & Functions of Networks

Social
Network is for meeting other LGBT people and socializing

Political
Network is for enacting change in the org.

Org.
Network is to help org. goals and image

Table 6. Preliminary themes arising from pilot interviews. Sample quotes from interviews illustrate these themes.

Preliminary Theme	Description	Sample Quote
Affiliation and Belonging:	Some of the interviewees discussed how it was nice to be in the company of other LGBT workers.	*Because I'm gay, and you know, it's important to me, and the gay community, even though I haven't really been involved in it, I kind of, it was a bit of looking for something new to be involved in, but also . . . kinda like, my people, kind of thing, you know* - **Aoife**
No 'Ceremonies'	Some participants did not want to make a fuss of their being LGBT, and instead wanted to normalize it.	*Yeah, it wasn't a big ceremony and that's like the last thing I wanted and probably one of things I was most scared of is that it would be a massive deal because I didn't want it to be huge, I didn't want it to be like this public hoo-ha with fireworks and celebrations, d'you know what I mean, because I think that would have made me intensely uncomfortable –* **Fintan** *I suppose I would try to normalize it as much as possible, in the same way a heterosexual person would talk about their partner, the same way you'd discover they're straight, I'd normalize it in the same way, I wouldn't try and make it an exception, and I wouldn't see the need to kind of out myself as such, I'd just try to normalize it as much as possible –* **James**
Being Outed/Loss of Agency in Coming out:	Contrary to the literature, which focuses on the different methods and strategies LGBT workers use in identity management, some participants did not have the choice to come out when or how they wanted to.	*I was outed in the job ... because I was seen, I think, coming out of the George (LGBT club), or wherever it was, so I was outed there, and that also you've lost a bit of control when that happens do you know... –* **Claire** *A teacher that knew me really well told my students of mine that I was gay and I'd be happier if I had a partner, totally out of the blue with no reason, but that particular teacher has been known for really inappropriate behaviour and conversations with students like, but it annoyed me a lot because it was somebody I work really close with, and there was no reason for this person to have said what they did say, so it really pissed me off –* **Fintan**
Othering & Loneliness:	Many interviewees mentioned feeling lonely in the workplace due to their sexuality.	*You can very much feel like "the only gay in the village" if you haven't got a gay or lesbian colleague around you, and you have a bad time, or they're having a bad time, you'd be oblivious to it, so you don't discuss it, you don't discuss your relationship, so you're not engaged in the same way your peers are, your straight peers –* **Claire** *It was nice to know that there were other people in the*

		organization that were gay cus, em, I think there's about 250 in [my] section and I'd be the only one that I know that's out, as such.. in many ways it can be quite lonely, you can spend you whole day in work and go home at the end of the day and realise God, I didn't talk to anyone today, other than work. - **Alan**
Aims and Functions of Network	The aims of LGBT networks in organizations varied from person to person; some saw it as a social outlet, others as a political/lobbying group, while others still seen it as having organizational functions, such as the promotion of diversity and inclusion to retain LGBT staff.	*[The HR manager] identified some former employees, who left the company because of some of the innuendo that they had heard, so that was something that she needed to eradicate, and that's something that, you know, that as an LGBT employer wasn't aware, that we had other LGBT employees so, that's why it's important for us now to have the network –* **John** *I've had staff members contact me privately to say look I have a nephew, I think he's gay and I'm very worried about him, how do I got about talking to him, who should I contact... and I'd give people the number and say look well if you want a bit of support yourself we've a staff support service within the [workplace] if you want to see somebody confidentially. -* **Aoife** *Plus I think it also gives out a good positive message that it's OK to be gay in the place, oh, hugely positive message, it's good for everybody, you know what I mean, it's just good for everyone, that you can be yourself in the place, you don't have to hide who you are, you don't have to hide your relationships, all that kind of thing, gets rid, breaks down that kind of barrier, you don't have to worry what lie to tell (laughs), what's your partner's name, oh, eh Joe, you know, Joan maybe, you know! –* **Claire**
De-criminalization	Some participants mentioned how the de-criminalization of homosexuality in Ireland in 1993 did not bring about a large overnight change and was somewhat of a non-event. Culturally and socially the workplace remained much the same.	*It's taken a long time now for it to filter out, you know ... they still didn't get it, do you know what I mean, they may understand that it's ok to be gay, but didn't actually get it, or get the difference that it would be, well you've grown up believing that there's something wrong with you, believing that you need help, believing whatever it is that you believing, and that's what you were taught, and people's perception of that doesn't change, really –* **Claire** *for '93, I don't think there was even a lot in the news or...maybe I wouldn't have watched the news back then –* ***John***

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the major methodological influences and choices in this research project. A critical realist philosophy has been the primary philosophical influence for the particular study undertaken. Critical theory and feminist theory were secondary influences. These philosophies helped shape the design and execution of the research project, and the analysis of the data that the data collection phase provided. Snowball and purposive sampling, and recruitment through online groups and my own personal network provided a diverse group of participants. Semi-structured interviews, designed to provide deep, rich data to analyse, was the method by which the experiences of these participants were gathered. As the interviews may (and did) encounter issues of a personal, sensitive, and possibly distressing nature, ethical considerations were taken; these are also outlined above.

The following chapter presents the theoretical framework that aided the analysis of the data collected using the semi-structured interview method outlined here.

Chapter 5. Theoretical Framework

"Those who don't know must learn from those who do."

Plato[vi]

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that helped shape my analysis of the data garnered from the semi-structured interviews. The theoretical framework used in this research project is outlined below. A framework is made up of a number of theories. *Theories* are defined by Berg (2001: 15) as:

> *"...interrelated ideas about various patterns, concepts, processes, relationships, or events...a system of logical statements or propositions that explain the relationship between two or more objects, concepts, phenomena, or characteristics of humans".*

The theories used in this research project help explore the identity management of LGB employees in Ireland by referring to relationships and phenomena that allow one to see the data in a new light. At the most elementary level are *concepts* (Turner, 1989),
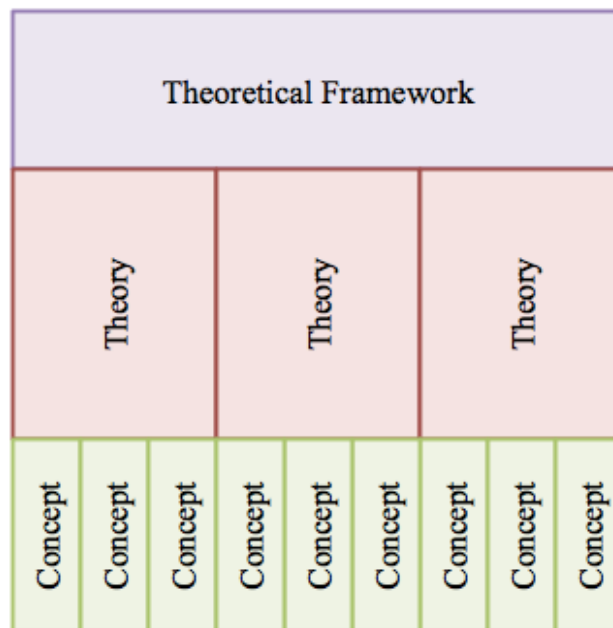
Figure 14. The components of a theoretical framework.

particular elements, properties, or features of phenomena (Berg, 2001), that united make up a theory. The primary concepts in this research are identity, identity management, and identity construction. As these concepts emerged from

the coding of the data and were shown to be underpinning much of the analysis, theories that would draw these concepts together and help interpret the data were chosen.

I use a pragmatic pluralist approach (Watson, 1997), in that a number of differing theories are used to interpret the data. To facilitate theorizing from the data, I therefore considered a number of different existing theories and frameworks that could help explain and add value to the findings that were emerging from the analysis of the data. For example, Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (1977) was considered as potential frameworks to aid analysis but did not fully clarify the data obtained, and was useful to only some small parts of the analysis, but not an overall aid. Ultimately, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1985, 1986), the *Stranger* concept (Simmel, 1908) and Dramaturgical Theory (Goffman, 1959, 1963) were chosen as components of a theoretical framework that could act as a base upon which to form theory that could explain the data. Through repeated analysis and reanalysis, power emerged as an overarching theory that could draw together and interpret the other components. While the Stranger theory is relatively novel in this context, both social identity theory (SIT) and dramaturgical theory link to broader debates within the business and management fields, and are built on the core concepts of identity, which are found in this research to be fundamental to LGB workers in the workplace.

Using abductive reasoning (see Chapter 4), these theories are used as a base upon which to build new theory. Rather than extend these theories to a new context, they are instead combined and modified to help explain the data collected. Below, I outline the main components of the theoretical framework used, and how it

relates to this study. After, I then discuss the concept of power and explain how it threads through and draws together each of the previous components.

5.2 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory is used in this study to explore how the LGB participants interviewed saw themselves and their colleagues. Social Identity Theory argues that one tends to categorize his or her self (and others) according to various social groupings, for example: gender, age, religion and ethnicity. One assigns (correctly or incorrectly) to each respective group certain characteristics (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). A group in this sense is a:

> *"collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it"* (Tajfel & Tuner, 1979: 40).

Tajfel (1978) conceptualized social identity by dividing it into three interlinked components:

- The *cognitive component* relates to one's awareness of being in a group
- The *evaluative component* relates to the value one associates with being a member of the group

- The *affective component* refers to the emotional attachment one has with being a member of the group

As explored below, these components were evident in some of feelings experienced by the interview participants, who were affectively cognizant of their membership of the LGB community. As Thatcher and Zhu (2006: 1077) highlight, social identity "operates when one is assimilated into social units whereby 'I' becomes 'we', and it incorporates the characteristic of the social unit into one's self-concept".

In categorizing and characterizing different groups, one makes sense of the world. One is also able to visualize their own position in the world, and form their own *personal* identity (abilities, attributes, traits etc.) and *social* identity, comprising of their group memberships (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). SIT highlights how a person's identity is multi-faceted and complex. For example, a participant of this study may have their own personal identity, made up of their sense of humour, interest in tennis, and facial features; as well as a social identity: their belonging to a particular organization and industry, their circle of friends, their family, and their being in the LGBT community. Being lesbian, gay or bisexual may be seen as both a personal identity, in that it involves personal development process (e.g. Cass, 1979) and is intrinsic to romantic and sexual relationships; and a social identity, in that one is a member of a visible and active extended community. In the same way that this research looks at both one's personal identity and work identity (see Chapter 3) and how they interlink, SIT emphasizes the analysis of those different facets of one's identity (sexuality, professional identity etc.).

Developing from the awareness of the existence of different groups, and the affective and evaluative attachment one has towards certain ones, there begins to form the concept of "in-groups" and "out-groups". One does not only start to categorize, but also to differ in favourability towards the groups they associate themselves with and the groups that they do not (Tajfel, 1978). The participants in this study recount in the following sections times when they felt more comfortable to be amongst people who shared their LGB identity, and felt isolated in the workplace because of their minority status.

The workplace is a place where members of a number of different groups come together; in most organizations a variety of ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, and religions are represented. The organization in itself is a group itself, of course, and one can identify with it as readily as with the former examples (Ashforth & Mael, 1989: 21). In terms of social identities, therefore, the workplace is complex and multi-faceted; two colleagues may share the organizational identity while all their other affiliations may be to entirely different social groups. This research looks at how LGB workers in Ireland manage their identities – sexual and professional; Social Identity Theory allows us to see the intersection of these complex multiple identities, while Dramaturgical Theory focuses on how these identities are enacted.

5.3 The Stranger

Social identity theory is a large, complex and sprawling theory, with many different conceptualizations, themes and offshoots. To reduce confusion and to tailor SIT more to this research project, I use Simmel's (1908) concept of *the Stranger* as a lens by which to interpret it.

This research undertaking presents the LGB worker as the Stranger in an organization: one who is present in the workplace (spatially close) yet is also, because of their sexual orientation, relationally distant. The notion of the Stranger arises from a short essay of 1908 by Simmel, and has been developed in more detail since (e.g. Schuetz, 1944). Although the original Stranger was the migrant, who has joined a new community yet still remains somewhat outside of it, because of their foreign origin (Simmel, 1908), McLemore (1970) argues that it is those on the margins, rather than those new to a group (like the migrant), that best exemplifies the Stranger.

The basic concept seems contradictory at first: the Stranger is a person who is both close by, yet far away. Simmel examines the duality of being both spatially close; that is, someone in the immediate proximity, yet relationally distant; one who, by the lack of in-group membership, is an outsider, or stranger. Simmel (1908: 2) points out that, although there are some shared characteristics between the group and the Stranger, these similarities are somewhat commonplace and general, in comparison to other likenesses that may bond people:

> *"...the proportion of nearness and remoteness which gives*
> *the stranger the character of objectivity, also finds practical*
> *expression in the more abstract nature of the relation to him.*
> *That is, with the stranger one has only certain more general*
> *qualities in common, whereas the relation to more*
> *organically connected persons is based on the commonness*
> *of specific differences from merely general features."*

Since the publication of Simmel's essay on the Stranger in 1908, the concept has been argued over, extended, reworked, and applied in various concepts by a large number of authors. As mentioned, Simmel himself gives the example of the migrant in his work (1908). Park (1928) references the Stranger in his description of the related, but distinct, "Marginal Man", who struggles to resolve his identity whilst occupying two antagonistic cultures; Schuetz (1944) positions the newcomer in a society as a form of the Stranger, while McLemore (1970) argues that it is anyone on the margins, rather than just those new to a group (like the newly-arrived migrant), that best exemplifies the Stranger. Levine (1977, 1985) argues that the Simmelian Stranger cannot be compared to Park's (1928) Marginal Man, and extends the concept only to people of a certain personality type.

In unpacking the underlying features of the Stranger within Simmel's short essay, we identify a number of aspects that are particularly relevant for LGB people. Firstly, LGB workers are often separate, made separate, or feel separate, for a number of reasons and it is this separation that forms the "farness" within the Stranger's near/far duality. One such cause of this separation can be the coming out process that many LGB people go through at work; disclosure decisions are made in every new workplace and with every new person that the LGB employee meets (Friskopp & Silverstein, 1995; Paisley & Tayer, 2016). Coming out in the workplace has been shown to have much better consequences for the individual than staying "in the closet": concealing can have a large psychological toll (Madera, 2010), and those who are open about their identity are found to have higher job satisfaction, lower role ambiguity, lower role conflict and a better work-life balance (Day and Schoenrade, 1997). Being 'out' in the workplace is

therefore a desirable state for many LGB people and, because of anti-discrimination laws and an ostensibly more liberal social climate in recent years, a legitimate choice in many countries, including in Ireland.

However, in the Irish context, as within other accepting country contexts internationally, whilst coming out may not lead to such outright aggression or overt employment discrimination as in previous years, it may nonetheless position LGB people as forms of the Stranger. Coming out can have implications for interpersonal relations in the workplace; with O'Ryan and McFarland (2010: 74) reporting lesbian and gay couples as cautious when forming relationships because of "the decisions about what to say and what not to say, and when to disclose, when to push it and when not to push it", which may be likened to Schuetz's (1944) discussion of the Stranger's difficulty in approaching seemingly culturally-established norms. Coming out positions oneself at the untraditional, unprivileged end of this heteronormative binary, increasing one's separation from the mainstream group. By taking on the mantle of the Stranger,

> *"... [one's] position in this group is determined,*
> *essentially, by the fact that he [sic] has not belonged to it*
> *from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which*
> *do not and cannot stem from the group itself"* (Simmel,
> 1908: 509)

Parnell, Lease and Green (2012) discuss how the fear of discrimination may prevent LGB employees from socializing; this may be a second cause of the Stranger's separation. Discrimination, and the fear of it, is a very salient issue in the workplace experiences of LGBT people (Gedro, 2010; McFadden, 2015). Discrimination against LGB people in the workplace has been found in many

forms: formal and informal, overt and subtle. Examples include being denied a promotion or being harassed at work (Lau & Stotzer, 2011), wage discrimination against gay and bisexual men (Tilcsik, 2011; Blandford, 2003), subtle and overt discrimination against lesbian and gay expatriates (McPhail, et al., 2016), and both cultural/institutional and interpersonal heterosexism (Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley, 2008). Such practices further enhance the separation of LGB employees from other employees, increasing the 'Stranger' experience of LGB people in organizations. While discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is now prohibited by law and company policies in many, though not all, international contexts; but, as shown above, subtle discrimination remains an issue for LGB employees. While it may be possible to identify formal discrimination, or even overt interpersonal discrimination, it is harder for someone to identify if more covert discrimination is in fact taking place. For example, Ward and Winstanley (2003) found that most of their study participants did not face overt, vocalized stigma when they made reference to their sexuality, but rather a 'reactive silence'; snubs that would be difficult to formally complain about but nonetheless were oppressive.

Another feature from Simmel's Stranger concept that I draw upon to explore the LGB employee's identity management is the shared commonalities that Simmel identifies between members of the group and the Stranger. Simmel (1908: 2) points out that, although there are some shared characteristics between the group members and the Stranger, these similarities are commonplace and general:

> *"The stranger is close to us, insofar as we feel between him*
> *and ourselves common features of a national, social,*
> *occupational or generally human, nature. He is far from*

us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or

us, and connect us only because they connect a great many

people...although the commonness functions as their

unifying basis, if does not make these particular persons

interdependent on one another, because it could as easily

connect everyone [sic] of them with all kinds of individuals

other than the members of his [sic] group."

Following Simmel's argument, the LGB employee's heterosexual work colleague is close to them because of generic similarities (e.g. occupational features), but this closeness is shared by all members of the organization and so, in the workplace context, the relative importance of the shared characteristics are diminished.

The third feature of Simmel's essay that strengthens the comparison between the Stranger and the LGB employee is de-individualization. The Stranger, as Simmel (1908: 2) points out, is "an organic member of the group". The Stranger has their place and position in the group and, perhaps because of this, is judged on their having that role rather than on their individual attributes. Simmel (1908: 2) argues:

"In the case of the person who is a stranger to the country,

the city, the race, etc....this non-common element is once

more nothing individual, but merely the strangeness of

origin, which is or could be common to many strangers..."

In this context, while the LGB employee or colleague represents the Stranger, there are usually other LGB people who also fill this role. While they are still in

the minority (or would not be Strangers), there may be enough of them to possibly form another group, for example, as discussed in Chapter 10, an LGBT employee network. However:

> *"...for this reason, strangers are not really conceived as individuals, but as stranger of a particular type: the element of distance is no less general in regard to them than the element of nearness"*

Stereotyping against lesbian and gay men in the workplace has been found in previous research (Embrick, Walther, & Wickens, 2007), and it arises perhaps from this view of the Stranger 'of a particular type'; where preconceived ideas or generalizations about this type of person affect one's perception of them. At the same time, the separation that demarcates the relationship between the group and the Stranger may limit chances to vanquish these stereotypes through repeated association and familiarity.

The features outlined above work together to position the Stranger in that particular position of being near and yet far, in the group and yet still outside of it, a member and not a member. While there are commonalties between the Stranger and the group, they are shared by many people and thus lose significance. This is compounded by the conditions that have already separated the Stranger from the mainstream. The position as the Stranger can de-individualize the person, adding further to their isolation. Whilst LGB people are now afforded more civil rights and protections that ever before, there still exists that minority status that may render them as a form of the Stranger in the workplace. Researchers have used social identity theory to explain the similarity attraction paradigm or homophily effect in organizations (Almeida, Fernando,

Hannif, and Dharmage, 2015), which renders those in organizational contexts that deviate from the 'norm' to be disadvantaged. In Almeida et al. (2015), the focus is on migrants' underemployment, however this phenomenon also explains the perceived and actual discrimination that members of the LGB workforce encounter at work, where they are perceived as outsiders to the heteronormative (Rumens, 2010a) composition of the workforce. Because of formal, informal, overt or subtle discrimination, institutionalized and socialized heteronormativity, or an expectation or anticipation of prejudice, LGB employees may feel relationally distant to those around them in the organization. Because of negative incidences like formal, informal, overt or subtle discrimination, or seemingly neutral facts such as one's socialized awareness of being in the minority, LGB workers may feel relationally distant to those around them in the organization, lying at the periphery of the in-group and the out-group. Those who have not disclosed their sexual identity can feel like the Stranger, but reactions from colleagues after coming out may solidify and strengthen that feeling. Coming out, then, is not just about disclosing one's sexual orientation, it is the taking on of a new social identity, that of the Stranger. The identity management process is thus more difficult than a simple to-tell-or-not-to-tell decision, with both interpersonal and perhaps career-related consequences to weigh up.

The following section outlines the next part of the theoretical framework, Goffman's (1959, 1963) dramaturgical metaphor, and how I use it to frame the identity management process of LGB people in Ireland.

5.4 Dramaturgical Theory

The work of Goffman (1959) on dramaturgical theory is another key part of the theoretical framework used to unpack and explore the workplace experiences of the participants involved in this study. Namely, dramaturgical theory is used to explore the identity management that these participants go through in the workplace. Goffman's (1959) theory has previously been used in the study of organizational life (e.g. Gardner, 1992; Gardner & Martinko, 1992; Rosenfeld, Giaclalone & Riordan, 1995) and identity in the workplace (e.g. Down & Reveley, 2009; Mangham, 1986), and has also partly been used to explore gay men's identity management in the workplace before (Creed & Scully, 2000; Roberts, 2011)

The use of dramaturgical theory as a theoretical framework here follows on from and adds to SIT and Simmel's *Stranger* concept. SIT posits that each person belongs to and categorizes themselves in a number of groups, resulting in a social/group identity. As noted by Stets and Burke (2014: 70), verification, defined by them as "matching perceptions of self-relevant meanings in the situation to the meanings of identity standard" is implicit in the maintenance of one's group identity. To verify one's group identity "means acting like others in the group and gaining acceptance by other group members that one is like them" (Stets & Burke, 2014: 70). In viewing the maintenance of one's group identity as an on-going "act", Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory complements Social Identity Theory.

The theory is comprised of a number of primary concepts: the *stage*, the *part*, and the *performance*. The *performance* is defined by Goffman (1959:8) as "all the

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activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants". The performance is how one's attempts to create a specific impression of themselves in the view of others; according to social identity theory, one's "performance" is part of one's on-going dynamic social identity construction.

The *part* or *routine* is the "pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance and which may be presented or played through on other occasions" (Goffman, 1959: 8). Taking the example of the on-going identity management/coming out strategies used by LGB workers, one may "play the part" of the heterosexual, by actively avoiding discussion of one's partner. Similarly, a number of participants in the research project discussed the idea of being "professional", and the routines associated with that (explored below). These routines may be played out in a number of *settings* (or contexts in which the performance takes place) (Goffman, 1959).

The *stage* is divided into front-stage and back-stage (Goffman, 1959). The front stage (or "personal front") is made up of the visual parts that are intrinsic to a person: their age, sex, race, size, speech patterns, expressions and gestures. While being lesbian, gay or bisexual is not a visual characteristic, being butch (for women) and camp (for men) are, and are strongly associated with being LGB, and thus may play a part in identity management, and represent part of the front stage. Furthermore, being open about being LGB, through discussing one's personal life, relationships etc., may also make up part of the front stage. The back-stage is the place where the performance is not given; the place where the routines are constructed and actions contradictory to the impression that the performance is designed to convey may be taken. The backstage in sexual

identity management would differ from person to person, according to who (if any) they have previously disclosed their sexual orientation; if no-one, the backstage could be seen to lie solely in the mind of the performer, or in places where they are anonymous and can be themselves; in the case of "disclosure disconnects" (Ragins, 2008), the backstage might be represented by the worker's personal life, with the performance being played in the workplace, and vice versa.

In conceptualizing the major influences on LGB workplace experiences using both Social Identity Theory and Dramaturgical Theory, a multi-layered framework emerges: the micro-level performance/impression management the LGB person uses in their coming out; the relational level influences from the audiences the LGB person plays the coming out routine to; the organizational level which makes up the setting that influences identity management; and the macro-level legislative and cultural context in which the person lives.

5.5 Power

As discussed above, the concept of Power unites and adds depth to the theoretical framework; it is a common theme that threads through each participant's interview, and through the theories outlined above used to analyse their experiences. It is a sprawling and complex topic; many authors (e.g. Foucault, 1975; Gramsci, 1971; Habermas, 1986; Weber, 1922) discuss different aspects of power, at different levels and in different contexts. Before focusing on the particular form of power that is of relevance in this context, I give a brief introduction to the concept.

An Overview of Power

As mentioned, power is a complex and multifaceted concept, about which many authors have theorized. Weber (1922: 212) defines power as "the ability of an individual or group to achieve their own goals or aims when others are trying to prevent them from realising them". He depicts power in two different ways: coercive power (that is gained through force), and authoritative power (gained through charisma, rationality or simply a tradition). Weber depicts power as being a "zero-sum game", that is, one person (using power) wins, while another person (against whom the power is being used) suffers an equivalent loss.

Parsons (1963), however, describes power as a "variable-sum game", wherein multiple and mutual gains and losses can be experienced by the powerful and the disempowered. Furthermore, he argues that coercion does not represent power; instead, power is a social resource, and represents the ability to use general societal resources to attain societal goals.

Foucault (1975, 1980) focuses much of his work on forms of power. Foucault (1980) argues that power is a constant, pervasive process within society, and is not concentrated in or possessed by one person or group, but is dispersed and omnipresent throughout society. Power, Foucault (1980: 131) argues, is linked with truth:

> *"Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of*
>
> *multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of*
>
> *power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general*
>
> *politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts*
>
> *and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances*
>
> *which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the*

means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true"

Foucault (1980) argues that power is based on knowledge; those in power make use of knowledge and in turn shape it to suit their own intentions. They do so through the use of discursive practices, e.g. constructions of morality, institutions, regulations, etc., and can use these *apparatus* to control the actions of others (Foucault, 1980; Hall, 1997). Below, a particular form of power, represented by a specific discourse (heteronormativity), is outlined.

Within the business and management domains, authors have focused on how power operates within organizations. In their review of the concept of power in management and organization science, Fleming and Spicer (2014), building on work by Dahl (1957), Bachrach and Baratz (1963), Lukes (1974), and Foucault (1977), identify four primary "faces" or dimensions of power, showing the multiple ways in which power manifests in the organization: *Coercion, Manipulation, Domination,* and *Subjectification*. The former two they refer to as episodic modes of influence, and are concerned with identifiable and distinct acts shaping another's behaviour. The latter two are referred to systemic, in that they are institutionally, ideologically or discursively engrained. Episodic power is more explicit and overt (e.g. ordering someone to do something), while systemic power is more subtle and covert (e.g. a culture or system where certain people are granted more power). The interview data did not contain much discussion surrounding episodic power (if it had, I expect it would take the form of homophobic jibes or blatant bullying); however, the systematic power

represented by hegemonic heteronormativity was a strong theme, and the domination and subjectification faces of power are therefore concentrated upon in this analysis.

The domination face of power represents influence that has become pervasive within the workplace (Fleming & Spicer, 2014). Instead of being openly and aggressively coercive or manipulative, domination "shapes our very preferences, attitudes and political outlook" (Fleming & Spicer, 2007: 19). The Domination face of power is where actors "establish influence through the construction of ideological values that become hegemonic" (Fleming & Spicer, 2014: 243).

The subjectification face of power is similar to, but distinct from, the Domination face. Whereas domination normalizes a particular social order, subjectification normalizes a particular way of being and acting within that order, and acts not on the organizational level, but on the individual level. This particular type of power, namely *hegemonic* power, was found to be of particular relevance in this study. In the next section, I focus on hegemonic power, and a particular form of it, *heteronormativity*, and how it relates to the experiences of the participants.

Hegemonic Power & Heteronormativity

The term hegemony (meaning the dominance of one group or state over another) is associated with the Marxist thinker Gramsci (1971), who refers to it as a relationship of power that is shaped by class. Other authors have broadened this and made reference to the power relations inherent in differences of gender, ethnicity and sexualities (Ludwig, 2012). Laclau and Mouffe (1985: xiii) define hegemony broadly, as "a relation where a particular group assumes the

representation of universality by universalizing a particularity". Similar to how Foucault (1980) describes power, Hall (1988: 44) discusses how hegemony is not a *direct* exertion of power on behalf of the dominant, but rather a more pervasive, omnipresent power:

> *"Ruling or dominant conceptions of the world [may] not directly prescribe the mental content of ... the heads of the dominated classes. But the circle of dominant ideas does accumulate the symbolic power to map or classify the world for others; its classifications do acquire not only the constraining power of dominance over other modes of thought but also the inertial authority of habit and instinct. It becomes the horizon of the taken-for granted: what the world is and how it works, for all practical purposes. Ruling ideas may dominate other conceptions of the social world by setting the limit to what will appear as rational, reasonable, credible, indeed sayable or thinkable, within the given vocabularies of motivate and action available to us".*

Hegemony, then, is an indirect form of power wherein a dominant group normalizes a particular way of being, and presents it as the natural and desirable state, the always-was and always-is.

The particular form of hegemonic power that I focus on in this research is that of heteronormativity, coined by Warner (1993), which assigns heterosexuality a privileged and idealised status while concurrently discrediting or denigrating non-heterosexual identities and acts. It is the "belief system underlying institutionalized heterosexuality [that] constitutes the dominant Western

paradigm in Western society (Ingraham, 2006: 309), where heterosexuality is "positioned as the cornerstone of the sex/gender system in which two sexes and two genders exist" (Giddings & Pringle, 2011: 92), and "the practices and institutions that legitimatize and privilege heterosexuality and heterosexual relationships as fundamental and "natural within society" (Gusmano, 2010: 2), thus positioning other sexualities as 'other' (Neary, 2013). Heteronormativity places heterosexual expression, values and practices as the natural, valued and preferred norm in society, and queer alternatives, including same-sex attraction and love, transgender or gender-variant identities, pansexuality or asexuality, are seen as deviant, discredited and aberrant. Heteronormativity is produced and reproduced by social interactions, cultural standards and institutionalized ideals in society (Kitzinger, 2005), and therefore, one may argue, in the workplace. As pointed out by Gusmano (2010), heteronorms are reproduced in our workplaces every day.

The concept has been known in other guises and definitions. Many authors, particularly within feminist literature (e.g. Butler, 1990; Hart, 1994; Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1990) have examined the crediting or normalizing of heterosexuality and the concurrent discrediting and de-normalizing of homosexuality. Rich (1980:1) discusses "compulsory heterosexuality", "through which lesbian experience is perceived on a scale ranging from deviant to abhorrent or simply rendered invisible", while Rubin uses the term "heterosexism" and Hart (1994) "heteropatriarchy". Butler (1990:151) discusses the "heterosexual matrix":

> *"a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender*
> *intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make*
> *sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable*

gender... that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined

through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality".

This is a particular form of Foucault's "truth": "the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true" (1980: 131). The heterosexual matrix presents a "reality" or "truth" that is produced and reproduced by those in power. Linking this concept to hegemony, in the broad sense outlined above, focuses heteronormativity/heterosexism/heteropatriarchy at the cultural level; hegemonic heteronormativity is compulsory heterosexuality as a dominant culture, wherein heterosexuality is the norm and homosexuality the discredited other, and it is at this level that I focus my analysis of power relations in the workplace.

A comparison can be made between the domination dimension of power (Fleming & Spicer, 2014) and the concept of heteronormativity, which is hegemonically engrained in our societal values and outlook, and is thus present and reproduced in our workplace culture and interactions, as noted by Gusmano (2010). Hegemonic heteronormativity forms the backdrop in front of which the actors play their part (Goffman, 1959), and these parts are played in order to gain or retain one's power. It also the context in which one's social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1985) is both created and judged, with certain social identities having more power than others; such as how the LGB employee has the disempowered social identity of the Stranger (Simmel, 1908).

The Domination face of power represents influence that has become hegemonic within the workplace (Fleming & Spicer, 2014). Instead of being openly and aggressively coercive or manipulative, Domination "shapes our very preferences, attitudes and political outlook" (Fleming & Spicer, 2007: 19). The Domination face of power is where actors 'establish influence through the construction of

ideological values that become hegemonic' (Fleming & Spicer, 2014: 243). Clear comparisons with this dimension of power and the concept of heteronormativity can be drawn, which is hegemonically engrained in our societal values and outlook, and is thus present and reproduced in our workplace culture and interactions. This is akin to Foucault's (1980) analysis of how discursive practices are used to shape knowledge to gain power.

The Subjectification face of power is similar to but distinct from the Domination face. Whereas Domination normalizes a particular social order (and is here represented by a heteronormative societal culture), Subjectification normalizes a particular way of being and acting within that order, and acts not on the organizational level but on the individual level. I use the Subjectification face of power to interpret the participants' recollections of interactions with other people in their workplace, and see how these individual level communications embody and reinforce the dominant heteronormative culture. Subjectification in this research project manifested as heteroprofessionalism.

Heteroprofessionalism

A particular manifestation of heteronormativity in the workplace is *heteroprofessionalism*. The term was introduced by Mizzi (2013) to refer to the use of heteronormative values as a tool to regulate the behaviours of individuals in organizations, where being "professional" is linked, through these ideals, to being heterosexual. Professionalism is seen by some as a set of norms that an organisation (through the influence of its power) can subtly mandate its employees to align with (Mizzi, 2016). However, professionalism can become entrenched with the dominant heteronormative workplace culture, to the point

that "professionalism", in and of itself, becomes a way of replicating heteronorms in the workplace (Mizzi, 2013, 2016). For example, heteroprofessionalism may be seen in the recent (2015) UK Parliament committee debate about mandated dress codes for female employees; with firms like British Airways expecting female cabin staff to wear high heels and not wear trousers (CIPD, 2016).

Heteroprofessionalism is characterised in this study as an example of the Subjectification face of power (Fleming & Spicer, 2014), where particular "correct" ways of being and acting within a hegemonic culture (the domination face, represented here by heteronormativity) are asserted and maintained. It is also reminiscent of the work of authors within the "Discursive Approach" of studying workplace identity (described in Chapter 3), which focuses on the role of ideology and dominant discourses in affecting one's identity.

Hegemonic heteronormativity was present in many of the participants' workplace experiences; while Chapter 6 focuses in particular on how it manifests in the workplace (including how heteroprofessionalism was observed), this prevalent power forms the context in which the findings presented in the following chapters are based.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that has influenced the analysis of the semi-structured interview data. A pragmatic pluralist approach (Watson, 1997) was taken; a number of different theories lent depth and nuance to the interpretation. Dramaturgical theory allows one to view identity and its management as a performance; social identity theory shows how identity is as

much a relational construction as it is an individual one; and the Stranger theory demonstrates how a particular type of identity performance may be placed upon, or actively assumed by, certain people in the workplace. The theories interconnected and related to each other through the overarching analytic lens of power, which manifested as hegemonic heteronormativity.

An overview of the findings from the analysis of the data is given next. After, a chapter is devoted to each of the four major strands of these findings: Chapter 6, Heteronormativity and the LGB employee as the Stranger, which reflects the power relations inherent in the workplace experiences of LGB employees, and the use of the Stranger concept to analyse these experiences; Chapter 7, Identity Management at Different Levels, where the management of one's identity in different aspects of one's life is explored; Chapter 8, Differing Identity Management Strategies, which presents a framework of archetypical strategies of identity management in the workplace using Dramaturgical theory as an analytic lens, and Chapter 9, the Role of LGBT Networks in Identity Management, where Social Identity Theory is used to explore how these groups interact with power and identity management of LGB employees in the workplace.

Chapter 6. Heteronormativity and The Stranger

"It's astonishing the amount of time that certain straight people devote to gay sex - trying to determine what goes where and how often. They can't imagine any system outside their own, and seem obsessed with the idea of roles, both in bed and out of it. Who calls whom a bitch? Who cries harder when the cat dies? Which one spends the most time in the bathroom?"

David Sedaris[vii]

6.1 Introduction

The first major strand of findings discussed here is in relation to how LGB employees are a form of the Stranger (Simmel, 1908). This is linked to the concept of heteronormativity, an ideological belief that positions heterosexuality as the desired norm, while homosexuality is portrayed as the deviant other. I use Fleming & Spicer's *Faces of Power* framework (outlined in the previous chapter) as an analytical lens in this chapter, to explore how heteronormativity manifested for the research participants I interviewed, and how it positioned them as a form of Stranger (Simmel, 1908) in their workplace.

6.2 Heteronormativity as Experienced by LGB Workers in Ireland

As argued by Kitzinger (2005) and Gusmano (2010), heteronormativity is produced and reproduced in the workplace. In this section, I explore how the participants experience this hegemonic power. I look at examples of discriminatory incidents and social mores that disfavour LGB identities and experiences and present heterosexuality as the preferred norm.

Some of the participants described blatant and visible manifestations of heteronormativity, while others discussed how it was subtly and culturally woven in the fabric of their organizations. The former is discussed here first.

Heteronormative Incidents

Of the former, Geraldine (39), who works in the professional services industry, discusses an incident of homophobic harassment she experienced after coming out that was both sexually and heteronormatively related:

> *"One evening I had a particularly negative, nasty experience with one of the senior people in the firm. He sort of indicated that he would fix me, and sort me out: "don't be bothering with that kind of nonsense" kind of thing, "you're far too pretty" kind of stuff"* **– Geraldine**

As well as sexual harassment, the incident was also a heteronormative act, with the discrediting of her lesbian identity and the contention that women must conform to a certain sexual identity. The incident suggests underlying systemic power, in that the senior colleague presumably felt that the culture of the organisation (systemic power) allowed behaviour such as this. Claire (49), a HR manager, faced a similar discrediting of her lesbian identity in her workplace. As outlined above, in Claire's organization, office celebrations (a lunchtime party and a cake) take place when an employee gets married, but when Claire married her female partner, no such event occurred, and her marriage was ignored. Claire discusses her feelings on the matter:

> *"[T]here's no obligation to have them so you can't sort of say I've been discriminated against, it's really subtle, but you feel it...and then like, a month later a [heterosexual] colleague was getting married, and there was a big thing about him, and tea and cake in the office and mine was blatantly*

ignored… [It] kind of hurt actually. That hurts. Because it

was deliberate, that was a deliberate thing to do" – **Claire**

The quotes above show how heteronormativity can manifest in the social relations of a workplace. As Claire points out, she felt she couldn't make a formal complaint, as she could with an overt example of discrimination, because it was a discretionary, culturally bound ritual (Erhardt, Martin-Rios & Heckscher, 2016; Schein, 1992). However, the sentiment behind the incident and the feelings Claire experienced as a result were felt just as strongly as an overt case of discrimination; the message sent by the colleagues was that Claire's same-sex marriage was of lesser importance or validity than that of her straight colleague's. While her organization is legally obliged to treat LGB employees equitably, social relations are harder to police, and so heteronormativity, in its many subtle guises, can be harder to detect and eliminate. In contrast to Claire's story, however, Áine has a better experience when she entered into a civil partnership (CP) with her partner:

"...we did the CP last year at short notice, for tax reasons, the

three of us brought three friends, wasn't a big deal, I said it

the day before we went to do it, it came up – 'what are you

doing tomorrow?', 'oh we're doing a civil partnership' – [my

colleague] burst into tears: 'we've no time to get a present!',

you know, so very lovely" – **Áine**

Unlike Claire's experience, Áine's civil partnership was celebrated by the staff in her workplace. These contrasting stories highlight the variability in experiences that one may go through in different workplaces (or perhaps even different

sections of the workplace); one may be fortunate in finding a cohort of colleagues that is accepting of LGB identities, while in other cases one may not be so fortunate. It may be hard for outsiders or prospective employees to figure out how they, having an LGB identity, would be treated in a particular workplace. This possible variation in colleagues' reactions also highlights the importance of the *Ascertainment Period*, discussed in Chapter 7, wherein the LGB participants mentioned how they chose to 'suss out' their workplace, in relation to its acceptance of LGB people, before deciding whether or not to integrate their sexual identity into their workplace identity. As each workplace could be different in terms of its culture and the staff's acceptance of LGB people, the Ascertainment Period is a necessary time where the new employee finds this out.

Except for Geraldine's and Claire's experience above, discrimination was mostly suspected, but not outrightly confirmed, by the participants in this research. This subtle discrimination leads to a situation where the participants felt they couldn't make a complaint, in case there were wrong about their being discriminated against, or if they felt they didn't have enough evidence. For example, Shane recounts how he believes he may have been fired from his workplace because he was gay:

> *"I'm going to say something to you now, and I have no proof*
>
> *for it, but I think I lost my job in [a previous organization],*
>
> *because of [being gay]…I came out a year before it. It suited*
>
> *me at the time, cus I was planning on going to Australia for a*
>
> *year anyway, and they made me redundant. So I got a few*
>
> *quid, and went off to Australia, a lot better off that I was*
>
> *gonna be, so I had no intention of challenging. But, I suspect,*

I have nothing other than suspicion, that that's what happened... I have no doubt [that it was the type of place where it could feasibly happen], it was a family owned firm, and I'd say I would have been seen as bad for business. [I was client-facing] and dealing with a lot of builders and stuff like that. So they just wouldn't have taken a chance" – **Shane**

Similarly, Amy also wonders if she was made redundant because of her sexuality:

"...[my boss] decided that he was gonna bring somebody else in to do a similar role to myself, cus they were getting more business, so what he did was, he brought somebody in on an internship, 3 to 6 months... and then he told me, 'oh there's no job for you anymore, the only thing that you can do now are just invoices, cus there's no role for you anymore', and I was like, 'what are you talking about, there's loads of work, what are you talking about?' And he was like 'that's life, off you go. Off you pop'. So I was like, [it] could have been two things, well it was two things, one, either she was going to get paid and I was going to get paid, and he wanted to cut costs and save money with his business, and two, he didn't gel with me therefore he gelled with her better. Was it because I wasn't going to be laughing at all his jokes and patting him on the back, you know. I just felt like, I wonder was it the whole gay thing that I got made redundant?" – **Amy**

A recurring theme in both Shane and Amy's stories is the idea of the discredited

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LGBT identity in comparison to the favoured heterosexual identity – in Brian's case the latter manifested in the family-owned aspect of the business and the machismo of their clients, while Amy's was a more direct comparison between herself and the replacement person that she trained. This discrediting is one aspect of the hegemonic heteronormative power (Butler, 1990; Hart, 1994; Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1990) that I concentrate on in this chapter. While it is possible that these participants were not fired because of their sexuality, but rather for another reason(s), these stories highlight that heteronormativity is both perceived in the workplace, and seen as a factor that could influence one's career. With this is mind, it's easy to see how gay men, lesbians or bisexual people may decide to stay away from certain respective professions or workplaces, if they feel that the heteronormativity inherent in them would affect their success at work or make them feel marginalized or excluded. For example, Geraldine, the head of her organization's LGBT network, discusses a gay colleague:

> *"One of our guys whose in our network here…[he's] probably*
> *about 22…when he was applying for jobs, all his mates at*
> *university said, 'you'll never get a job there, you're way too*
> *gay', they were like 'you won't fit in there!' and he was like*
> *'well I don't think that should stop me"* **– Geraldine**

Geraldine's quote shows how certain industries may be seen as inherently heteronormative, in this case, the professional services industry, to the point where people feel that LGBT people may face problems actually gaining employment in them because they will be discriminated against.

Kate faced the isolation and marginalization characteristic of being the Stranger, and experienced heteronormative harassment, in one workplace, and links to the

overall culture of the region she was working in as much as to the organization she was working for:

"I worked [in a] call centre, and I found that the people there, the staff and management, were lacking education, information on the LGBT side of it, and I even had managers pass ridiculous comments to me, and actually pause and wait for an answer when another ten people sat at their desks waiting for an answer too, and I found that that kind of made my working environment really uncomfortable, and it was down to management not providing information, and also HR not knowing how to handle it either...But I put that down to small town syndrome, you know, and there's very few gays in the town as such, so employers don't really know how to, but I found that really hard to work with, especially from where I was coming from with employment as well, from educated open-minded people who worked a huge amount of the community, to then work in this tiny little call-centre with such closed-off people and just didn't know how to deal with me. I got asked the most obscure questions, and that probably put me off working in that environment or anything like it again, down to those kind of people. It actually discouraged me from working in the...area as well... I left because I was put under an awful lot of pressure and I was segregated from people, I found I was constantly lonely and on my own, so yeah, it's a pity" **– Kate**

She believes that the workplace has a role to play in combating heteronormativity against LGB employees, by something as simple as mentioning LGB people in their welcome pack:

> *"not touch on it excessively, but just highlight it, so then everyone in the room knows that LGBT [people] are respected in this work environment, so don't go out to disrespect them, I think something as simple as that would really make a huge difference. Especially when I'm sitting there and people are like 'why did you come to [X], sure you're from [Y], what your fella's name?' and you're like 'it's [female name]...' and they're like 'that's not a fella's name' and then they take a few minutes and they're like 'oh, it's a girl' and then that's it, nobody wants to have a cigarette with me out in the smoking area because they don't know how to approach it. So like, where if it was kind of brought up in the introduction then I think people have it in their head like, 'lesbian gay bisexual transgender...'"*–
> **Kate**

Similarly, the heteronormativity present in Amy's workplace also manifested in the social relations, like when she was discussing the upcoming same-sex marriage referendum in Ireland with a colleague:

> *"So [my colleague] turned round and said 'oh the thing is Amy, people need to educated [about same sex marriage]', and I was like 'yeah I know', he was like 'with two same sex people, if two same sex people have a child, I mean,*

there's no father, there's no father figure in the scenario or

family', and I was like 'of course there is, and of course

there would be, cus people realise that there's going to be

granddads, there's going to be uncles', and I just thought it

was the most ridiculous, that's what he said it was, he said

people need to be educated and can't just like not have any

motherly figure or any fatherly figure for the child" **– Amy**

Heteronormative Culture

Other participants discussed how the culture of the organization, rather than colleagues' interactions, characterised their LGB identities as illegitimate and discredited. Liam's experience of being in a heteronormative workplace eventually led to him leaving his job. He describes how the culture of his former workplace positioned him, as a gay man, on the margins:

"I didn't fit the mould for there…The mould would have been

very much squeaky clean… no head above the parapet, no

drawing attention to yourself…very grey. Ordinarily I would

not have been boisterous… I think, had either one aspect,

either my sexuality, or my ethnicity or religion been at issue,

they have been tolerated, but both together, the confluence of

that was not going to be tolerated" **– Liam**

Liam's workplace maintained a heteronormative influence that categorized being gay as aberrant, and this made him feel marginalized. Claire shares a similar feeling

"You can very much feel like "the only gay in the village" if you haven't got a gay or lesbian colleague around you" –
Claire

Along with Liam's minority religion, his homosexuality made him a deviant in this work environment, which culturally espoused heteronormative ideals. Shane similarly believed that an organization he worked in previously was somewhat heteronormative:

"Organizationally it's fairly conservative ... I always had a sense that the gay guy in the pool of [people in the same role]...would be discriminated against in…that …you weren't…one of the people that'd be promoted into management…That was just my perception of it" – **Shane**

Amy also finds her workplace culture to be heteronormative, and explains how it can sometimes affect her work:

"I don't find it's actually easy to be in sales as a gay person, because when you're in sales, they don't buy from whatever you're selling, they're buying from you, so it's [about how] you get on with people … so it's all about your personal life as well … I find there's something a little bit different about getting the rapport with people, because they're quite kind of girly or they've brown tan…It's totally different to me…because they're talking about their boyfriends...and I think it can be a little bit difficult" – **Amy**

In Amy's workplace, heteronormative expression and interactions, such as traditionally feminine presentation and discussions about their opposite-sex partners, were the standard way of forming a relationship with a buyer, and Amy felt her work could suffer because she couldn't comfortably take part in these relations. Similarly, Alan found that his work was affected because of the heteronormative environment he was in, but, in his case, with possibly positive consequences:

> *"I do think I would be more driven to prove myself [because I'm gay], and I think that can help you in your career, or certainly help you get promoted, I think to some extent I probably made more of an effort to be acknowledged, and to do well, and I think that can be associated with your sexuality…I think [I have] to prove that as a gay man I can do just as well as anyone else, especially in a male environment, where a lot of the time, you might get a bit of negativity about you know, "aw sure he's gay, he's grand leave him out there [doing menial tasks]" or something, you wouldn't be able to manage the men or look after the [machinery]…or stuff like that, and I always felt I could do it and part of me wanted to prove it, so I would have probably made a greater effort" –*
> **Alan**

Aoife (38) faced institutionalized heteronormativity when she attempted to apply for parental leave when her partner had children. When her request was denied, she told her workplace she was taking legal action, and:

"within minutes they came back to my boss to say, 'yeah ... we can sort this out, we can sort this out', and they rang me to say, 'oh no sorry that was just an error, and we didn't know how to put you down, what category to put you in', and I said, 'what category to put me in?', and they said 'well, [when] parental leave is given – there is a kind of definition of what parental leave should be, that it's you know, a parent or someone who'd adopting a child or someone who is in loco parentis, a guardian or whatever, so we can slip you in that you're the guardian of the children" **– Aoife**

Aoife, Amy and Laura's stories highlight the heteronormative contexts in which they were working. In Aoife's case, her workplace's policies and forms did not contain an option for same-sex, non-biological parents and, in addition, rather than rectify the issue and grant Aoife the parental leave, her workplace's first decision was to deny it to her.

Heteroprofessionalism

As discussed in Chapter 5, heteroprofessionalism (Mizzi, 2013) refers to heteronormative values influencing the construction of "professionalism" in the workplace. The concept of corporate heteronormativity arose during the inductive coding of interview data in this project, as participants discussed how the culture of the dominant workplace group had impacted on their identity management. For example, as mentioned above, Amy discusses her impressions of heteronormativity in her working environment and how it impacts on the relationships she has with her colleagues and clients:

"I find there's something a little bit different about getting the rapport with people, because they're quite kind of girly or they've brown tan…It's totally different to me…because they're talking about their boyfriends...and I think it can be a little bit difficult" **- Amy**

Similarly, Claire (49) discusses how her impressions of the heteronormativity that she feels is present in professional workplaces affect her choice of workplace:

'I'll put it to you this way, I'm not going to go to any of these places, like Ernst and Young or any of these places, in a skirt, I'm not going to go in all dolled up, like a dolly bird, you know what I mean' **– Claire**

Amy and Claire sensed that they were different in fundamental ways from the environments they are discussing, and that to fit into them (and be "professional") one must change their social identity, dress and expression in ways more agreeable to the heteronormative standards they see to be common in these organisations and overall professions.

Brendan (39), who had moved into a corporate setting from an artistic, liberal workplace, talked about how he wanted in the first few weeks to keep his sexual orientation a secret, and changed his behaviour to appear less camp:

"...now I was going into proper big corporate world, and I was very unsure about myself going into that. And I suppose I really played myself down, I wore

quite conservative clothes, tried to be as unanimated

as possible, keep my voice a little bit lower, and I was

very conscious of how camp I could be" – **Brendan**

For Brendan, the idea of being corporate was equated to being heterosexual, traditional and conservative – heteronormativity set a standard of behaviour that he felt he had to follow in order to succeed in his new job, and curbed his agency in his identity management strategy. Similarly, Emma (27) discusses 'the professional face' and how it impacts on her identity management:

"Work is obviously the one element where you're

more likely not to be out, and disclose information

about yourself, because you want to hold this kind of

professional face…[the professional face is] going to

work, doing your work, going home, you know. It's

being über-professional, not talking about your

personal life, it's just talking about work, and

everything around work". - Emma

Emma's quote shows how the concept of acting "professional" disallows any discussion surrounding sexuality. While this could be equally be applied to heterosexual workers, LGB workers suffer more from the censorship because they are in the statistical minority; when heteronormativity presume everyone to be straight, the consequence of these heteroprofessional limits on behaviour and speech is LGB identity erasure. Heteroprofessionalism can be likened to a performance by which one maintains the "professional identity" or, as Emma calls it, "the professional face". The data gathered did not explain *why*

professionalism appeared to come with an in-built heteronormative element. However, this finding suggests that LGB employees perceive cultural and societal barriers in the reconciliation of their sexual identity and their professional identity. This may of course be a sort of implicit bias on the part of these participants, who feel they would be forced to dress or express themselves in such a manner if they were to enter such an organisation or professions, because they have actually been inside it, while in reality, experiences within the workplace may be more varied and one's expression may be less immutable as these participants think. The end result may be the same however; the findings presented here suggest that those on the outside of particular organizations or professions feel that their identities or expressions would not be welcomed or even tolerated, and that they would have to conform to a particular, heteronormatively-tinged way of acting. One could broaden this finding to other employee groups, who may feel that that particular professions or organisations are, for example, male-dominated or comprised mostly of white employees, and that their own possibly marginalised identity would not be welcome there. The onus may therefore be on the workplace themselves to show to outsiders (if it is indeed true) that in reality, expression of identities is freer than people think.

As explored in Chapter 2, *Person-Organisation fit* (*P-O fit*) 'the congruence between employees' values and those of their workplace organization' (Velez & Moradi, 2012) suggests that while having support in place for LGB employees will improve how they perceive their fit with the organisation (and thus reduce their intention to leave the organisation), having a heteronormative climate will not alter it. One can only conjecture as to why this might be, however the findings presented in this chapter, and the other findings chapters, suggest that

the choice available to LGB employees to use a concealing or dodging strategy in a workplace they feel is heteronormative (and thus escape discrimination or marginalisation) means that they may feel more confident in their ability to stay in their job. This may also be related, as shown in Chapter 7, to a number of influences on other levels, as well as the role they are doing itself. For example, while Brendan (an IT consultant), was able to change his presentation to appear more traditionally heterosexual, Amy's sales role required a lot of personal information to be conveyed in to form a rapport with customer. This suggests that the actual functions and duties of the job itself may be a factor in determining how well an LGB employee will fit in with an organisation, especially one that has a hegemonically engrained culture of heteronormativity. Additionally, if one believes that there might not be a better, more supportive workplace out there, this may reduce their intentions to leave their current job. The perceived fit between the organisation and the LGB employee is, as shown above, multi-faceted and complex; more research is required to isolate and study each individual level and aspect.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the role of heteronormativity in the identity management of LGB employees, and how it manifests through the cultural and social aspects of the workplace. The Stranger concept (Simmel, 1908) is used to explain the feelings of marginalization and exclusion that the participants reported when at work. Their experiences ranged from blatant heteronormativity, where their LGB identities were positioned as 'other' through social interactions with colleagues, to more subtle, cultural manifestations. The latter involved the

proclivity of heteroprofessionalism (Mizzi, 2013) to regulate and standardize particular modes of behaviour and presentation that were consistent with heteronormative ideals, and pressured some of the participants into worrying about their dress or expression at work.

Heteronormativity and heteroprofessionalism is presented here as a negative influence on the identity management of LGB employees. As well as factoring in the individual, relational and collective aspects of their identity when managing it (as shown in Chapter 7), they are also required to think about a hegemonic culturally-bound heteronormative organizational climate, and take into account the engrained standards that this holds.

Chapter 9 examines a possible antidote, in part, to being the Stranger in the workplace: the LGBT network. The next chapter discusses identity management, and how one manages this Stranger identity.

Chapter 7. Identity Management at Different Levels

"Coming out is the most political thing you can do."

Harvey Milk[viii]

7.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the many influences on identity management in the workplace, and how identity management, in turn, affects the workplace experiences of LGBT employees. A multi-level analysis (Rousseau, 1985) is taken, showing the influences on identity management at different levels. This is likened here to the multiple identities, or aspects of identity, that one has (Brewer & Gardner, 1996), and the various aspects of Goffman's (1959) Dramaturgical metaphor (see Figure 15)

An advantage of using semi-structured interviews is the depth and richness of the
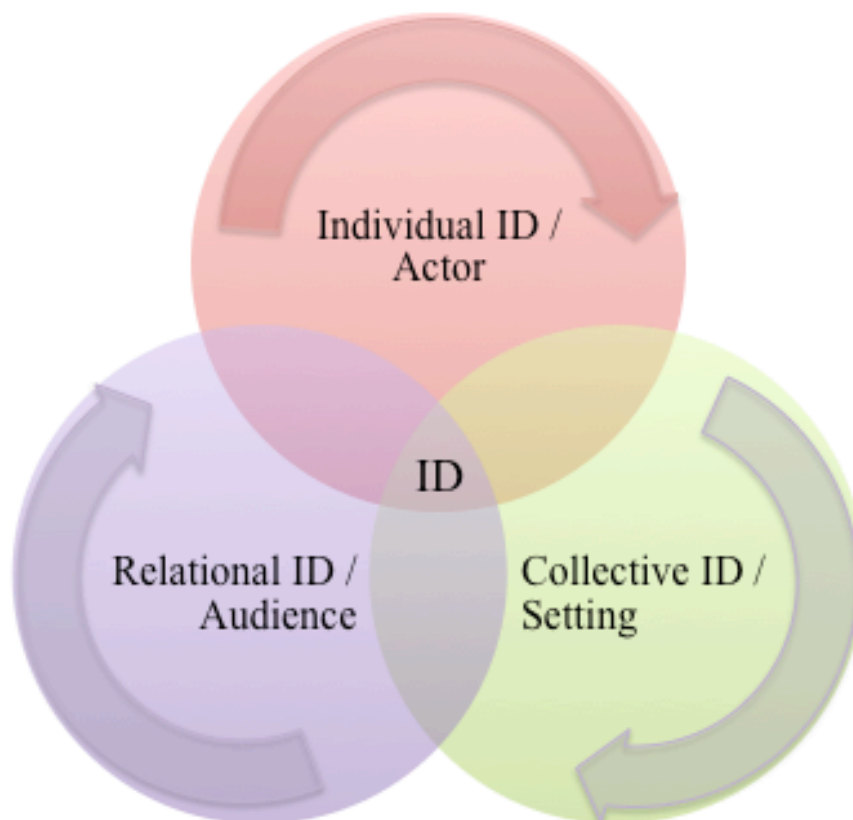
Figure 15 The multi-layered framework of LGB identity management in the workplace. Developed with reference to Goffman (1959), Rousseau (1985), and Brewer and Gardner (1996).

data that can be obtained (Bryman & Bell, 2011), and this showed in the nuanced

and complex identity management considerations that were relayed by the participants. Far from being a simple question of whether or not to come out in the workplace, a multi-layered process, complete with many facets and aspects, emerged. As explored in Chapter 3, Identity is considered not just at the individual level, but also at the group and collective level, and this emerged from the analysis of the data. This was also reminiscent of Rousseau's (1985) focus on analysing organizational phenomena at multiple levels. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory can also be superimposed on this framework, adding extra insight and analysis. The resulting framework, shown in Figure 15, shows how identity management is comprised of a number of interacting layers. The individual identity, composed of one's own concept of themselves (Sedikides & Brewer, 2015); the relational identity, made up of the self-concept one derives from their interpersonal interactions with others; and the collective identity, the self-concept one derives from their membership of a group (Brewer & Gardner, 1996) are each distinct aspects of the entire identity, and each of these aspects requires on-going management. The individual aspect also represents the level of the actor (Goffman, 1959), who managers their own identity in front of an audience (relational aspect) in a particular setting (collective aspect).

Factors such as the perceived organizational culture and support, relations with family and friends, and one's own agency in disclosing affected the identity management strategies of the participants. The interacting layers that make up organizations (Rousseau, 1985) are emphasized. This chapter explores the interplay, complexity and fluidity of these layers and how it affects the identity management of LGB employees.

7.2 Individual and Relational level: Work Life/Personal Life Overlap

A consideration not well represented in the literature on identity management is the degree to which one's work life interacts with one's personal life, and how this might affect the identity being portrayed in the work environment, as well as the power relations that are inherent when there is a "disclosure disconnect" (Ragins, 2008). Ragins (2008) discusses disclosure disconnects in the US context, where one discloses one's possibly stigmatized identity at work but not at home, or vice versa. The dichotomy may be less clean-cut for Irish people, who live amongst a much smaller and tight-knit population, or indeed, for anyone who regularly uses social networking sites, where private information may be more readily accessed.

For example, Amy (34) previously worked in the banking industry, where her father had also worked and was still well known. She felt she couldn't come out in her workplace because she had not yet disclosed her sexual orientation to her parents, and was afraid that they would find out through mutual contacts:

> *"I did say it to a few friends, but I wasn't out, so probably I didn't want to hurt his feelings if he heard back 'oh your daughter's gay and she's working in the bank', I didn't know how he'd react"* **– Amy**

Amy's quote demonstrates an aspect of identity management that is particularly relevant in smaller countries like Ireland. While in this case it was her father who had worked with her colleagues, it is not unlikely, given Ireland's small population and clustered urban areas, that there are only a small number of degrees of separation between one's work colleagues and one's non-work

friends, and family. Similarly, Kate (28) felt that she had to tell her boss, with whom she had a good relationship, about her sexual identity before someone else did, and because her family hadn't accepted her after she came out:

> *"In case anyone, well in case [someone else] knew me or it came to his attention, I'd like him to know first, just in case, you know people can be sneaky. And also because I had an extremely hard coming out, I actually lost my family, and the majority of my friends by coming out. And at the time, my mother kicked me out of my house, and it was the 17th December, so it was just a week before Christmas, and I had nowhere to go, and I had to, the only place I could go was actually [my girlfriend's] house... so I had to go and explain to him in more detail and where I was going"* – **Kate**

In these scenarios, the power that the LGB employee has in managing their identity is lessened or lost; if a larger disconnect was in place between one's work identity and one's non-work identity, one could reasonably assume that one could manage their identities separately and distinctly. However, when the line between these two locations blur, the power to do this may be lost. Both Kate and Amy's relationships with their families, and how they managed their identities at home, influenced how they managed their identities in the workplace. Áine, who represents her organisation in the media a lot, discusses how being in the spotlight has led her to consider her identity management carefully:

"I do a lot of media, we get over 120 a year, so let's see, say I do at least half of them, print, TV, radio, and about once or twice a year there might be something that's a personal profile piece, and I've never [come out], I nearly did it last year, and I was sitting on the fence whether to come out or not... And I've really looked at that and thought OK, what are the implications, what are the pros and cons of coming out or not. And in terms of my personal life, there's no cons, cus everybody knows who matters, I'm very comfortable, and particular in having a son, you know, we've gotta be out there, completely proud and comfortable with our family and our relationship. And the one thing that has paused me is I would often debate [conservative organisations and people], and I just think, do I want him to know that about me, does it make any difference, would he use it? And if he did, what would it mean, and you know, he probably wouldn't, cus it shouldn't come up, but it's the one thing that's given me pause for thought" – **Áine**

Amy, Kate, and Áine's quotes above include both the hesitancy to come out at work but also an undertone of on-going fear by some LGB workers regarding potential disclosure of their sexuality by others in organizations (for instance, colleagues, peers), who may "out" an LGB colleague before they are ready or willing to disclose their identity themselves, whether it be through friendly chat

(Amy) or through more malicious intent (Kate: "people can be sneaky").

Similarly, Fintan (26), a teacher, was angered when he was outed by a colleague:

> *"a teacher that knew me really well, told my students of*
> *mine that I was gay, and I'd be happier if I had a*
> *partner, totally out of the blue with no reason…it*
> *annoyed me a lot because it was somebody I work really*
> *close with, and there was no reason for this person to*
> *have said what they did say, so it really pissed me off"* **–**
> **Fintan**

This incident is particularly noteworthy because, at the time it occurred, Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act allowed religious-run institutions like Fintan's school to formally discriminate against employees if they didn't fit its religious ethos. Claire faced a similar situation:

> *"I was outed in the job … because I was seen, I think,*
> *coming out of the George (LGBT club), or wherever it*
> *was, so I was outed there, and that also you've lost a*
> *bit of control when that happens…"* **– Claire**

The intrusion into one's personal privacy in the workplace and the fear of being outed are real concerns for the LGB population at work, with their identity management not completely in their own power, but also in the hands of colleagues at work. Such acts by others in outing an LGB colleague, innocently or maliciously, affect the LGB worker's identity management, in that it may force them to counterfeit, avoid or integrate their identity before they are ready to do so in the work environment. This, in turn, could affect their relationships with

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co-workers, with superiors, and with customers. The act of "outing" someone is ultimately one of power; the person doing the outing has the power that their knowledge brings, while those who are outed at work are in effect losing the power to manage their identity. This dynamic is made possible by the underlying hegemonic heteronormativity in place in many Irish workplaces, wherein non-heterosexual identities are given a discredited or deviant status; if these identities were not seen as deviant, there would be no power to be had in knowing that a colleague is lesbian, gay or bisexual and in the closet, and thus outing would lose its potency.

As Claire (49), who set up and chairs an LGBT network in her organization, mentions above, she was outed because her work life and non-work life overlapped when she was seen leaving an LGBT club. She further outlines this division between one's work life and one's non-work life when she mentions how a number of employees did not want to join the group; some because they weren't out to everyone in their work life, but also some because they weren't out in their non-work life:

> *"People are just not - either not out at home or they're*
> *just not out at work, we found that actually, when we*
> *were setting up the LGBT network in there, that we were*
> *aware of no end of gay and lesbian staff, but they're not*
> *out and they won't join the network either…they just*
> *won't talk about it"* **– Claire**

Seemingly subtle discriminatory actions also provide indications to LGB workers regarding their status and acceptance in the work place. As mentioned above, in

Claire's (49) organization, small office celebrations take place when an employee gets married, but did this not occur when Claire married her female partner. Claire discusses her feelings on the matter:

"[T]here's no obligation to have them so you can't sort of say I've been discriminated against, it's really subtle, but you feel it…and then like, a month later a colleague was getting married, and there was a big thing about him, and tea and cake in the office and mine was blatantly ignored… [it] kind of hurt actually" **– Claire**

Public celebrations such as weddings or civil partnerships are relatively new in the LGBT community; employees marrying their same sex partner are now faced with new identity management challenges, and new methods of discrimination against them. Furthermore, these are new challenges for workplaces that may have difficulty in deciding whether or not to publicize celebrations such as these, in case they draw unwanted attention to the employee's sexual orientation. There is therefore a delicate equilibrium in place in these changing times, between highlighting their support for their LGB employees, and ensuring that these employees are still comfortable in the workplace. As Chapter 8 shows, there are many different ways in which one might integrate or separate their identities in the workplace. Brendan's (39) story especially highlights this. An IT consultant in a medium-sized organization, he discusses when he met another gay person in his workplace:

"There's very few openly out gay men working in my organization, there's only one that I'm aware of. And he was at the party ... and he came running up to me, screaming 'oh my god, oh my god, you're the other gay, so nice to meet you!' and I was like 'OK, hi, nice to meet you', and then he turns around to this big group of people in the organization that I'd never met before and goes 'Hey everyone, this is another gay! Finally I'm not the only gay in the office!' Now I grabbed him, and I reefed him off to the side and I said 'you f**king little s**t, I am not the other gay; I am Brendan, the consultant...who happens to be gay. I've never meet these people before, you don't go and introduce me round as being gay'. I was pretty much... there was no problem with being gay, but I was a little bit pissed off that people's first impression of me... was not what my technical abilities were or what my professional abilities were, it was that I was 'a gay'" –*
Brendan

Brendan's story captures well how different people approach identity management differently in the workplace; for his colleague, being gay appears to be a primary facet of his workplace identity, whereas Brendan's choice was to downplay his being gay in favour of his work-related capabilities.

All of the quotes above demonstrate the complex blurring between one's personal life and one's work life; the choice whether or not to maintain the "disclosure disconnect" (Ragins, 2008) differs from person to person, and is not always

possible, in some cases because others outed them, in others because it was difficult to keep the separation from work and home. To borrow from Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical analogy, the *settings* in which the different performances take place can begin to merge together, making the juggling of identity performances more and more difficult.

7.3 Organizational Level: The Ascertainment Period & Voice

The Ascertainment Period

Participants discussed how, before and when just entering a workplace for the first time, they would take some time to determine whether the organization was friendly towards LGBT people in general, and in the meantime would either pretend to be straight (the *fabrication* (Button, 2004) or *counterfeiting* (Woods, 1993) strategy) or would dodge or circumvent discussion possibly pertaining to sexuality (*avoidance* (Button, 2004; Woods, 1993)). While the latter option is not as active a performance (Goffman, 1959) as the former, because heterosexuals make up the statistical majority, the avoidance strategy is in effect passively performing as straight. The time taken by participants to ensure that their working environment is safe to come out in is here termed the *Ascertainment Period.* The Ascertainment Period is where you, as Claire (49) describes:

"*kind of feel your way around*".

Donna (24) discusses why she attended a meeting of the LGBT employee group in the large multinational company she worked in:

> *"just to see how many people would have been out in that kind of environment…more to kinda dip my toe in the water and see what kind of acceptance there was there".*

The Ascertainment Period allows the worker to work out the extent to which the *setting* and *audience* in/to which they will be performing (in Goffman's terms), i.e. during their daily work routines, is LGB-friendly. After Ascertaining whether or not a particular setting is friendly to LGB employees, the person then determines whether to reveal or not. This finding is similar to Ragins (2008), who explored the antecedents of one disclosing their stigmatized identity in the workplace. She finds that the anticipated consequences of disclosing, as well as environmental factors such as the presence of similar others and institutional support, affected the decision to disclose.

LGB identity management can be referred to as a process rather than a single event, as one constantly meets new people and therefore makes the decision to come out or not to them. This is true in the organization also; one may have come out to close work colleagues, or one's team, but others in different teams or departments may not know. In this way, one may have to ascertain the supportiveness of a number of environments within the workplace if they wish to come out there. John's discussion of coming out in his workplace resembles this idea of continual ascertainment:

> *"I…took probably gradual steps to this point, but it was always making sure that everything was being*

checked along the way, and that I wasn't doing too

much, too fast, too soon."

Similarly, Fintan (26) talks about ascertaining and how it affects him:

"I think that's why I left [coming out] so long

because I was really....scouting out what it was

gonna be like, and trying to measure up the

situation and trying to avoid it being huge, and I

think I don't know if drawing it out was the right

thing to do, but it made it easier for me ...I have

found myself checking how I act or how I talk to

strangers, when I don't know them...just in case

they might be homophobic" **– Fintan**

Fintan's continual ascertainment of new people was related to the reluctance he felt about making a "big deal" about his sexuality, but also the stigma that he felt he might face when he did disclose it. Donna (24) takes a similar strategy:

"I'd say I'd still kinda suss some people out and just

kinda get a feel for, are they genuine, or are they gonna

be the kind that stabs you in the back...if I trust them,

great; if not, I'll just keep it very general...they don't

need to know, they don't have to know, but if it is a case

where I feel more comfortable with them then I'll let that

in" **– Donna**

The quotes above demonstrate the on-going nature of the coming out process (and the Ascertainment Period), with this process perpetuating as new work

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environments are encountered (such as lateral or vertical movement within the same organization; or moving to a new organization). Fear of discrimination due to sexual orientation and the fear of the stigmatization of homosexuality are persistent undercurrents throughout the interviews, suggesting that non-heterosexual discrimination is still present in Ireland, despite recent advancements in LGBT civil rights in the country. The Ascertainment Period also highlights the power dynamic at play; LGB employees must take their time in making sure that their workplace is accepting of sexual minority employees before deciding their strategy of identity management. Only by hiding one's LGB identity at the beginning of the working relationship can these employees retain any modicum of power themselves. Even then, however, they can live in fear of being outed, as explored in the previous section, and could feel like they are living a lie and being inauthentic to themselves.

The period of getting used to a new workplace and set of colleagues is not exclusive to LGB employees, of course. As described in Chapter 3, for all employees, there is a period when they are just joining the organisation and are trying to get settled into a new workplace culture, a new set of colleagues, and new responsibilities. During this induction period there is a heightened risk that the employee will leave, perhaps feeling that they do not fit into their new role (Hill & Trist, 1955). This induction period has parallels with the Ascertainment Period outlined here, and can be thought of as theoretically similar. They both consist of getting used to an organisation and settling into a new combination of interpersonal relations and roles. The new employee can be said, like the LGB employee, to be a form of the Stranger, in that they are proximally close yet still relationally far.

However, while theoretically similar, a number of differences between the induction period and the Ascertainment Period exist. After they have been socialized into the organisation, new recruits lose their Stranger status, unless, of course, they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Their "Strangeness", in Simmel's (1908) sense, is fleeting and vanquished through the induction period or the onboarding process, whilst for LGB employees, the Strangeness will remain after this time. Another difference between the two concepts lies in the fact that an induction period is usually only held a single time per new workplace; even when transferring across departments or into a new role in the organisation, the employee is already inducted into the culture of the organisation and know their place there. LGB employees must continually go through the process of deciding whether or not to reveal their sexual orientation. As Shane describes:

"I kinda go 'OK, I have to come out, again' *"* – **Shane**

In this sense, there is almost a constant Ascertainment Period going on. LGB employees, to ensure that they will not be discriminated against or marginalised, may have to ascertain with every new group of people. While they may be sure that the workplace culture is accepting, the same cannot be Ascertained for every single person in the workplace, and so LGB employees may temporarily hide their sexual identity when dealing with those they have never met before and as Donna says, "*still kinda suss some people out"*.

Like with the onboarding process that many employees go through when first joining a workplace (Galvin, 2003), the organisation can play a part in the Ascertainment Process too, by actively promoting LGB diversity and inclusion in the workplace. As well as discussing how LGB employees may have to take time

to get used to the organisation and figure out how welcoming it is of LGB identities, Emma discusses how the environment of the organisation has a role to play in affecting the Ascertaining process:

> *"I just think ...as LGBT employees...you know, a lot of people...they kind of have this discomfort to a certain extent when they go into a workplace, and I wonder do a lot of place know that or think about that...and I know everybody when they start work, needs to...disclose something about their life, but for LGBT employees, it's disclosing an awful lot more than just, you know, where you live or what you're boyfriend's name is or whatever, you're disclosing a huge part of you, you know. Em, so I think, like employers like [my workplace] kind of, they do think about that you know, and I think having a network there enables the employer to kind of – or enables the employee to know that there's that kind of level of comfort and everything else"* **– Emma**

By actively promoting their acceptance and support of LGB employees, organisations could reduce the time these employees take in Ascertaining. Instead of working it out themselves, through cultural cues and interpersonal communication, an employee could be explicitly informed and will thus have to worry about it less.

Voice

At the intersection between the individual and the organisation, this analysis found employee voice to be intertwined with LGB identity in the workplace. While mechanisms that enable and support employee voice, such as unions, employee networks and complaint procedures may be in place in organizations, the effectiveness and outcomes of using these mechanisms may vary. While voice mechanisms, such as LGBT networks, may exist, the organizational processes (such as complaint procedures that may be in place for cases of overt discrimination) may not take subtle discrimination into consideration, which could also isolate and marginalize those affected. In the case of interpersonal or subtle discrimination, the process of making a complaint might be more difficult, despite mechanisms being in place, and, without any recourse, the employee may feel isolated in the organization. Similarly, one may not trust that their voices will be heard or responded to, because of historical mistreatment. Yvonne's story below ably captures the dilemma some LGB people may face when wanting to make a complaint.

During the Marriage Equality referendum campaign in Ireland in 2015, Yvonne's LGBT network was planning an event to support the campaign and LGBT charities. However, senior staff cancelled the event, as they didn't want to take sides on a political issue. When Yvonne organized an open meeting to allow staff members to express their anger and disappointment about the event cancellation, it did not go to plan:

> *"I wanted a lot of our LGBT community to come and let*
> *our management know how pissed off they were about it,*
> *and how it made them feel. And when we got the meeting,*

everyone was really silent…We immediately went into solution mode, and people didn't really voice any of their concerns about how fucked off it made them and how it made them feel marginalized. And when that meeting was over, all of my counterparts went and escalated back to other people and they were making a lot of voice that they weren't happy, and then the general manager came to me and said 'hey, I'm feeling sucker punched, I thought everyone was happy?' So I had a really good conversation with her [about] why gay people have a hard time being honest sometimes, like because we don't trust the structures that are there… As gay people, we've always seen the world as a place that may or may not like us, depending on where we're at, and we kinda tiptoe into equality… We want to make sure that each step forward that we're not putting ourselves in harm's way, that we're not going to be discriminated against or whatnot, because we don't trust the structures that are there." –
Yvonne

The story above shows how formal voice mechanisms may not always work if there is distrust. While Yvonne's colleagues were happy to complain to her or their colleagues about their anger, they weren't prepared to do in an official setting to a more senior manager. Historical mistreatment from the establishment may have severed any trust that complaints would be listened to or dealt with, or could be detrimental to the complainant's career or relations with more senior

managers in the organization. Power is once again at play here – the employees feel powerless in using their voice in the organization, and moreover feel that the organization could use their complaining against them. Critical theory highlights the role of asymmetric and hierarchal power in particular, and as an analytical lens shows more clearly how the employee has considerably less power in the organization. The refusal of the employees here to engage in discussion is also indicative of acquiescent silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003), where one deliberately withholds opinions due to resignation or the belief that it won't make a difference. Despite Yvonne's efforts to formalize her co-workers' voices, it seemed that the informal workplace grapevine represented a safer space to voice anger. Incidents of interpersonal or institutional discrimination may also go unreported if the person does not want to use voice out of fear of the consequences on their reputation. Yvonne discusses another reason why her colleagues did not complain about the event cancellation:

> *"When you have an environment where you have people*
> *that are really pissed off but they've got this chance to*
> *talk to the general manager who indirectly has an*
> *influence on the continuity of their job, these people don't*
> *– they've never put themselves out there before, they*
> *don't wanna brand themselves or label themselves as*
> *"those gay noisemakers!'"* **– Yvonne**

The fear of being seen as a "noisemaker" or agitator, and the effect that that might have on their careers, can result in the official voice mechanism going unused. The hierarchal power represented in Yvonne's story by the senior managers and executives in the company affected the employees' tendency to use

the voice mechanism. Similarly, Liam describes when he felt he was being discriminated against, yet chose silence instead of voice:

> *"Heterosexual people in my organization, when they get married, they get a week off work, plus I believe, they get a cheque, or they have got a cheque. I didn't get any extra leave, I didn't get any extra funds… [I didn't bring it up]… I didn't want to diminish myself, I didn't want to be that person."* **– Liam**

It appears in these quotes that there is a common wish not to be seen as a noisemaker, or to disrupt the status quo. This has resonance with findings by Upchurch et al. (1995), where the authors contend that employees who use their voice may run the risk of appearing to employers as disloyal or as a disruptive influence. Similarly, Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin (2003) find that many of their respondents chose silence instead of voice because they were afraid they'd be viewed negatively and therefore damage valuable relationships. However, had the LGB employees represented in my sample and in the quotes above voiced their concerns openly, exercising their prosocial voice, they could have provided their organizations with invaluable information to improve their respective workplace's diversity and inclusion knowledge. Rather, they chose defensive silence, and withdrew from expressing opinions or annoyance in an effort to protect themselves and their careers. The findings here question the effectiveness of mechanisms such as complaint procedures or open meetings in providing LGB employees with voice. Spencer (1986) finds that employees are more likely to remain at an organization if they are given more opportunities to voice their dissatisfaction with the aim to change it. However, as shown above, if employees

feel that they cannot use these voice mechanisms without fear of recrimination, the efficacy of the mechanisms falls, and employee dissatisfaction remains.

To encourage LGB employees to use their voice, despite historical mistrust or exclusion, an organisation can highlight how they want to hear from their employees, through promotion and support of LGB identities. This occurs in Laura's workplace:

> "*The company is trying to promote LGBT at the moment,*
> *... how can they make this more comfortable for you and*
> *if there is ever a situation don't be afraid to go to them,*
> *and every problem is dealt with the right way*" **– Laura**

Another possible way of ensuring each individual LGB employee voice is heard it to encourage the use of a group voice; in this way the individuals and their reputations are protected and somewhat anonymized. Below, in Chapter 9, I discuss the potential of LGBT networks as a voice mechanism, and the potential they offer with regards to reducing the LGB employee's Stranger status, and facilitating and enabling LGB employee voice within organizations

7.4 Relational Level & Collective Level: The Evolution of the Coming Out 'Routine'

At the relational and collective levels, coming out (disclosing one's sexuality) was affected. As shown in Chapter 9, many participants chose to normalise their LGB identity, rather than hide it or highlight it. While participants did not directly say why they felt their identity could be normalized, their interviews

included discussion about the growing acceptance in society for LGB people. The macro context in which they found themselves, which in previous decades (at least in Ireland) would have cast LGB identities as deviant, was now more welcoming and supportive. In particular, the Marriage Equality referendum, which was passed while this research was being conducted (May 2015), was a pivotal moment in how LGB people perceived their role in society (e.g. see Yvonne's quote below). The analysis of the interview data suggests how the collective and macro-level evolution in perception, from rejection to acceptance, can have an impact on the identity management of the participants.

When it came to the actual physical act of disclosing one's sexual orientation, participants discussed the "ceremony" or the "party" that is commonly associated with it, where people are told, in an almost formal manner, that one is gay. A quote from Fintan (26) best demonstrates what is meant by the "ceremony":

> *"I never wanted a big fuss, for example, and I think*
> *that's why I never had a coming out 'ceremony', as I*
> *like to call it, because I didn't want people making a*
> *really big deal and like, applauding me and making me*
> *proud of it, or assuring me that it was OK, because*
> *that would internally make me think that it wasn't OK,*
> *that there was something wrong with it."* **– Fintan**

As shown in the quote above, coming out can be seen, in Goffman's terms, as a "routine" in the dramaturgical sense, with associated roles, and pre-established patterns of actions for both the performer and the audience. For Fintan and other participants, however, the "ceremony" was a way of disclosing one's sexuality in

a manner that highlighted difference and stigmatization. As he explains, the coming out routine was almost akin to the breaking of bad news or a confession, with assurances from others that it was OK that he was gay, something he did not feel he needed. His strategy in coming out, therefore, was to make his sexual identity known in more subtle or nuanced ways, rather than in a declarative manner; in doing so he normalized it and downplayed its importance and, perhaps, its stigmatization:

> *"...it was always like, people asking and I was neither denying nor confirming, d'you know what I mean, but a lot of people presumed, and I didn't tell them that they were wrong, so it was kinda unspoken more so…"* **– Fintan**

Donna (24) and Brian (41) discuss the similar strategy that they took in their workplaces:

> *"I never really 'came out' at work, I was more kind of a case of, I'll mention my partner or something like that, I didn't want to make it a, a kind of a big party and everything else, a big deal, I suppose"* ***– Donna***

> *"I would try to normalise it as much as possible, in the same way a heterosexual person would talk about their partner, the same way you'd discover they're straight – I'd normalise it in the same way. I wouldn't try and make it an exception, and I wouldn't see the*

need to kind of 'out' myself as such, I'd just try to

normalise it as much as possible" – **Brian**

Similar to Fintan, Donna and Brian did not want a fuss made of the fact that they were gay, and did not want to enter into the "routine" that they associated with coming out, but rather, to form their own method of disclosing. These experiences in the Irish workplace appear to be different than those presented in much of the academic literature on identity management strategies used by LGB employees, which positions coming out as quite a stark, possibly risky choice (e.g. Clair, Beatty & MacLean, 2005; Day and Schoenrade, 1997; Ellis and Riggle, 1995; Griffith and Hebl, 2002). For many of the participants interviewed in this research, however, coming out in the work place in a declarative manner would have been awkward and highlighted difference. Once they had ascertained that the environment which they were in was supportive of LGB people, they passively disclosed their sexual identity if it came up naturally in conversations with colleagues.

The quotes above illustrate the changing nature of the coming out "routine", from declarative to normalized, from confessional to casual. Given the variation in background, age and experience across the sample (see Appendix C), it is possible that identity management decisions may be made in particular temporal as well as organizational contexts. We may think of the coming out routine explored above as a vestige of former times when being homosexual was stigmatized, and, not long before that, criminalized in Ireland. Alan (50) recounts, while he was already out to many of his friends, family and colleagues, the decriminalization of homosexuality affected his identity management strategy:

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"What I found it helped, when I was legalised, was that I made it easier to talk about, suddenly, if you were out, or you were in a gay club or you did something, I found it easier to say in among groups"
– Alan

In a similar parallel, the passing of the Marriage Equality referendum of 2015 had an effect on Yvonne's (33) self-identity.

"I'm actually walking with broader shoulders, like a taller head, like 'you know what? I'm fucking equal to you, bitch!'. I mean, my partner and I keep joking about, but we're serious about it, like 'God, it feels good to be equal!'. Like…we're gonna be some of the first people to get married, and I've always known that I'm gonna call her my wife, always, but I'm always worried that some arsehole can be like 'don't you mean civil partner?' and sort of be derogatory – they can't now. If you talk shit to me, or call me a fag…I know now that 63% of my country loves me how I am, and I don't have any reason to feel unequal…I know I have the law on my side, I've got society on my side, I don't have to wonder if people will support me, I know they'll support me, and that feels really nice, to feel like I'm 100% acknowledged as equal and valid, not inferior to straight people" –
Yvonne

These quotes from Alan and Yvonne show how, at the macro level, the formal public acceptance of LGB people signified by recent legislative changes in Ireland has already led to changes in self-perception and self-identity. This new "routine" (in Goffman's terms) of casually disclosing one's sexual identity in a normalizing sense may reflect the new status of acceptance that homosexuality now has in Irish life; one does not feel they have to "confess" their identity, but rather, mention it if appropriate, reflecting the multiple interacting levels of Rousseau's (1985) framework mentioned earlier in the chapter.

This findings shows the very specific nature of this research undertaking, wherein interviews were held a few months before, during, and after the Marriage Equality Referendum campaign. At the time, LGBT identities and relationships were being constantly discussed in the media, at events and between families, friends and colleagues. Participants (e.g. Yvonne) were ecstatic after the referendum was passed; however, while the macro-context was changed at a legislative level, biases and prejudices may still remain on the social level. Future research studying identity management may therefore uncover different aspects and emotions not present in this study.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter presents the multiple layers impacting upon LGB identity management in the work place; at the individual, relational, organizational and broader socio-cultural-legislative levels. Rousseau's (1985) work on multi-level research and the organizational implications is unpacked. While literature on LGB identity management has focused on coping mechanisms and identity

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management strategies at a more micro-individual level, this research, using Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor, highlights the multi-faceted nature of LGB identity management in work contexts. This research, therefore, contributes to existing studies on LGB workers in the management and business domain by sharing how sexual identity management at work is multi-layered and more complex than outlined to date. Using Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor to frame the different elements influencing identity management (with actor as the LGB individual; audience as relational contacts such as family members and co-workers; setting as the organizational context and the country/macro-level context), the individualized nature of the performance of identity management in the work environment is emphasized, with each "actor" potentially embarking on a very different "performance" (identity management strategy). This research and analysis highlights and helps to explain the multi-faceted complexity of identity management of LGB employees at work.

A further influence on identity management, namely the LGBT network, was also developed from the analysis of the participant interviews. However, this theme was large and contains a number of different facets, so instead of being presented in this Chapter, the findings on LGBT networks make up Chapter 9.

7.6 Contributions and Implications

The contribution of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, to business and management researchers interested in LGBT research. The multi-layered experiences of LGB people in the workplace present the complex and mercurial nature of identity management in the workplace. The Ascertainment Period is a new concept and

requires further research and attention. However, it has parallels with the onboarding and induction period where new recruits settle into the organisation, and so has some theoretical support.

Secondly, at the organizational level, this study shares insights into the daily identity management experiences of LGB people at work. Inclusive versus exclusive customs and traditions; respect for privacy coupled with facilitating personal celebrations; and on-going organization-wide open support for LGBT groups in the workplace are three notable organizational concerns with regards to integrating LGB workers into the organization. In order to fully support LGB workers, a whole-organization approach is recommended, where the inclusion of these workers in existing customs is espoused and where privacy boundaries are respected.

Finally, the theoretical contribution of this paper suggests that identity management is a core concern for LGB workers and determines their workplace experiences. For organizations and academics seeking to better understand and cater to LGB people in the workforce, an appreciation of the intricacies of identity management is warranted, with the integration position as best practice, while allowing for reasons why other strategies may be needed at certain times.

Chapter 8. Identity Management Strategies

"No need to hurry. No need to sparkle. No need to be anybody but oneself."

Virginia Woolf

8.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, identity management is a complex and multifaceted process. This chapter outlines the identity management of LGB employees. As Ashforth and Mael (1989: 21) discuss, one does not identify with a certain identity in an 'all-or-none' fashion, but instead by 'a matter of degree', depending, for one, on how on how valuable that identity is to them. Ashforth and Mael (1989) cite Jackall (1978), who finds that people doing menial work tend to distance themselves from that identity by telling themselves it was only a temporary job. In Chapter 3, the view of identity as fluid rather than fixed was discussed. In viewing identity as versatile and adaptable rather than a firm inflexible entity, we can see how LGB workers may distance themselves from their sexual identity while at work, or completely integrate it into their workplace identity. As Jung and Hecht (2004) describe, there is a distinction between one's *personal* identity and one's *enacted* identity, the former being one's self-image and the latter being the 'performed or expressed identity' (Jung & Hecht, 2004: 266).

Therefore, far from being a simple question of whether or not to come out in the workplace, the process of LGB identity management is more varied and more complex (Button, 2004). In this chapter, a number of different archetypes, representing the different ways in which one might approach integrating their sexual identity with their workplace identity, or separating the two, were identified, using Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor to explore the differences between the *personal* identity and the *enacted* identity, or, in applying Goffman's terminology, the differences between what's on the *back stage* and what's on the *front stage*. Previous research has explored how sexual minorities (in their

research, only gay and lesbian employees) disclose their sexual identity in the workplace, with Woods (1993), Shallenberger (1996) and Button (2004) exploring three different strategies, including fabricating a false heterosexual identity, avoiding the topic of sexuality completely, and integrating their sexual identity in the workplace. The findings presented here build on that work, and make reference to it in the naming of the strategies of identity management discussed, but also extend it, exploring in more depth (using qualitative methods rather than quantitative methods, unlike the previous authors) the reasons and feelings behind each strategy, and also adding to the amount of strategies. I present five identity management strategies instead of four; the extra strategy is comprised a radicalizing strategy, and may reflect a change in the social and legal landscape since these previous studies were conducted.

These differing strategies of identity management are plotted on a continuum of identity separation and integration, which is outlined below, along with a description of each strategy. Then, the ramifications for the workplace of the differing identity management strategies used by LGB workers are explored.

8.2 Strategies of Identity Management

As discussed above, the participants in this study relayed different ways in which they managed their identities in the workplace. Most of the participants used a number of strategies throughout their career, depending on the workplace, on current events at work, and on their own identity development stage. Through coding and analysis of the participants' interviews, a number of identity management themes emerged. While some participants talked about how they hid

their LGB identity at work, others talked about how they constantly made it part of their workplace identity, and the reasons why they did so. The participants' quotes were eventually ascribed to a number of identity management strategies that they represented. The different strategies are plotted here on a continuum of separation (where the LGB identity is kept completely separate from the work identity) to integration (where the LGB identity becomes part of the work identity), to highlighting (where the LGB identity becomes a major emphasized part of the work identity). Figure 16 shows the different archetypical identity management strategies, arranged by number of research participants that used them. Figure 17 shows which of the participants used which strategy, a quote that represents the use of each strategy, and where on the continuum of separating to integrating one's sexual identity with one's work identity that each strategy sits.

At one extreme of the continuum were those who separated their workplace identity and sexual identity completely, as represented by the quote by Emma in Figure 17, and the following quote from Claire:

> *"...we found that actually, when we were setting up the*
> *LGBT network in [the organisation], that were aware*
> *of no end of gay and lesbian staff, but they're not out*
> *and they won't join the network either"* – **Claire**

Those at this end of the continuum may have come out in other parts of their lives, but have not brought this identity into the workplace at all. At the other extreme were those who integrated them completely; their sexual identity represents a large constituent part of their workplace identity, as Geraldine's quote in Figure 17 shows. In the middle of the continuum were those who

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normalized their sexual identity in the workplace, as shown in Brian's quote in Figure 17; the majority of the sample used this strategy. These people disclose in their workplace but do not actively make it a part of their workplace identity.

By extending Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical metaphor to identity management, one begins to think about the interaction between the actor and the setting in which they find themselves. In my analysis, I highlight how the strategies that the participants use arise from the combination of their own agency, as well as from environmental influences. Figure 18 depicts, like Figure 17, the five identity management strategies identified in the analyses, but includes the added dimension of the actor vs. setting influences. While presented as a binary, in reality the complex nature of identity management results in both sources of influence being part of the process.

It is worth noting that in recounting their workplace experiences, some of the respondents used different strategies throughout their life and in different contexts, in keeping with findings from other authors (e.g. Button, 2004; Shallenberger, 1996; Woods, 1993). Some, for example, concealed at first but came out later (e.g. Emma), some normalized in one location and concealed in another (e.g. Brian), and others usually normalized but at times differentiated or radicalized (e.g. Yvonne, Aoife). The following sections explore the different identity management archetypes identified from my analysis, beginning with the separation end of the continuum, and those who used the Concealing strategy.

Critical realism highlights the search for underlying mechanisms, and the major mechanism that triggered events (such as decisions in whether one would disclose, and in what manner) was that of power in the form of hegemonic

heteronormativity, as discussed in Chapter 6. This hegemonic power that characterise LGB identities as at best discredited and at worst deviant was an underlying mechanism that influenced the participants' choices. Throughout this analysis I draw attention to how each strategy is a response to hegemonic heteronormativity.
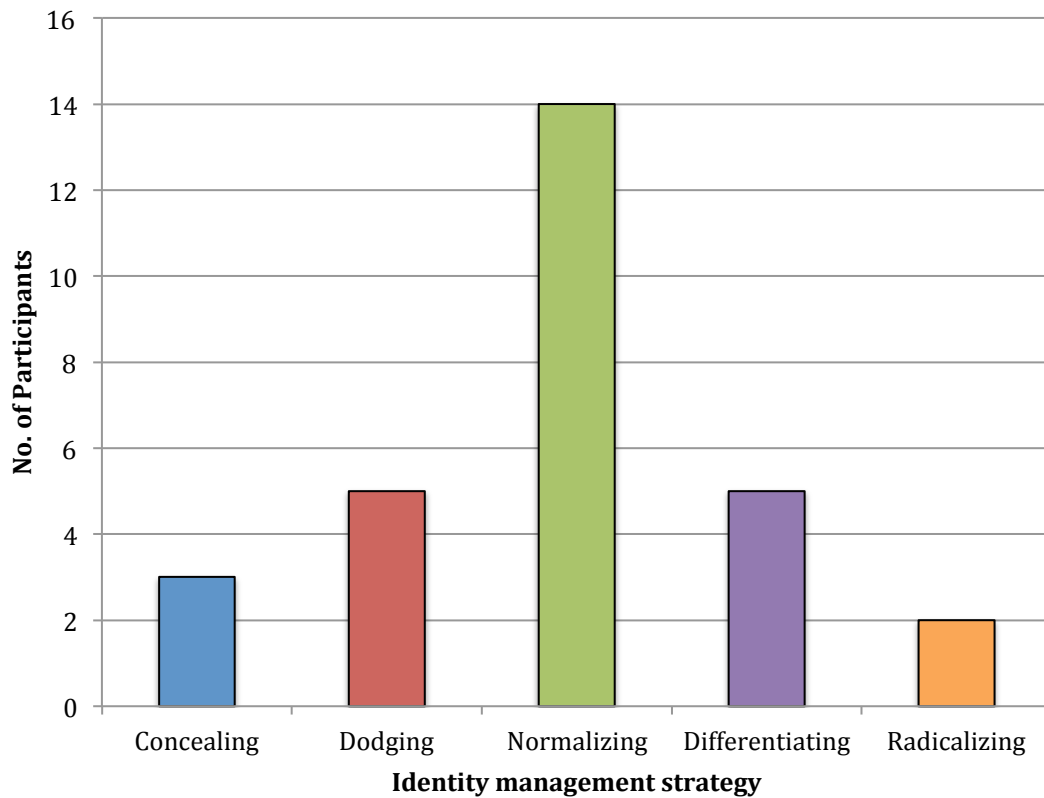
Figure 16. Breakdown of the identity management strategies used by the participants

Separating Identities

Concealers

"I wanted to go into [my workplace] and be my own person, and have people judge me on my work and whatever else, as opposed to any of the personal factors involved"
- **Emma**

Dodgers

"It was always like, people asking and I was neither denying nor confirming... but a lot of people presumed, and I didn't tell them that they were wrong, so it was kinda unspoken more so".
- **Fintan**

Normalizers

"...in the same way a heterosexual person would talk about their partner, the same way you'd discover they're straight, I'd normalise it in the same way"
– **Brian**

Differentiators

"I do stuff internally, talking about diversity and inclusiveness, and I've spoken out in public... and I head up our internal network."
- **Geraldine**

Radicalizers

"I just decided, you know what, I'm sick of this shit... I'm sick of this, why don't we just do something?"
- **Claire**

Integrating Identities

Emma, Jennifer, Liam,

Cam, Fintan, Matthew, Paul, Ian

Adam, Áine, Alan, Amy, Brian, Brendan, Cillian, Conor, Devon, Donna, Laura, Kate, Kevin, Shane

David, Geraldine, John, Stephen, Yvonne

Aoife, Claire

Figure 17. The continuum of separating and integrating identities. Included is a representative quote from a participant, and a list of participants divided into their respective, most commonly used, identity management strategy.

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Strategy 1: Concealing

The first archetypal strategy on the identity management strategies continuum, Concealing, represents the most extreme separation between one's work identity and one's sexual identity. It is analogous to the 'Counterfeiting' strategy discussed by Woods (1993) and Button (2004). Participants using this identity management strategy had come out in other areas of their life, e.g. to their families and friends, but had made the decision to not disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace. The following quote from Emma (27) outlines some of her reasoning behind this decision:

> *"I wanted to go into [my workplace] and be my own person, and have people judge me on my work and whatever else, as opposed to any of the personal factors involved… I didn't want … to be thought differently for [coming out as a lesbian], you know, and I think, part of me thinks that yeah, maybe it was a good idea to do that, cus I got myself across first, like my work, and then the personal stuff started coming into it, so you know, my colleagues had already judged me already, they'd made their first impressions – I'd made my first impression on them, they'd made … whatever preconceptions or notions about me had nothing to do with my sexuality at that stage... I like to keep them a little bit separate. I'm not gay first and foremost, I'm a HR graduate first and foremost, I think my work speaks for itself, and then I'm kind of, like I don't, no I don't think that it has any*

bearing for me whatsoever, cus I think that my work is

the most important thing, you know" – **Emma**

For Emma, it was important to her that the work she did stood for itself. While she didn't judge her workplace in itself to be hostile towards LGB people, the heteronormative culture in her workplace still positioned her as a Stranger (Simmel, 1908). Being a type of Stranger in the workplace could lead to judgments based on personal identity rather than workplace identity, so Emma decided at the beginning to remain 'in the closet' at work, and in doing so, exhibits more of an actor-influence in her identity management strategy, rather than a setting-influence. Similarly, Yvonne (33) describes why she believes LGB people in her workplace won't come out:

"I think some people just don't feel comfortable being out

or having muddy the waters of their 'brand', their career

brand" – **Yvonne**

In other cases, however, the workplace environment wasn't a suitable environment in which to come out; in Goffman's (1959) terms, the setting had a major influence on the identity management strategy being chosen. Liam (47) recounts how one of his first workplaces affected how he managed his identities:

"At work situations, in a work environment I would

have been fairly quiet, conservative… and wasn't

turning up in gay pride t-shirts and… Stonewall t-shirts

and things" – **Liam**

When Brendan (39) first joined what he presumed to be a conservative workplace after being in a more liberal environment, he took similar action:

> *"I was in a small organization… now I was going into proper big corporate world, and I was very unsure about myself going into that. And I suppose I really played myself down, I wore quite conservative clothes, tries to be as unanimated as possible, keep my voice a little bit lower, and I was very conscious of how camp I could be." – Brendan*

Brian, who works in a multinational company and sometimes in locations around the world, discusses how he conceals his sexuality in some places:

> *"Generally people would assume I'm straight anyway, I'm not, I suppose, very obvious, that's my nature...I'm unassuming a little bit as well, so. If I want to hide my sexual orientation, particularly if I'm in places like India, it's pretty easy for me to do so"* **– Brian**

Liam, Brendan, and Brian's stories show how one may consciously repress one's sexual identity when they feel it is not safe to reveal it. In the workplaces that the participants felt to be more conservative than others, the Strangeness (Simmel, 1908) associated with being LGB was heightened, and they therefore had to take action to make sure nobody found out. In Goffman's terms, the visible manifestations of their sexuality in their *front-stage* (e.g. the clothes, speech and mannerisms) were altered and their identity performance changed. While the

actors themselves used their own agency to hide their sexual identity, the setting they worked in was a primary facet of the decision, rather than any individual tendency to conceal. These stories also highlight how these strategies are not fixed, definite and used for the majority of one's life – they are instead situational and contextually-bound; in Brian's case he switches from a normalizing strategy (discussed below) to a concealing strategy when he enters workplaces or locations that he feels he would be stigmatized against.

Heteronormativity, manifesting here in a manner similar to the Subjectification face of power, and Foucault's (1980) analysis on discursive practices, places restrictions on Liam, Brendan and Brian's expression and interpersonal relations, while Emma and Yvonne's colleagues believe coming out would affect how others evaluated their work. The choice in separating one's LGB identity from one's work identity, as those who use the concealing strategy do, could be seen by some as submitting to these heteronormative climates. However, one could also view this separation of identities as an active resistance against heteronormativity. As Benozzo et al. (2015) contend, coming out can be interpreted as a way of reproducing heteronorms, with the revelation of one's LGB identity reinforcing the binarized system of sexuality that constitutes heteronormativity. By deliberately eschewing the taking on of an ostensibly deviant sexual identity, one rejects participation in the heteronormative discourse.

The workplace consequences of hiding one's sexual identity have been well documented, with Madera (2010) finding that cognitive resources are sequestered when one conceals, leading in part from the fear of being discovered. As explored in Chapter 2, the workplace climate plays an important role in the

identity management of the LGB employees. Those who are in workplaces that are perceived to be non-supportive, like Liam and Brendan, may therefore have poorer work outcomes in terms of their objective and subjective careers when they are actively separating their identities. Those who choose to separate their identities not because of a hostile climate, but because it would allow them to be judged solely on their work, may still have to deal with the decisions involved in hiding their sexual identity, for example, at social functions and personal interactions. They may also face career-related consequences associated with hiding their sexual identity if it becomes known. For example, Collins and Callahan (2012) discuss how Lord John Browne, former CEO of British Petroleum, kept his sexual identity and work identity completely separate because, as he says, 'in corporate life, [being gay] was something you didn't talk about. And in the oil industry it was most definitely not something you did' (BBC News, 2010). Lord Browne resigned after he was told his sexual identity was about to be made public knowledge by a tabloid newspaper. His comment in the aftermath epitomizes the Concealer's strategy of separating identities:

> *'In my 41 years with BP I have kept my private life*
> *separate from my business life. I have always regarded*
> *my sexuality as a personal matter, to be kept private.'*

Strategy 2: Dodging

With the 'Dodging' strategy, one either confirms nor denies their LGB identity at work. One using this identity management strategy is keeping their LGB identity

separate from their work identity by avoiding situations where they might have to discuss it or where the two identities overlap.

In Goffman's terms the Dodgers are, like the Concealers, keeping their sexual identity in the *backstage*. However, unlike the Concealers, who may alter their *front-stage* in order to appear heterosexual to others, the Dodgers do not make any active changes. For them, work is simply not a place where one's sexual identity, LGB *or* heterosexual, is discussed, either because they feel it not appropriate, or because it is none of their colleagues' concern. In this way the setting still has an influence, but the actor retains more control than with the concealing strategy. Fintan (26), who works in a Catholic secondary school, describes his identity management strategy:

> *"It was always like, people asking and I was neither*
> *denying nor confirming... but a lot of people presumed,*
> *and I didn't tell them that they were wrong, so it was*
> *kinda unspoken more so... that hatred that the church*
> *did show and their doctrine and stuff, makes me be*
> *careful how I act and what I do and say in school as*
> *well, because I can't, I don't wanna jeopardise where I*
> *work because of that, like I find it such a small issue*
> *but it could easily, so I tend to – for want of a better*
> *word – tone everything down when I'm working..." –*
> **Fintan**

However, for Dodgers, the passivity with which they hide their sexual identity (by dodging rather than actively concealing) may arise from a wish to be

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authentic to themselves in some respects (in Goffman's terms, the influence on identity management comes more from the actor rather than the setting). Because Fintan has not confirmed that he was gay to his colleagues, he is not subject to the Stranger status under which other LGB people would be treated in a typically heteronormative climate, or to conversations that he feels may be awkward or inappropriate for the workplace. However, because he is not denying his sexual identity or fabricating a heterosexual identity, he still retains some self-authenticity. In other words, he enjoys some benefits and less of the negative consequences by neither being in, nor out, of the workplace closet. Using the Dodging strategy, like the Concealing strategy, could be seen to be both reinforcing and rebelling against heteronormativity; they do not actively try, like those who Radicalize (discussed below) to overthrow a heteronormative culture; conversely, their decision to not come out means that they are not partaking in the binarized system of gender and sexuality that heteronormativity contends. Ironically, however, it may be that those who conceal and/or dodge, by not being open about their sexual identity, miss out on some of the social and relationship-building interactions, further positioning them as a form of the Stranger in the workplace.

Other authors (Button, 1993; Clair, Beatty & Maclean, 2005) describe how one may, in interpersonal communications in the workplace, actively avoid conversations that may hint towards their LGB identity, in effect appearing asexual. This finding confirms the existence of this strategy for the participants in this research, and contributes to the literature by exploring the reasons why, and the ways in which how this strategy is enacted.

Strategy 3: Normalizing

In contrast to the previous two strategies, which concentrated on the separation of the sexual identity from their work identity to some degree, Normalizing is the first strategy that starts to blend the two identities. However, unlike the next two strategies, which highlight and emphasize the sexual identity at work, the Normalizing strategy is not concerned with highlight it, but, as the name suggests, normalizing it. This strategy is roughly analogous to the "Integrating" strategy identified by Button (2004) and Woods (1993), but, as shown below, this analysis shows different ways in which integration of identities takes place. Those who used the Normalizing strategy represented the largest group type in the participants sampled, and are best represented by the following quote from Brian (41):

> *"...in the same way a heterosexual person would talk*
> *about their partner, the same way you'd discover*
> *they're straight, I'd normalize it in the same way" –*
> **Brian**

Shane (40) takes a similar approach in coming out in his organisation:

> *"what I'd do was try and work it into a conversation*
> *with a few people very early on. As soon I start I kinda*
> *go 'ok, I have to come out, again'. So, you'd say stuff*
> *like yes myself and my* boyfriend *do this, or usually*
> *something like that, or you'd drop a 'yeah, we did this,*
> *yeah, and I said to* him'*, whatever way, and just check,*
> *and make sure that they caught it… ideally if you got*

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the person – if you identify someone who was

obviously very talkative and very communicative – if

you got the most gossipy person, or the person that

you could be sure would [tell everyone]" – Shane

For Brian and the rest of those using the Normalizing strategy, having an LGB identity in the workplace was, in their mind, to be treated in the same way as having a heterosexual identity. In Goffman's terms the LGB identity was part of the *front-stage*, alongside and a part of one's work identity. Unlike the following two strategies, however, Normalizing does not make one's sexual identity part of their active *performance*. Laura (25) points out that her sexual orientation isn't treated as anything strange or unusual to those in her workplace, a retail store:

"...they all just know*, so over the years have gone by*

they've known, cus I've had girlfriends cus they've

been in the shop with me and they just know, and

that's just the norm to them, it's just 'oh Laura has a

new girlfriend', it's not strange and it's not awkward

or anything, and I think there's even a few customers

that know". – Laura

The Normalizing strategy of seamlessly blending their workplace and sexual identity may represent an act of resistance to being the Stranger in the workplace, and in doing do, may be seen as an effort to retain more of the actor's influence, rather than the setting's influence, over one's identity management. It could also be seen to represent an act of resistance to heteronormativity in the workplace. While statistically in the minority and in some cases (and historically)

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stigmatized, Normalizing attempts to lessen the difference and, consequentially, the deviant aspect of their identity. If more and more people were out in the workplace, being LGB could lose its deviant edge, as shown in a quote from Yvonne, who uses a normalizing strategy in combination with a differentiating strategy (outlined below):

> *"even today like, I talk about my partner, my fiancé the way that anyone else would talk about their fiancé or their husband or their wife or whatnot, and there's no weirdness about it, it's just 'whatever, so what, who cares', you know what I mean?"* –
> **Yvonne**

However, as mentioned above, coming out and normalizing their identity may be a way of reproducing constrictive heteronorms (Butler, 1990; Hart, 1994; Rich, 1980; Rubin, 1990). Furthermore, the act of "normalizing" a gay identity in itself could be seen as a form of imitating and replicating heterosexual identities, rather than highlighting the differences that having an LGB brings with it, thus furthering a heteronormative environment, similar to Rumens and Broomfield's (2014), Rumens (2014) and Williams, Giuffre & Dellinger's (2009) discussion of how 'gay-friendly' workplaces are characterized by heteronormatively-constrained constructions of gay identities.

Strategy 4: Differentiating

The latter two types differ from the former three in that one's sexual identity is highlighted in the workplace, not hidden or normalized. This highlighting of

identities happened in two different ways, and is named Differentiating (identified by Clair et al., 2005) and Radicalizing, which is a new strategy examined in this research.

Differentiating is named thus because it emphasize one's difference in the workplace (Clair et al., 2005). Those who Differentiated in this study thrived in workplaces where diversity and difference is celebrated, and used their own sexual identity and minority experiences to aid the organization in their diversity and inclusion work. For these participants, being LGB was an important aspect of their identity in every respect, and this carried through to the workplace. In other words, the sexual identity has become part of the workplace identity, has been brought to the *front-stage,* and is part of the *performance.*

Geraldine (39), the head of her workplace's LGBT network, uses a quintessential Differentiating strategy:

> *"I do stuff internally, talking about diversity and*
> *inclusiveness, and I've spoken out in public... and I head*
> *up our internal network."* – **Geraldine**

The blending of Geraldine's sexual identity with her work identity is best exemplified by the fact that her time spent on her LGBT activities is counted towards her work contribution:

> *"although it's only a small percentage of my time, it's*
> *a recognized percentage of my time, and a valued*
> *percentage of my time"* – **Geraldine**

The quote above shows how Geraldine's sexual identity has become linked and a part of her workplace identity, both on formal and informal levels. In some cases, highlighting one's sexual identity had positive career effects. Yvonne (33), for example, also leads her workplace LGBT network:

> *"...it's been really enjoyable to help promote equality and diversity at the company in that space, but it's also, you know, it's helped my own brand, its helped to expose me to leaders and movers-and-shakers that I wouldn't have gotten access to otherwise, which has helped me in my day career, helped me probably to get the promotion that I just got, cus diversity and inclusion is taken seriously"* **– Yvonne**

In Simmel's and Goffman's terms, the Differentiators respond to being a form of the Stranger in a different way than the other types. While the others respond to the negative aspects of being the Stranger by moving their sexual identity to the *back-stage,* or (in the case of those Radicalizing) by aggressively highlighting it, those using the Differentiating respond by positively moving it to the *front-stage* and making it part of their *performance*. These employees take what makes them different, their LGB identity, and put it front and centre. However, as Yvonne finds, moving the LGB to the *front stage* could sometimes have a negative impact, where colleagues see her *only* in terms of her sexuality:

> *"...sometimes I kinda feel like I am the gay girl, and I've had some recent conversations with colleagues at work and I'm like 'guys I actually have real talents*

and skills, I've won awards for my day job!' and they're like 'oh we know that, we know that!', but I kinda don't want to be known only as – I don't mind being a mover shaker in LGBT equality, that's fine, in the sense of the company, I don't mind that, but I don't want that to be my only attribute" **– Yvonne**

In actively celebrating their difference, they can be seen to rebel against a heteronormative culture that places them as the discredited. This is, for Yvonne (who uses a combination of the Normalizing and Differentiating strategies) not an on-going battle but one she thinks will be resolved:

"I think over time when we become more normalised and when people refer to your husband as they would their female friend's husband and it all becomes normalised, I think there'll be less of a need for us to be activists, and when it just becomes more normalised, they won't see us as different, and [we won't have] that whole fear of coming across as different, and…we won't be highlighted anymore, which I think is going to be great" **– Yvonne**

The extent to which differentiators can actively champion difference, however, may depend on the workplace they are in. While Yvonne and Geraldine were given the resources to differentiate themselves, others in more conservative workplaces may not get that chance. This distinction shows the part that the workplace, and particularly the HRM function, can play in facilitating the

dissipation of a heteronormative culture, and also highlights the relevance of the multiple levels (explored in Chapters 3 and 7) affecting identity management, including individual, relational, group and collective influences which may interact at any point in time. It also shows again the complex and dynamic nature of identity management.

Strategy 5: Radicalizing

The final strategy represents those who, like those who Differentiate, highlight their sexual identity in the workplace. In this case however, they did not highlight their difference to aid their career or organizational diversity efforts, but rather to radically change their working environment for the better. Those who Radicalize want change; they emphasize and concentrate on their sexual identity in the workplace in order to make it a better fit. While most participants did not face any overt discriminatory incidents, subtle discrimination (discussed in Chapter 3: Harrell et al., 2003; Meyer, 2003; Silverschanz et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2003; Waldo, 1999) was encountered or suspected in many cases, and it was to these that those who in the sample who Radicalized reacted.

The story from Claire (49) that has been mentioned earlier is again pertinent here. Claire discusses her feelings on not having a celebratory office event thrown for her when she got married to her partner:

> *"[T]here's no obligation to have them so you can't sort*
> *of say I've been discriminated against, it's really subtle,*
> *but you feel it...and then like, a month later a colleague*

was getting married, and there was a big thing about

him, and tea and cake in the office and mine was

blatantly ignored... [it] kind of hurt actually. That hurts.

Because it was deliberate, that was a deliberate thing to

do." **– Claire**

The quote above demonstrates well how the LGB person may be treated as a Stranger in the organization, and also how pervasive yet subtle discrimination may be. In response to this (and other) discrimination, Claire set up an LGBT network in her organization to enact change:

"...I was being constantly sniggered at in a previous

department, before the one I'm in now, and in around the

civil partnership thing, I just thought, decided, you know

what? I'm sick of this shit, excuse my French! I'm sick of

this, why don't we just do something?" **– Claire**

Similarly, Aoife (38) faced discrimination in her workplace:

"One of the reasons I wanted to join the [LGBT

employee] group was when my partner was pregnant

with the twins, I had applied for parental leave…so I

checked it out with my immediate boss and he was like

I've no problem with you doing a four day week… I

filled out the forms, sent them off, my manager approved

it, he had no problem with it, and then a few weeks later

my manager, came out to say it to me 'Aoife, look, HR

are after ringing me to say that I have to tell you that

you've been refused your parental leave" – **Aoife**

Aoife then began to take legal action and sought the advice of her union and a LGBT rights organization. Her HR department subsequently granted her parental leave. The story shows how Radicalizing can enact change in their organization. While she was relieved that the issue was eventually resolved, she reflects that:

"...if I hadn't had the balls to call and let them know

that I was seeing further about it, they probably would

have just said, "ah yeah…", just fobbed me off, you

know, so I felt a bit pissed off over that" – **Aoife**

She then joined the newly formed LGBT employee group in her organization to help make sure that 'it couldn't happen again', and, as Secretary, focuses some of her workday on enacting further positive change for LGBT people in her organization. While Radicalizing may sound at first somewhat aggressive, stories like Aoife's show how this subgroup can enact change through a simple refusal to bow to the pressure from the workplace.

It may be said that when Radicalizing, one's LGB identity begins to represent almost the totality of the *front-stage*, while one's work identity becomes less prominent in contrast. In a workplace, it is easy to see why this may be met with negative reactions from others; even those who are not heterosexist or homophobic may be chagrined by a repetitive or single-issue person. From my analysis however, using the Radicalizing strategy was a response to the negative consequences, like discrimination and heteronormativity, associated with being

the Stranger in the organization; in other words, 'fighting fire with fire'. Those using the Radicalizing strategy embrace their difference, their Stranger status, in order to make change for themselves and others like them. Lord John Browne, discussed above, separated his sexual identity completely from his work identity until he was outed; in more recent years, however, he has become a campaigner for equal rights and respect for LGBT people at work; his career now consists of Radicalizing, in response to working in an environment of homophobia and heterosexism throughout his life. His identity management journey reflects the dynamic nature of identity management over time, context and circumstance.

8.3 Discussion

This chapter unpacks the identity management strategies of LGB employees in the workplace. Rather than a one-size fits all recommendation, the analysis outlines a continuum of separating /integrating identities that exist in practice and were evident in this research undertaking, as detailed in Table 7 below. Goffman's distinction between the *actor* and the *setting* allows one to better understand the strategies of identity management that the participants used, with some choices arising primarily from the actor themselves (such as Emma's decision to conceal her identity because she wanted to be judged by her work), others arising as a result of pressure from the setting they were in (such as Claire radicalizing as a result of the exclusion she experienced), and some as a result of both (such as Yvonne differentiating because she both wanted to and was able to do so in her workplace). Figure 18 below shows how the five identity

management strategies may be enacted because of influence from the setting, a decision from the actor themselves, or (more realistically) a combination of both.

In focusing on both the actor's role and the environment setting in which the role is played out, a more nuanced representation of identity management emerges. We see that strategies often represent the interaction between the actor and their setting – concealing is at once the actor's own choice, but if often influenced by the reactions they believe they will receive after coming out. Dodging is a similar decision and may involve similar environmental cues, but in this case the actor uses a different interpersonal approach. Normalizing is done so because the actor doesn't want a big deal to be made of the sexual identity, but the success of this strategy may lie in the environment itself, with more diverse workplaces naturally rendering their minority identity more run-of-the-mill. Similarly, one may wish to differentiate their sexual identity from others and highlight it, but the extent to which this can be achieved may depend on the workplace; larger multi-national companies interested in promoting diversity and inclusion may represent a more suitable setting in which to do this, while small to medium enterprises, even if they appreciate diversity, may not have the capacity or resources to support such an effort. Lastly, radicalizing, which is seen here as one's highlight of their identity in order to enact change, is a natural fusion of the actor (the change-maker) and the setting (the workplace that is perceived to need changing). Both differentiating and radicalizing highlight the influence of the setting in identity management – while the former strategy takes place best in a workplace that celebrates diversity and inclusion, the latter can be a response to a negative environment. Both of these strategies included highlighting one's LGB

identity, but in different styles and to different ends. Figure 18 shows the actor/influence framework with the strategies, along with some exemplar quotes.

The extent of the differences that can exist in each LGBT person's approach to identity management in the workplace means that there are implications for organizations and its human resource management function, if they are to fully support their LGBT employees. Table 8 in Chapter 10 highlights implications resulting from each strategy. As it shows, organizations must take into account many different factors when considering how to support their LGBT employees.

Setting-Influenced   Actor-Influenced

	Concealing	Dodging	Normalizing	Differentiating	Radicalizing
Actor-Influenced	"I wanted to go into [my workplace] and be my own person...." – Emma	"A typical Monday morning conversation – "What did you do over the weekend?'. 'Oh, WE did this'" – Matthew	"...in the same way a a heterosexual person would talk about their partner, the same way you'd discover they're straight, I'd normalize it in the same way" – Brian	"I do stuff internally, talking about diversity and inclusiveness, and I've spoken out in public....and I head up our internal network" – Geraldine	"If I hadn't had the balls to call and let them know that I was seeing further about it, they probably would have just...fobbed me off, so I felt a bit pissed off over that" – Aoife
Setting-Influenced	"...now I was going into proper big corporate world, and I was very unsure about myself going into that. And I suppose I really played myself down, I wore quite conservative clothes, tried to be as unanimated as possible...." – Brendan	"...that hatred that the church did show.... makes me careful how I act and what I do and say in school as well, because I can't, I don't wanna jeopardise where I work because of that" – Fintan	"...they all just know.... it's just 'oh Laura has a new girlfriend, it's not strange and it's not awkward or anything, and I think there's even a few customers that know" – Laura	"...it's been really enjoyable to help promote equality and diversity at the company in that space, but it's also....helped my own brand....helped me in my day career....cus diversity and inclusion is taken seriously" – Yvonne	"I just decided, you know what, I'm sick of this shit, I'm sick of this, why don't we just do something?" – Claire

Figure 18. The five identity management strategies presented on an actor versus setting-influenced framework.

Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor also helps in the analysis to show the complexity of identity management in practice, where LGB identity management strategies move between *back-stage* and *front-stage* disclosures, with corresponding implications and perceived implications on the LGB workers' career outcomes. As depicted in Figure 19, the identity management strategies differed in how much the LGB identity entered the person's front stage – the visible personal front that one presents to others as part of their identity performance – with those that concealed and dodging keeping their LGB identity in the back-stage, those that normalized letting it be somewhat a part of the front stage, and those that differentiated and radicalized making it very much part of their identity performance.

Many of the strategies in themselves, such as Concealing and Radicalising, could be viewed as a response to this heteronormativity, with the former a way of avoiding it and the latter a way of confronting it. As noted in Chapter 3, identity management is a process encountered by all, not only LGB employees, so it is possible that power, in guises other than heteronormativity (e.g. patriarchy or ableism) could impact on the identity management of other employee groups. Future research could use the separating-integrating framework as a blueprint upon which to build research more specialized to each individual group, and how their respective identity management archetype may change over time and circumstance, influenced at multiple levels within and outside the organization.
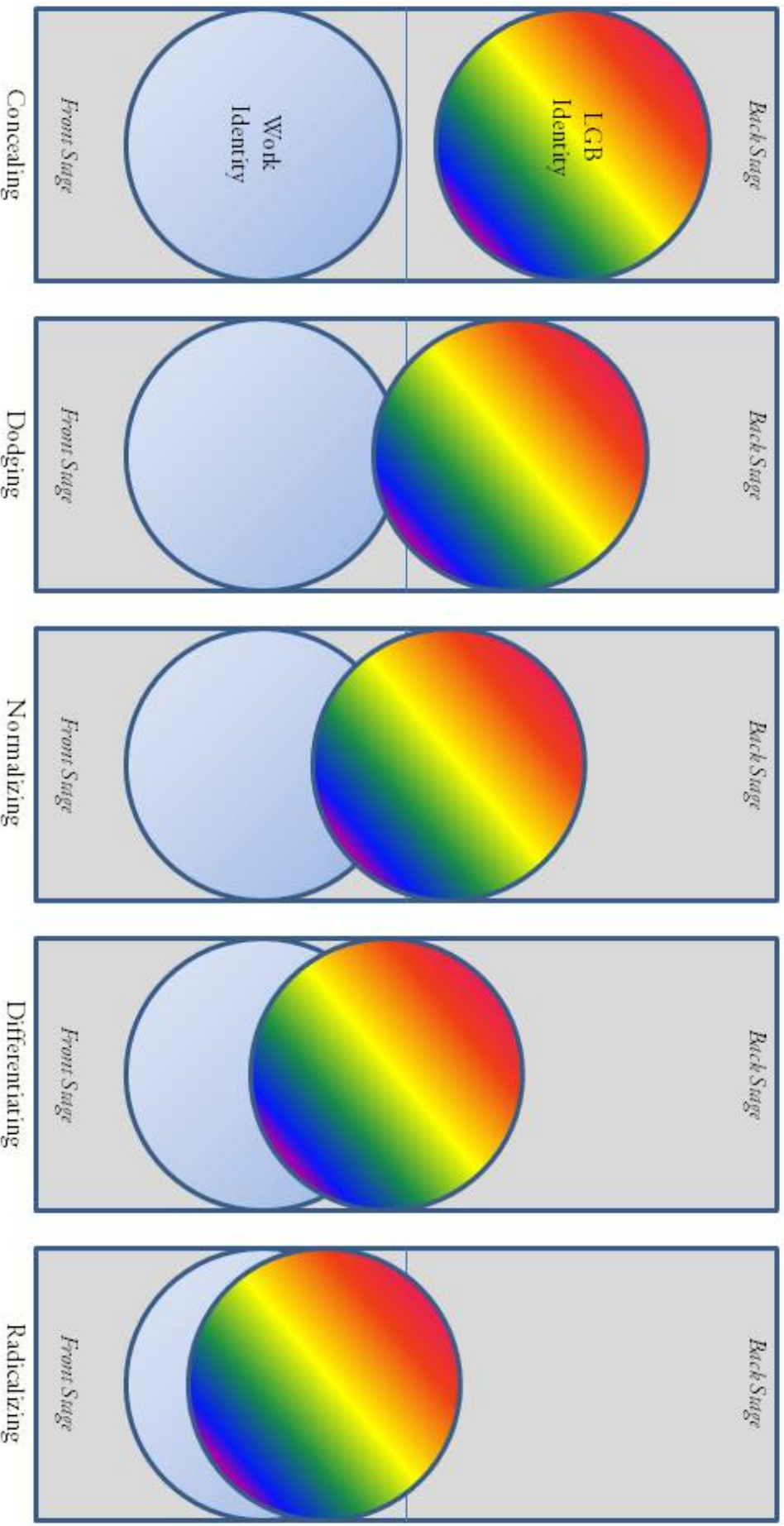
Figure 19. The five identity management strategies depicted according to how much the LGBT identity becomes part of the front-stage

These strategies, while building upon and similar to those proposed by others, for example, Button (2001) and Clair et al. (2005), are explored differently in some respects. As well as adding the strategy of Radicalizing, this analysis concentrates more on the internal *identity* aspect of identity management, by using Simmel's Stranger and Goffman's dramaturgy, while Button (2004) analyses the prevalence of each strategy amongst a quantitative sample. Clair et al.'s (2003) analysis is more similar in scope, in that it looks at identity management strategies, but constructs a generalized model of the disclosure of concealable identities, including those with a disability and those with devout religious beliefs, rather than the more specific analysis that is presented here.

8.4 Conclusions

This chapter shares the varied and dynamic nature of identity management for LGB employees in the workplace. Building on literature on identity management (see Chapter 3), its relevance for the work experiences of LGB employees has been explored. In this chapter, the identity management strategies of LGB workers in Irish workplaces are unpacked and positioned along a continuum of separating and integrating identities. Expanding on previous research that looked at identity management of LGB employees (Button, 2004; Shallenberger, 1996; Woods, 1993), but extending it, these findings deepen our understanding of why one chooses to hide their sexual identity or integrate it. This analysis also extends the previous research in that it shows an additional identity management strategy,

Radicalizing, a way of highlighting one's LGB identity in the workplace that may not have been possible in previous decades.

As explored in Chapter 2, and as shown throughout this chapter, the workplace has a role in the identity management strategy used by its LGB employees. In addition to the culture that is hegemonically engrained in the organisation (and whether it is supportive or not), the organisation itself, in particular the senior and executive members, can take action to support the integration of LGB identities in the workplace. In Geraldine and Yvonne's case, the respective organisations recognized the time they put into promoting diversity and inclusion at work, and actively supported the initiatives that the LGBT network wanted to promote, and as a result these participants were able to use the Differentiating strategy and highlight their LGB identity. Other participants, however, were in more conservative workplaces, and some felt they had to use a Concealing or Dodging strategy to separate their identities, or, in Claire and Aoife's cases, actively rebel against the organisation and use a Radicalizing strategy to enact change. King and Cortina (2010), and Griffith and Hebl (2002) argue that by leading the charge in enhancing community support for LGBT individuals, companies will benefit from economic advantages. This chapter has found that make organisations more supportive for these individuals and for LGB identity management, the individual, the individual's relations with co-workers, and the organisation itself will benefit. Chapter 10 gives a detailed discussion on the different ways in which the workplace can support LGB employees using a variety of strategies.

Table 7. The primary aims, possible antecedents and problems that can arise from using each of the strategies.

	Concealing	**Dodging**	**Normalizing**	**Differentiating**	**Radicalizing**
Primary aims:	To hide sexual identity	To hide sexual identity yet remain authentic to oneself.	To present sexual identity as conventional, not 'other'	To use personal experience and knowledge to help organization	To use personal experience and knowledge to change organization for the better
Possible antecedents:	To be known for work, not sexual identity To ensure family or friends don't find out Homophobic colleagues Hostile workplace culture	To be known for work, not sexual identity; Possibly hostile work culture Possibly hostile colleagues To remain authentic to oneself	LGBT identity is normalized in other aspects of one's life Concern that unwarranted attention is given to their sexual identity	Organisation lacks knowledge about LGBT experiences	Work environment hostile or ignorant regarding LGBT issues Lack of support from senior members regarding LGBT staff Ongoing incidents of discrimination
Possible problems arising from using strategy:	Constant identity management taking attention from work Benefits only open to out employees Workplace focuses on out LGB employees only	Constant identity management taking attention from work activities A focus on out LGB employees – pressure to come out	Perceived over-focus on sexual identity by colleagues and workplace Act of coming out can position sexuality as non-normative	No outlet to use experience Organization doesn't recognise or reward input	Hostility from colleagues and workplace No system for change or voice

Chapter 9. LGBT Networks

"...we are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided."

Albus Dumbledore[ix]

9.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the role of LGBT networks in the work experiences and identity management of LGB employees. To support LGBT employees at work, LGBT employee networks/affinity groups have grown in popularity in recent years, particularly in large multinational organizations, such as Google, Accenture, Goldman Sachs, Microsoft, J.P. Morgan, and EY. LGBT employees' networks can be formed either by the actions of unions or by companies themselves (Colgan & McKearney, 2012), and may vary in their structure, operation and goals (Githens & Aragon, 2009). Like other such company networks, they provide a voice for marginalized or minority employees, a chance to meet other similar workers, and offer the prospect of lobbying for positive change in the organization (Bell, Özbilgin, Beauregard, & Sürgevil, 2011; Colgan, 2016; Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Githens & Aragon, 2009).

In this chapter, the role of employee networks/affinity groups as a source of social support and remedy for LGB workplace isolation, and as a means of providing and encouraging the voice of LGB employees within organizations, is considered. While 'LGBT' is the commonly used acronym for this population and has thus been applied to these networks, this study, as noted above, uses only interviews with lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) employees as its primary source of data. Therefore, although the term "LGBT network" is used in reference to these employee affinity groups throughout this chapter, "LGB" is used in reference to the findings presented here.

As noted earlier, LGBT networks in themselves did not constitute a major theme in the systematic literature review shown in Chapter 2 (and was instead

categorized within the literature on the importance of social interactions and relationships at work) meaning that there was not a lot of research conducted on this topic. This theme was very much developed from the analysis of the empirical study conducted; in other words, the participants discussed LGBT networks to a greater extent than represented in the literature.

The chapter begins with an outline of LGBT networks, their history and ostensible functions. Then, the findings from this study are outlined. The role and function of LGBT networks in the identity management and construction is discussed. The functions of the network discussed here include how it can moderate the Stranger status of the LGB employee; how it provides a chance to form relationships between LGB colleagues, and how it provides voice for some, but perhaps not all LGB employees.

9.2 Overview of LGBT Networks

Raeburn (2004) tracks the rise in number of LGBT networks from 1978 to 1998, and relates the growth to the prevailing politic climate at the time (e.g. the Reagan era saw no new networks set up, while the early Clinton years saw a large rise in number). Today, LGBT networks (or affinity groups, or employee resource groups, as they are also known) are common in many large companies, with 85% of 851 companies surveyed by the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index having some such network or group in place (www.hrc.org, 2016), from only two in 1980 (Raeburn, 2004).

While there is a dearth of research and discussion on LGBT networks in academic literature, authors (Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Githens & Aragon, 2009) have outlined some characteristics, goals and purposes of LGBT employee groups and networks, and there is some literature on LGBT employees having LGBT colleagues. Colgan and McKearney (2012) and Colgan (2016) discuss how LGBT networks act as an individual and collective voice mechanism, provide visibility and community for members, and promote change. By the very fact that they bring together a group of sexual minority employees to the one space, LGBT employee networks can provide social support in the organization (Githens & Aragon, 2009). Similarly, Willis (2010) finds that having colleagues who are also lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer (LGBQ) is a source of support and positive affirmation for LGBT employees; while Chung (2001), exploring coping strategies by LGB employees facing discrimination, finds that social support is one way of managing. The degree to which personal values are aligned with perceived organizational values affects individual employee decisions whether or not to exercise their voice in a work context (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012). However, Rumens (2008) discusses how LGBT employees may not want to be seen to ghettoize themselves in an organisation by socializing with LGBT colleagues. LGBT networks in this analysis are shown to have an effect on the identity management of both its members and the non-members within the organization; this is explored more fully in the following sections.

9.3 LGBT Networks and Identity Management

Because of their name, aim, and membership, an LGBT network interacts with one's identity management in a larger way than other groups. Some LGBT networks, such as Accenture's PWC's GLEE and EY's Unity, have allies –

straight supporters and friends – as members. However, this is not often well known and not common to all networks. Publicly joining an LGBT network is then, in effect, laying claim to a minority sexual identity in the workplace. In this way, the act of joining an LGBT network at work moves one further right on the framework presented in Chapter 8; instead of separating one's sexual identity from one's work identity, one has taken a step towards integrating the two. While exceptions must be made for individual circumstances (including the differing influences at each level presented in Chapter 7), one can assume that those who Concealed and Dodged depicted on the separating/integrating framework would not feel comfortable in joining an LGBT network in their workplace, or, if they indeed do join, would join it in secrecy. LGBT networks ostensibly are therefore made up of the rest of the framework subgroups, those who Normalized, Differentiated and Radicalized. However, this may not always be the reality, as explored in Section 10.5.

Below, specific aspects of LGB identity management in the workplace, namely the Stranger status, and how voice may be affect by identity, are explored in more detail.

9.4 The Potential of LGBT networks

As outlined above, an LGBT network can play a variety of roles in the work lives of LGB employees. Analysis of the interview data shows that an LGBT network serves a variety of functions, similar to findings by other authors (Colgan, 2016; Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Githens & Aragon, 2009), I identify that the LGBT network exists for a number of reasons. As explored in Chapter 7, identity management can be influenced and takes place on a number of levels, and the

LGBT network is one. However, although it does include some discussion of the group-level, my analysis looks more at the micro-level, the individual's interaction with the network, and how it affects their identity management. Firstly, I explore the potential of LGBT employee networks in combatting the isolation and discrimination that characterizes being the Stranger.

Networks as a Social Outlet and Moderator of the Stranger Status

Chapter 6 outlined how heteronormativity and the associated exclusion and marginalization made the LGB person a form of Stranger in the workplace. However, for those in LGBT employee networks, the groups represented a form of respite from the isolation and stigmatization often experienced in other parts of the organization. Some of the participants felt isolated when they were discriminated against, while others felt isolated simply as a result of the small numbers of LGB colleagues in their workplace. The quote below from Aoife (38), where she discusses joining her workplace's employee network, demonstrates how she felt a desire to be around other LGB people:

> *"...I'm gay, and it's important to me, and the gay community, even though I haven't really been involved in it, it was a bit of looking for something new to be involved in, but also… kinda like,* "my people", *you know…"* –
> **Aoife**

For Aoife, the network fulfilled a wish to be around people who had had similar experiences of being gay in Ireland, and in her workplace. The network allowed her the chance to meet other LGB employees, her 'people' as she describes, in

her workplace, with whom she might not have met in other circumstances. Alan shares a similar feeling:

> *"It was nice to know that there were other people in the organization that were gay cus, em, I think there's about 250 in [my] section and I'd be the only one that I know that's out, as such, I know there are 3 or 4 more [here] who are gay, but they're not comfortable about it and they don't want to come out about it, so I'd respect that with them, em, I do know 2 or 3 more who work in [another section] that are gay, but it was nice to suddenly know that there was another 30 or so in the LGBT group that you know, are there, and it just gives you a social outlet, every 3 or 4 months we go for something to eat – it's nice to meet other people who are in the [organization] who are gay that you can relate to and chat about and complain and moan and do all those sort of things we all like doing about the job, but who are also gay"* **– Alan**

Tajfel (1978) conceptualized group membership to include an affective and value element; in other words, a group member can be emotionally invested and derive value from being part of a group. From this perspective, it is easy to see the value of the LGBT network for these workers, and why Aoife was interested in being around her 'people'. Tajfel and Turner (1986) also highlight how being part of a broader social group allows one to access a source of self-worth and social

belongingness, similar to how Aoife and Alan feel. Rumens (2008) finds that friendships between gay men in the workplace can offer a sense of belonging in the workplace, especially in heteronormative ones, as well as enabling them to talk about 'gay issues', where having a shared gay identity engendered affinity and intimacy, overriding differences in superiority, work roles etc. Similarly, Claire discusses how the group acts as a social outlet, and especially with people like her:

"The thing is, the people who responded to the initial invite to join the network and to become part of it, people then who formed the steering group, they're on the same wavelength as you, because they want to do something... You're making new friends, people on the same wavelength, people whose paths you wouldn't cross because they're in [other departments] or somewhere else, and they're there" **– Claire**

Yvonne shares that opinion about her network:

"There's also a social element, [there's] a social director that organizes dinners out, drinks out from time to time. So just at the basic level it's about creating a sense of community within the company" **– Yvonne**

The quotes above show how LGBT networks can help mitigate the feelings of isolation that LGB employees can feel because of their minority status in the

workplace, and in doing so, reduce the feelings and consequences of being a form of the Stranger, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Network as a Symbol for Acceptance and Diversity

The LGBT networks in the participants' organisations, as well as forming a social outlet for their members, also acted to symbolise and signal diversity and the acceptance of LGB employees. In some cases, the LGBT network's very existence acted indirectly as a sign of acceptance, while in others, the network directly took action to address homophobia in the organisation. Like Aoife, Donna (24) discusses how the network in her organization helped her feel part of a group, but also showcases how it highlighted that being LGBT in this particular workplace wouldn't hinder her career:

> *"...there's a sense of...kind of a sense of support but a*
> *sense that I'm not alone in this, you know, like there are*
> *other LGBT employees in here, who are obviously doing*
> *fine, and are great and you know, get along I suppose..."*
> **– Donna**

In this way, the employee network made visible the LGB colleagues who had been successful in the same context, and, as Donna says, 'having a network there enables the… employee to know that there's that kind of level of comfort'. Amy, who works in an organisation without an LGBT network, would like one for similar reasons:

"I think there should be [a LGBT employee network], I would like there to be one…I just think it's good in terms of looking up to people and having role models, and there's no role models I have in the work environment, personally, you know, in the work sense, in the business role, in [my workplace] anyways, so I think I would like to have that kind of role model, and have the space to get to know people" **– Amy**

The network and its members can signal to existing, new, and prospective employees how supportive the workplace it is with regards to LGB diversity. Similarly, Brendan discusses the role he thinks employee networks have for LGB employees in highlighting acceptance:

"I imagine the functions of the network are just to make sure that people do feel comfortable with the sexuality, with the organization, and to reaffirm that you know, if you're a bit camp … it's OK, it doesn't matter, you can be yourself in the corporate world, and the corporate world is not judging you. I think, maybe it's … needed, a necessity for all the years where you would have had to keep it under …wraps, why these sort of networks are reassuring people that it's OK, you know" **– Brendan**

Emma also discusses how the network signals acceptance for LGB employees:

"A lot of people…have this discomfort to a certain extent when they go into a workplace. …I wonder do a lot of places know that or think about that… I know everybody when they start work, needs to kind of, disclose something about their life, but for LGBT employees…you're disclosing a huge part of you…I think…employers like [my workplace] …do think about that… and I think having a network there enables the… employee to know that there's that kind of level of comfort" **– Emma**

The above quotes are from members of organisations, who share the effects that they believe network has. The following quote from Yvonne, however, as the head of her organisation's LGBT network, shares how support is one of explicit goals of the network:

"…our goals are quite clear in that we want to create a sense of community for [LGBT] employees at the company; a support network, if you're kinda feeling unsure or you're new to the company, it's a safe space to kinda learn from your mentors and your peers to be successful at the company" **– Yvonne**

With these quotes, we can see how the network can (and in some cases are designed to) impact on the identity management of LGB employees in the organisation, and not just its members, where having the networks signals to them that being openly LGB is possible and, in some cases, supported by the organisation in that particular workplace. The network, and its prominent

members, had an encouraging influence on LGB employees. For example, Alan discusses how the network's (and his) function can act as an identity management influence on some LGB colleagues who aren't out:

"...one of the issues I suppose is that...I'm gay and I'm out, but I'm always concerned about the fact that there's so many others who aren't, and I think what could, what does help me, is the role, the kind of middle management, but I suppose, for a lot of men in [one section], out of the offices as such, it's very male-orientated, and there's a lot of testosterone... like a football pitch and that, I can see the difficulty for some gay men who would find that intimidating, and that's something I'd like to see the [organization] address more, whether it's training, or better introductions for new staff they're taking on, to let them know that there is an LGBT group there that's taken seriously, and just the presence and acknowledgement, and I think people coming into the council, whatever about the existing staff, coming in, will know that the [organization] take their responsibilities in this area [seriously], and that they're conscious that it's not something they can sweep over...I think...yes, I think if it was given more visibility more people would come out, but I also think, there's a lot of people who just won't,

they're at that stage in their life or, you know, and that's ok if they don't want to that's fine…I'd be more of the opinion that its new people coming in, it's the next generation that it should be made easier for, or at least they don't feel that they can't [come out], and that's what's I'd like to see, any new staff coming in, being made aware that there's an LGBT group" **– Alan**

Similarly, Geraldine, as the head of her organization's network, discusses her role as a very prominent and visible trailblazer for new LGB colleagues:

"…It's because I've done all those things, and I'm gay, and it hasn't mattered that I'm gay, that I want to talk about those things, because I want the next people who are coming through in their careers or the people around me who are maybe not so confident to see that what's more important in the workplace is your work, and your attitude to your work, and your attitude to your colleagues, not that you have to feel scared…" **–**
Geraldine

These quotes show how an LGBT network can help make visible other LGB colleagues who are successful despite their possibly marginalized sexual orientation, and signal the organization's promotion of inclusion. However, as explored in Chapter 8, there are a variety of identity management strategies, and not every LGB employee may feel like they want to join a network. Brendan,

who is characterised as using a typical Normalising strategy in Chapter 8, is one of these, although he recognises the value of it for others:

> *"I don't think [there is a need for an LGBT network in my workplace], certainly not for me, I don't feel I need it, I don't know about the other people in the organization, people that may be in the closet in the organization…I don't know that there's a need for it, maybe so, I know there's quite a lot of gay women in the organization, like quite a lot actually, and at senior levels, and a lot of them are actually in the closet, I don't know whether it'd help them maybe, if there was some sort of a network, but I don't feel the need for it, no"* **– Brendan**

Brendan's quote captures how an LGB network, and its functions, may only be a support for some LGB employees. For someone like Brendan, who prefers to normalise his LGB identity, joining a network may draw more attention to it than he'd like, and the presumed value of the network for them may be lessened.

While the functions of the LGBT networks explored above focus on the micro and relational levels, networks were also found in the analysis to have an impact on the organisational level, in that they cater as a voice mechanism for their members.

Networks as a Voice Mechanism

In Chapter 7, I discuss how the participants and their LGB colleagues often felt like they didn't have, or couldn't use, voice in their workplace. There were a number of reasons for this, including the distrust that some people felt for authority because of historical mistreatment, not knowing how to make a complaint about subtle discrimination, or because they didn't want to be seen as disloyal or an agitator. In some cases, however, the LGBT employee network provided voice for its members, and they didn't have to individually voice their concerns, similar to findings in previous research (Colgan, 2016; Colgan & McKearney, 2012). Claire (49) set up the LGBT network in her organization as a direct result of the discrimination she felt during her time in the organization and the incident of subtle discrimination regarding her civil partnership, described above:

> *"...I was being constantly sniggered at in a previous department, before the one I'm in now. And in around the civil partnership thing, I just thought, decided, "You know what? I'm sick of this shit… Why don't we just do something?"* **– Claire**

For Claire, the LGBT network acted as a collective voice mechanism to lobby for the abolition of heteronormative exclusion and discrimination in her organization. Similarly, John (33) describes how the LGBT network in his company was brought in as a form of voice mechanism, as a result of discrimination, and the need for social support:

"...our employees at the LGBT forum told us they didn't know where to go, and they all had different stories [of discrimination]... and they just had no one to talk to or didn't realize that there was someone to talk to, and the idea of having a semi-formal network is that you have someone to talk to or you know, where to go to if you want to talk" **– John**

The networks also represented a voice mechanism for those LGBT employees who wanted to enact change in their organization:

"[The network has] been in touch with HR, making submissions to them about a leaflet we've drawn up that we feel every member of staff should get. We also want to bring up stuff about, when new staff come in they get a day's instruction, and that they're made aware that [the network] exists, and that the [workplace] has a policy in relation to the [network], and people who are in that category, That doesn't happen at the moment so we're trying to push for that" **– Alan**

"[The network] also then [does] this aspect of working with leadership and working with HR, to make sure that the firm is on track, so we've just done a big piece of work with our HR... around policy, to make sure...our policies [are] equal for LGBT employees, as well as everybody else, so have we got the same status, have we

got the same rights, have we got the same… everything

else"– **Geraldine**

These quotes show how, as well as having a role in the micro and relational levels of the LGB workplace experience, the network can have an effect on the organisational level. The employee networks themselves differed in size, scope and goals, similar to Githens and Aragon's (2009) analysis of these groups, as outlined in Chapter 2, showing that there is not a uniform approach to establishing or maintaining an employee network in organizations.

Critical theory draws attention to the power differentials between actors – in this case we can see the networks and groups serving as the actors, and observe the differing degrees of power and acceptance that they have in the organization. Some networks, like Claire's, which were formed in an attempt to change a hostile climate, were more political, critical and subversive in scope, almost similar in tone to a workers' union, or Githen's and Aragon's 'Queer/Radical Approach', and had little support or buy-in from their organisation. Others, like Geraldine's and Yvonne's, which had organisational support, were closer to Githens and Aragon's 'Conventional Approach' in their scope, and worked hand-in-hand with the organization to meet their goals. While the latter type of network certainly enjoys more resources, support and visibility, their close relationship to the organization may prove calamitous in incidents like Yvonne's story, where senior staff cancelled an event the network wanted to hold in support of the Irish Marriage Equality referendum (see Section 7.3). It might be that the price of having such organizational support limits the autonomy of the network, and their capacity to act outside of set organizational goals (Githens &

Aragon, 2009). On the other hand, the more radical networks, acting as a form of union, could act in direct opposition to the network and suffer less from the organization's umbrage, yet may find it harder to enact change as they may not be able to use conventional channels (Bryson, 2004; Dundon & Gollan, 2007; Danford, Richardson, Stewart, Tailby & Upchurch, 2005). These networks may also run the risk of isolating its members further from the general workforce, exacerbating the Stranger versus Group dichotomy that Simmel (1908) highlights, and creating a "gay ghetto" (Rumens, 2008); whereas members of the more conventional networks that are entrenched in their organization may not suffer from that marginalization.

9.5 Conclusion

The stories above demonstrate how LGBT employee networks can serve as an antidote to discrimination and loneliness in the organization, as well as a mechanism for voice. From being treated as outsiders and representing a form of the Stranger because of marginalization or exclusion, the employees have formed or joined an LGBT network to gain social support, organize a collective voice for change, and to share their stories with similar others. The LGBT network allows its members to meet other people like them, in a space wherein there may be not be many, and in doing so they can feel like less of a Stranger. The network can shield its members from the potential and perceived harm that using one's individual voice in the organization and in doing so allows the member to feel the benefits of being heard.

While the culture of the organisation often led to the exclusion or discrediting of LGB employees, the LGBT network is a way of counteracting this, by providing voice and a form inclusion. Viewed through the power lens, while heteronormativity was hegemonically ensconced in some organisations, the LGBT network represented a form of collective power that to some extent disempowered it. For those on the outside of the organisation, or newly joined, the network is a signal that heteronormative values aren't supported in (all of) the organisation; for current employees, the network can act as a reprieve from the pressure and othering that the culture can lead to.

However, as explored in Chapter 11, the LGBT network does not represent a suitable support mechanism for all LGB employees. Chapter 8 outlines how some LGB employees (namely, those using a Concealing or Dodging strategy) do not wish to integrate their LGB identity in the workplace; these people presumably would not feel comfortable joining a network unless strict confidentiality/anonymity practices were in place, and still may not even if they are.

The importance of the LGBT network, as shown here, further demonstrates the multiple levels of influence on identity management.

9.6 Contribution and Implications

This chapter has shown how LGBT networks can play a part in the identity management of LGB employees in the workplace. It adds to the large gap in the business and management literature and in particular draws attention to the

micro-level interactions and identity ramifications that an LGBT network can have with a member, as well as how the network represents a source of social belongingness (Rumens, 2008) for its members, similar to propositions within social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and findings from Rumens (2008). Chapter 7 shows how influences on LGB identity management exist on a number of levels; this chapter shows one other particular influence at the group/relational level.

Chapter 6 above has shown how LGB workers can feel isolated and completely different from their heterosexual colleagues, positioning them as a form of Stranger in the workplace. This chapter shows one possible remedy to these feelings of exclusion. The implications of this study underline the importance of organizational LGBT employee networks in advocating organizational belongingness to this particular workgroup. LGBT networks within organizations provide a forum to counter discrimination or feelings of inequity from minority employees, in that it allows communal discussions and information-sharing on members' careers and the obstacles (or not) faced by LGB employees within their respective organizations. This enables access to LGB role models within the organization (important for signalling a supportive workplace environment for LGB employees, McIntyre & Nixon, 2014) social interaction with other LGB colleagues (Rumens, 2010b), and a source of self worth and social-belongingness (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The research presented in this chapter is one of only a handful of studies on LGBT employee networks. It presents in particular for the first time a clear link between LGBT networks and identity for LGB employees, and investigates how

networks can provide a number of identity-related functions for their members, including mitigating the 'Stranger' feelings. While the focus in this research is LGBT employees, the findings here could readily be applied to other minorities in the workplace.

The next chapter outlines the contributions that this dissertation makes to the literature on LGB workplace experiences, identity in the workplace, and diversity and inclusion.

Chapter 10. Research Contribution and Implications

"We can only see a short distance ahead,
but we can see plenty there that needs to be done."[x]

Alan Turing

10.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the contribution to knowledge that this research project makes, and the implications for practice that arise from this. As stated in Chapter 3, there is a dearth of research on LGB careers and workplace experiences in the business and management domains, despite the proliferation of interest in the business case for diversity within organisations. This thesis focuses on the experiences of LGB employees in their identity management in the workplace. This chapter seeks to elucidate and highlight the specific contributions that this research makes, in confirming, adding to and extending extant knowledge, and contributing to new knowledge. The chapter is subdivided based on contributions made to theory, and the implications and recommendations of the findings presented for practice. Tables 9 and 10 give an overview of the main contributions.

10.2 Contributions to Theory

Three major contributions to theory regarding the workplace experiences of the LGB population are presented in the findings chapters within this thesis. Firstly, in Chapter 6, the heteronormativity inherent and/or felt in many interactions, practice and systems within the Irish workplace is discussed, using Simmel's Stranger concept as an analytic lens. In Chapter 7, Goffman's Dramaturgical metaphor for identity management is used to show how LGB workers can hide, reveal or emphasize certain facets of their identity in response to their surrounding environment. Lastly, in Chapter 9, social identity theory in particular is used to analyse how LGB networks can represent a respite for some LGB

employees from feeling like the Strange in organizations. Each of these is unpacked further, next.

Heteronormativity and the Stranger

Chapter 6 explores how heteronormativity (Rumens, 2010a) manifests in the Irish workplace, and how this positions LGB employees as a form of the Stranger (Simmel, 1908). As discussed, heteronormativity is a cultural hegemony that places heterosexual expression, values, and practices as the preferred norm, while queer alternatives, including homosexual, bisexual, gender variant or non-binary identities and expression, are viewed as deviant and unnatural (Butler, 1990; Hart, 1994; Rich, 1990, Rumens, 2010a). Chapter 6 focuses on how this hegemony was experienced by LGB employees, and uses Fleming & Spicer's (2004) *Faces of Power* framework, and Simmel's (1908) concept of the Stranger as tools of analysis.

Simmel's (1908) work on the Stranger was considered in unison with Goffman's (1963) work on stigma, as outlined in Chapter 2. While other authors have used this work in analysing the work experiences of LGBT employees (e.g. Creed & Scully, 2000; Roberts, 2011), I found that Simmel's appeared to more closely match the data collected in this study. While the two theories are quite similar, I felt Goffman's construction of a stigmatized identity was too strong – the participants did not relate that they felt stigmatized per se, but rather, as Amy puts it, " *a little bit off the beaten track"*. This may reflect the growth in acceptance of LGB people in the workplace and wider society; whatever the reason, Goffman's (1963) description of the stigmatized did not seem to explain

the experiences of the participants interviewed, while the subtle and more nuanced distance that Simmel's (1908) Stranger faces did more accurately.

I find from my analysis that hegemonic heteronormativity indeed appeared to be woven into the everyday culture, interactions and practices of the organisations in which the participants worked. Some participants experienced overtly heteronormative interpersonal interactions, while for others heteronormativity manifested as a culture that made them feel isolated and excluded, for example, as Liam and Amy outline in Chapter 6:

> *"I didn't fit the mould for there…The mould would have been very much squeaky clean … no head above the parapet, no drawing attention to yourself … very grey. I think, had either one aspect - either my sexuality, or my ethnicity or religion - been at issue, they [would] have been tolerated, but both together, the confluence of that was not going to be tolerated"* **– Liam**

> *"It just wasn't me. I felt a little bit off the beaten track compared to the rest of them. They were all lovely people, but I just didn't feel … there was anyone else …similar to you. …All my friends were sound, but in terms of the gay thing, I just didn't feel comfortable… and I felt it was very straight-laced, and you'd hear on a weekly basis people slagging…there's a lot of under-toned kind of slags, now that was 7, 8, 10 years ago, I'm sure it's changed a lot now, but at the time, I didn't feel it was OK"* **– Amy**

Heteronormativity was encountered in ways reminiscent of both the *Domination* and *Subjectification* faces of power (Fleming & Spicer, 2014). While episodic power is also represented in Fleming and Spicer's (2014) framework, through the *Coercion* and *Manipulation* faces of power, direct and blatant acts of heteronormative power relations were not discussed often in the interview data, suggesting that heteronormativity operates on a more systemic level, at least in the workplaces of those interviewed. The other faces of power, Domination and Subjectification, were found in this study's analysis, however, with the former manifesting as an institutionalized value system that placed homosexuality at a discredited end of a solidified binary, and the latter policing behaviour through interpersonal interactions and idealized specific ways of acting and appearing 'professional'. For example, as shown in Chapter 6, both Amy and Claire found certain workplaces to be heteronormative:

> *"I find there's something a little bit different about getting*
> *the rapport with people, because they're quite kind of girly*
> *or they've brown tan…It's totally different to me…because*
> *they're talking about their boyfriends...and I think it can be*
> *a little bit difficult"* **- Amy**

> *"I'll put it to you this way, I'm not going to go to any of*
> *these places, like Ernst and Young or any of these places,*
> *in a skirt, I'm not going to go in all dolled up, like a dolly*
> *bird, you know what I mean" – **Claire***

Heteroprofessionalism (Mizzi, 2013) was shown to be a particular way in which the behaviour, dress and expression of employees was regulated and standardized, in line with heteronormative ideals.

These findings add to the growing amount of research on heteronormativity, and how it manifests in the workplace. It shows how LGB employees may feel that they will not belong in a particular workplace because they do not conform to certain ways of dress, acting and presentation. In particular, it also adds to the research on the relatively new concept of heteroprofessionalism (Mizzi, 2013). The analysis shows how "professionalism", as thought of by the participants, is comprised of certain heteronorms, and dissuades one from being open about their LGB identity.

Separation and Integration of Identities

The second theoretical contribution of this PhD dissertation was set out in Chapter 8, which presents a framework showing the different archetypical strategies that LGB employees use in managing their identity in the workplace. Using Goffman's (1959) Dramaturgical metaphor, I show how some people like to place their sexual identity in the 'backstage' and conceal it; others move it to the 'front stage' and emphasize it; still others prefer to normalize their identity and have it neither at the front or back.

The framework consists of five archetypical strategies one can take in the management of their sexual identity in the workplace, and draws attention in particular to the role of heteronormativity and power in these identity management decisions. The Concealing and Dodging strategies, for example, can

be viewed as subjecting to the hegemonic heteronormativity by hiding one's sexual identity, or subverting it by deliberately not allowing the culture to exclude oneself on the basis of sexuality. These archetypical strategies built on but extended previous frameworks (e.g. Button, 2004; Clair et al., 2005; Woods, 1993), by providing a richer, qualitative exploration of four strategies analogous to those previously identified by these authors, and also identifying an additional strategy of identity integration (namely, Radicalizing).

The identity management strategies and framework may be applied in different contexts and to other marginalized employees groups, particularly those with concealable stigmatized identities such as those with particular disabilities or those with mental health issues. The different archetypical strategies, ranging from concealing one's identity to making it an observable facet of one's work identity, may easily apply to, and therefore be used in the analysis of, the experiences of these other employee groups. Like in Roberts (2014) and Creed and Scully (2000), the use of Goffman's metaphor allows one to visualize more clearly the process of LGB identity management, transforming the process from an abstract conceptualization into a familiar, recognizable representation. Creed and Scully (2000) explore the ways in which LGBT identity is claimed in the workplace; Roberts (2014) shows how gay men's workplace identities can be negotiated, resisted and modified in interaction with others. This study shows how LGB identity management in the workplace is affected by a confluence of influences at multiple levels, including hegemonic heteronormativity and LGBT networks.

The contribution of the separating-integrating framework is four-fold. Firstly, to business and management researchers interested in research on minority, under-researched populations at work; in this instance, in LGB(T) research. These findings add to the knowledge and understanding on LGB identity management in the workplace, showing how, depending on the workplace or the 'audience', one's identity management strategy can change. I have presented five different archetypical strategies with which one integrates or separates their LGB identity with workplace identity. Further research is required to explore these different sub-groups in more detail, for instance using longitudinal studies to explore issues of intersectionality and comparisons both within sub-groups (e.g. between L, G or B participants; across age ranges; across educational background, etc.) and across the sub-groups. However, studies in the business and management domain focusing on LGB workers are only in their infancy, and much more in-depth research is required in order to encourage researchers to theorize about these differing work experiences and to test the blending identity continuum with larger groups of LGB respondents.

Secondly, at the organizational level, this study shares insights into the daily identity management experiences of LGB people at work, and how a group that is often treated homogenously in terms of HR policies and practices is in fact comprised of many different subgroups that approach their workplace identity differently. Rather than a singular approach to diversity management across the LGB population at work, this study suggests that a more multi-pronged approach, accepting of LGB employees' individual decisions regarding the extent to which they blend their identity at work, is required within organizations. Future research of a more quantitative nature which could enumerate the proportion of LGB

employees at work across the five archetypes in the continuum would provide further evidence to organizations regarding support mechanisms which balance individual privacy, career concerns, and identity disclosure, weighing up the organizational and individual benefits across the five archetypes, and the corresponding organizational responses and supports.

Thirdly, this research showed how identity management was underpinned by the generative mechanism (Bhaskar, 1975) of power, manifesting in this context as heteronormativity. Wider ramifications of this finding for other groups can be observed; as noted in Chapter 3, identity management is not a process unique to the LGB population, but experienced by everyone. Other populations may also have their identity management impacted by hegemonic power or ideals, including those with other minority identities that can be concealed, for example, those with a criminal background or with mental health issues (Goffman, 1963), and have to choose from strategies similar to those presented in the separating-integrating framework.

Finally, the theoretical contribution of this chapter suggests that identity management is a core concern for LGB workers and determines their workplace experiences. For organizations and academics seeking to better understand and cater to LGB people in the workforce, an appreciation of the intricacies of identity management is warranted, with the integration position as best practice, while allowing for reasons why other strategies may be needed at certain times. The framework presented in Figure 15 summarizes this. Further research substantiating, testing, and adding to my proposed blending identities continuum would be welcomed.

LGBT Networks

Chapter 9 explored the role and value of organizational LGBT networks or affinity groups in the workplace experience of LGB employees. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) was used as a theoretical lens to help analyse this. I find that LGBT networks serve as an antidote to the loneliness and isolation that heteronormativity can incite, through the shared identity and experience of its members. I also show how these networks can promote voice for LGB employees. LGBT networks represented a form of collective power against hegemonic heteronormativity in the workplace. In using Social Identity Theory, I could ascertain the value to some LGB employees of their LGB identity, and the subsequent worth that they placed on the LGBT network.

However, LGBT networks were also found to not be a desirable solution for every participant. As explored in Chapter 8, some LGB employees do not reveal their sexual identity in the workplace, and would therefore not want to join a network, while others may believe that joining a network would over-emphasize their sexual identity, whereas they would prefer to normalize it.

The findings regarding the LGBT networks contribute to knowledge in a number of ways. Firstly, as shown in the literature review presented in Chapter 2, research on LGBT networks is very scant (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Colgan & Rumens, 2014). This research furthers the literature on these groups by developing the extant knowledge on the role and function of the LGBT network in the identity management of LGB employees. Similar to other research on LGBT networks (Colgan, 2016; Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Githens & Aragon, 2009), this analysis shows that the LGBT network has a number of functions in

relation to identity management and the workplace experiences of LGB employees. It is a source of social support, and can moderate the exclusion and marginalisation that is characteristic within the experiences of the Stranger (Simmel, 1908), and in doing so allows an LGB employee feel more comfortable being out in the workplace. As other authors (Colgan & McKearney, 2012; Githens & Aragon, 2009) have found, a network can represent a voice mechanism and provide visibility to the LGB group within the organisation.

This study also shows, however, how an LGB network may not appeal to all members of that employee group, and in doing so reduce their presumed effectiveness and reach. This could theoretically be extended (but must be empirically tested) with other affinity networks in the workplace, such as those designed to support women or racial minorities in the workplace. Prospective members of these groups may feel that to join such a network would magnify their difference; they may prefer to normalise or minimise it.

These findings warrant more research on the nature of LGBT employee networks, to extend the very small amount of research that has been conducted in the business and management literature, and to delve deeper into the identity management functions and influences that the network represents.

10.5 Implications for Practice

This research primarily focuses on the individual and their workplace experiences; individual employees, not organizational representatives, were interviewed, and it is at this level that most of the findings presented above are formed. Nonetheless, a number of the findings presented in this dissertation have

implications for the organization and practice. These are, namely, findings concerned with the heteronormativity that is found to be hegemonic in many of the participants' workplaces (Chapter 6), with the multiple levels at which identity management is influenced (Chapter 7), with the Ascertainment Period (Chapter 7), with the differing ways in which sexual identity can be integrated with or separated from one's work identity (Chapter 8), with LGBT Networks (Chapter 9), and with the Power/Identity framework that is presented later in this chapter.

Heteronormativity

As explored in Chapter 6, many of the participants in this study found the culture of their workplace to be heteronormative, positioning LGB identities like theirs as aberrant or discredited, in comparison to the preferred heterosexual norm. Whether through interpersonal relations and incidents, or through the culture of the organisation itself, this hegemonic power affected the participants' identity management, caused them to question their role in the workplace, and negatively influenced their sense of belonging.

Although legislation exists to protect those who face discrimination based on sexual orientation (see Appendix H) these findings show that LGB employees can face very subtle culturally-bound oppression, based on heteronormative standards, that may be less easy to target, similar to findings by Rumens (2014), Rumens & Broomfield (2014) and Williams et al. (2009) that show that even in supposedly "gay-friendly" workplaces, queer identities can be limited and constrained by heteronormative ideals. These employees may find therefore

themselves unable to formalise a complaint to HR. This analysis shows that different types of discrimination and marginalisation, both blatant and subtle, exist in the workplace; a multi-faceted approach is therefore needed to combat it. As well as having a complaints/grievances procedure in place, a workplace could hold information sessions as part of their diversity programme, specifically addressing heteronormativity in addition the more commonly discussed and blatant homophobia. As discussed in Chapter 9, an LGBT network can give both visibility and voice to LGB employees; ensuring that a viable group such as this is present and in the workplace, and is listened to, will help ensure experiences and cultural manifestations of hegemonic heteronormativity that may not have been visible to heterosexual employees will be taken note of. Simple acts of reaffirming the organisation's support for diversity and inclusion in relation to LGB identities, such as participating in Pride events or celebrating International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia can ensure that sexual minority employees feel they are valued as much as their heterosexual colleagues.

Multi-Level Influences on Identity Management

Chapter 7 explored, from the individual LGB employee's point of view, how identity management took place at, and was influenced on, a number of levels. How LGB employees approach their identity management may be a useful guide in explaining how they experience the workplaces. With existing research suggesting the positive business case for being out in the work place (Gedro, 2013; Herring, 2009; King and Cortina, 2010; Robinson and Dechant, 1997; Slater, Weigand and Zwerlein, 2008), organizational awareness of the complex

layers which influence the identity management decision-making for LGB workers should aid them in improving their inclusive HR policies and practices in their organization. In turning attention to the managerial and organizational contribution of this research, the analysis leads to three specific recommendations which organizations could act upon and improve in order to better support their LGB workers.

Firstly, informal organizational customs and traditions need to be inclusive, particularly in Ireland given the legislative changes, to ensure that celebrations such as engagements or weddings are equally respected among all employees, irrespective of sexual orientation. Claire's experience of having her Civil Partnership ignored in this sense shows a result of failing to respect such an event:

> *"...it's really subtle, but you feel it...[It] kind of hurt*
> *actually. That hurts."* **– Claire**

Recognizing that these culturally-bound rituals are as much as part of the workplace experience as formal events allows one to see the importance of ensuring they are practiced fairly and equitably.

Secondly, the privacy of the individual needs to be respected, to prevent LGB workers from living in fear of being 'outed' by someone else. From a HR perspective, this means ensuring that confidentiality and data-protection policies are extended to include sexual orientation, and that employees within the HR department ensure that their colleague is open about their sexuality (in all areas within the workplace) before disclosing it in conversation or otherwise. This is,

and will be, more of an issue in cotemporary times, compared to previous decades, because of the passing of civil rights legislation (See Chapter 11). More LGB employees than ever before are likely to approach HR in relation to partner benefits (for spouses) and parental leave, and in doing so could reveal their sexual orientation to HR, whilst remaining in the closet in other areas of their workplace.

Thirdly, on-going organization-wide open support for LGBT networks in the workplace is required, whilst still allowing a degree of separation and autonomy for these groups, who may at times be critical of the workplace. By supporting (but not controlling) these networks, an organization can ensure that the rights of their LGB employees are being supported; that an additional voice mechanism is in place for these employees, some of whom may not want to act individually; and that any problems in the workplace with regards to discrimination, heteronormativity, policies or practices will be flagged by the group, allowing the organisation to educate themselves and make changes if necessary.

My study found that many participants wished to normalize or downplay the importance of their sexual identity in the work environment (organizational-level layer). While much of the literature from the USA describes coming out as a momentous and weighty decision (e.g. Day and Schoenrade, 1997; Ellis and Riggle, 1995; Griffith and Hebl, 2002), those interviewed here did not feel so, which may be because of the increased acceptance of LGB people in the broader Irish society (at the macro-level layer), and the consequent changes in their self-perception (at the micro-level layer). On a more meso/organizational level, Irish workplaces may wish to keep this in mind when monitoring their diversity

initiatives, for example, LGB employee networks/affinity groups. While many openly LGB employees in the USA would benefit more from joining an LGBT employee network for the protection and social change they promote (Githens & Aragorn, 2009), Irish LGB employees may not feel as motivated to do so, because of the employment protection (enshrined in the legislation) and civil rights afforded to them. The relative importance of the LGB employee network may then be lesser in countries where a large amount of civil rights and employment protection for sexual minorities exists. Low numbers of people within LGB employee networks may not signify lower numbers of these employees, or a lack of interest in LGB diversity, but simply that the LGB workers feel comfortable enough at work that they do not feel it necessary to join. Correspondingly, LGB employees in countries where no such rights or protections exist (for example, Turkey, Russia and many African countries, at the time of writing) may benefit much more from an employee network in their organization, if it is possible to initiate one. In places like this, however, it may of more use if the HR department advocate for diversity, privacy and ethical treatment of all employee groups, rather than start a network that may not gain a useful number of employees as members. In other words, a one-size-fits-all, or "best practice" approach may not be useful; instead, a tailored "best-fit" approach, taking into account each countries unique cultural, social, political and legislative context, would be best. However, this is beyond the scope of this study; much more research, focusing on each context individually, would be needed.

The Ascertainment Period

In this research study, I coined a new identity management term, the *Ascertainment Period*, in which the employee works out whether their new workplace will be welcoming of them before deciding to come out or not. As detailed in Chapter 7, this is similar to the induction period that all employees, LGB or not, go through when they first join the workplace. Like the induction period, which is a time where new recruits settle into the new organisational context, the Ascertainment Period relates to getting used to the new environment, but is specifically concerned with one's sexual orientation and how well it will be accepted in the new environment. LGB employees spend this time (which theoretically occurs simultaneously with the induction period) looking for cues as to the organisational support for non-heterosexual identities.

As discussed above, coming out into a safe environment has positive effects for both the person's career and the organization (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; King et al., 2008; Madera, 2010). Madera (2010) shows how concealing an LGBT identity can have a large cognitive toll on LGB employees, possibly interfering with day-to-day work, while Day and Schoenrade (1997) show that workers who are open about their sexual identity have higher affective commitment, higher job satisfaction, higher perceived top management support, lower role ambiguity, lower role conflict, and lower conflict between work and home. It is in both the employee's and the employer's best interest, therefore, to ensure that LGB workers feel comfortable enough with their environment to come out, and the sooner they do so, the better. HR practitioners are in a unique position to ensure that, especially during the period in which new, potentially LGB, employees are Ascertaining (for example, after the recruitment of a cohort of graduates), the

company actively promotes supports LGB diversity in the workplace, and in doing so encourages their employees to come out. To minimize the cognitive toll of hiding one's identity in the workplace during the Ascertainment Period, HR practitioners can highlight in the information they give their new employees the value they place on diversity and inclusion, and the protective, supportive and equitable policies they have in place, thus reducing the time then needed for LGB workers to determine the support available. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that the existence of 'gay-friendly' policies are cognizant of the inherent differences between the LGBTQ subgroups (as discussed above in Chapter 2) (Colgan et al., 2007), and that the existence of such a culture does not constrain or inhibit the individuality of such identities with heteronormative ideals (Rumens, 2014; Rumens & Broomfield, 2014).

There are a number of ways this could be achieved, for example, by highlighting the business case for having a diverse workforce (Gedro, 2013; King and Cortina, 2010; Slater, Weigand and Zwerlein, 2008), hosting diversity workshops and events, and outlining the disciplinary measures in place designed to prevent homophobia within the organization. Having LGBT employee resource groups within the organization would also signal its acceptance of sexual minorities to prospective and new employees (Colgan & McKearney, 2012). However, as mentioned below, the caveat of having an LGBT network in place is to appreciate that some LGB people may not want to join, for a number of reasons, some of which are beyond the scope and responsibility of the organisation (e.g. for personal privacy reasons and family issues), rather than, for example, fear of career-related discrimination.

Separation or Integration of Identities

As explored in Chapter 8, a number of identity management strategies were observed in the interviews with the participants. These strategies differed in the degree to which one's LGB status was brought to the *front-stage* of one's identity performance. These differences have several implications for organizations and the HR function within. Below are the strategies and the associated implications for practice for each of them.

It is very likely, of course, that an organization will have LGBT employees that each use different strategies in managing their identity at work; for example, some may differentiate while their colleagues normalize, or conceal. As Claire mentions above:

> *"People are just not - either not out at home or they're just not*
> *out at work, we found that actually, when we were setting up*
> *the LGBT network in there, that we were aware of no end of*
> *gay and lesbian staff, but they're not out and they won't join the*
> *network either…"* **– Claire**

While Claire is characterized as using a radicalizing strategy, she knows of colleagues who use the concealing or dodging strategy. The actor/setting binary is again highlighted here; while the setting is the same, the actor's personal profile also influences the identity management strategy that is chosen. Therefore, the organization should use a combination of the actions recommended below to better serve all of their LGB employees. There are no clashes or incompatibilities between the recommendations – indeed many of the

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proposed actions could serve a number of the strategies. The exact practices that the organization uses should be as a result of their knowledge of their employees. For example, if they were made aware by the head of the LGBT network that they were lots of people in the organization that were concealing or dodging, they could focus their resources on the recommendations for these two subgroups.

Concealing

Those who used this strategy wished to completely separate their LGB identity from their workplace identity. Some wished to avoid the negativity arising from heteronormativity or homophobic colleagues in the workplace, and others wished to separate their identities so that others' focus would be on their work, and not any personal aspect of their identity.

With that in mind, an important consideration for workplaces is how much, or in what manner, they wish to encourage LGB employees to come out at work. While, as shown in Chapter 2, research has highlighted the positive effects of being out at work, some may not benefit as much or at all, depending on individual circumstances and personality. To access certain benefits (for example, partner benefits or parental benefits), LGB employees may have to run the risk of outing themselves to colleagues in the HR department. Workplaces should therefore allow these employees to remain in the closet whilst still having access to these benefits; for example by revising the terminology and questions on forms, or by ensuring that HR staff do not informally ask potentially revealing questions. Furthermore, members of the HR department should be made aware

that complete confidentiality with regard to matters such as these is upheld. To allow LGB employees to use their voice in the organization and make recommendations or complaints on LGB diversity without outing themselves, anonymous voice mechanisms (like a suggestion box) should be put in place. Or, if they knew the majority of their employees were comfortable being open in the workplace (and normalizing), they could take onboard some of the recommendations in the Differentiating subsection below, to help their diversity and inclusion efforts in general and ensure that new employees are encouraged to be out at work also.

Dodging

Like with those who use the Concealing strategy, those who use the Dodging strategy wish to separate their sexual identity and their workplace identity. They do so in a different manner than the previous subgroup however, in that they dodge or avoid conversations, topics and events wherein their sexuality may become known. By dodging these topics, one does not have to fabricate a heterosexual identity, which comes from the assumptions of others, rather than any deliberate effort on behalf of the person themselves. In this way they retain some authenticity to themselves. For this reason, those who use the dodging strategy may not be as committed to keeping their sexual identity completely private, and so workplaces may be in a position to encourage those who use the dodging strategy to be more open at work.

This can be done in a variety of ways. Dodging may occur as a result of an employee's indecision about whether or not the organization is accepting of

sexual minority employees. One way to address this issue is to internally and externally show the organization's commitment to the LGBT community; through sponsorship of LGBT events, diversity statements, and the celebration of role models. Starting an LGBT network, or openly supporting the creation of an LGBT network, also highlights acceptance, and importantly gives the employee a space in the organization in which they know they would not be discriminated against due to their sexuality.

However, other employees who use the Dodging strategy may not want to, or may not be in a position, to come out at all. Workplaces should respect this decision and not push too much. With these employees, workplaces could implement practices of confidentiality and secrecy, like those recommended in the Concealing section above, to ensure that these voices are still heard.

Normalizing

The Normalizing strategy represents those who neither conceal nor highlight their sexuality. Their sexual identity is part of their workplace identity, in the same way that a heterosexual identity is part of most others' workplace identity. In breaking down this strategy, we can surmise that one Normalizes because they feel they are comfortable in being open about their sexual identity, and do not feel they have to radicalize it in response to a negative environment. As some of our participants showed, one can both normalize their identity at most times and differentiate it at others (e.g. Yvonne), if the organization prompts it.

Both Normalizing and Differentiating can be seen as desirable outcomes for both the individual and the organization; the former strategy means business as usual,

where one's sexual identity does not interfere with one's workplace identity, while the latter signals that the organization can count on the knowledge of the individual to better build on their diversity and inclusion knowledge, while the individual could benefit from increased visibility and responsibility in their career. Concealing and Dodging, as show in the literature review in Chapter 2, takes up psychological resources, and may therefore affect one's work (Hetherington, 1991; Schmidt & Nilsson, 2006), while the Radicalizing strategy is by nature a response to a negative environment.

Therefore, it is in the individual's and organization's best interests that employees feel they can Normalize or Differentiate in the workplace. However, as stated above, sexual identity management is not a static choice, it is an on-going process that can change and differ in new environments or groups. Thus, for those who are already normalizing their sexual identity in the organization, practices that help encourage and reinforce this behaviour (i.e. that help ensure that one does not begin to Conceal, Dodge, or Radicalize in response to negative treatment). In this way, the aim for organizations is to ensure that the conditions that lead to one concealing, dodging or radicalizing are not met. One recommendation to encourage this is to celebrate the diversity of the organization's employees, as well as highlighting a commitment to diversity and inclusion externally. These diversity statements should explicitly address coming out and being authentic in the workplace.

Differentiating

Those who Differentiate, as described above, do so in response to positive prompts from their environment. Differentiating is centered on highlighting one's sexual identity as part of their work identity, in order to aid the organization in its diversity and inclusion efforts, which may have positive ramifications for their career also.

As described in the previous subsection, Differentiating is a positive strategy for both the individual and the organization; therefore, organizations should encourage a differentiating strategy for those who want to. There are a number of ways in which they could do this. Firstly, reward structures and recognition should be in place for those who differentiate. As Geraldine recounted in Chapter 8, her workplace recognized the time and effort she spent working on diversity and inclusion efforts in her performance reviews; this aspect of her informal work became a formal part of her daily workload, which made her feel more valued by the organization. Secondly, asking for volunteer LGB role models will allow more senior LGB employees to Differentiate, will highlight to all employees the organization's interest in diversity and inclusion, and will show junior and prospective employees that LGB employees exist throughout the company, and progression and a lasting career within the organization is possible. Building on a role models program, an LGB-specific mentoring programme will allow junior employees to benefit from the experience of senior employees, with specific regard to LGB issues in that particular workplace. These two last recommendations will also highlight to LGB employees in general that there are other LGB people in the workplace, perhaps mitigating any loneliness they may feel, such as that which Claire, Amy and Liam recount in Chapter 6.

Radicalizing

As discussed above, those who Radicalize also highlight their sexual identity in the workplace, but in contrast to those who Differentiate, do so in response to a negative environment, in order to create positive change. Radicalizing is indicative of a negative culture or repeated negative incidents in the workplace, and so the organization must take action to ensure that this is rectified. As well as building on the recommendations proposed in the previous subsections, special action must be taken with regard to those who are radicalizing.

One such way is for organizational representatives, such as senior figures or those in HR, could meet with these people to assess why they feel they have to do. As well as signaling that the workplace cares about their LGB employees, they may also glean valuable information about what is going on in the organization. As discussed in Chapter 6, in many cases it is difficult for LGB employees who face heteronormativity in the workplace to complain about it in a formal setting. An informal discussion with employees may therefore allow them the space to highlight any problems they may be encountering. In the case of a negative culture, change may take longer to implement; if the negativity is arising from one or two particular people, formal grievance policies could be enacted to ensure the change takes place. Other voice mechanisms (anonymous and otherwise), for those who wouldn't feel comfortable talking directly to HR or senior figures, should also be put in place.

Table 8. The implications of each identity management strategy for the human resource management function in organizations.

Strategy	Implications for HRM
Concealing	• Maintain and communicate complete confidentiality in relation to sexual identity of employees; • Develop practices that allow LGB employees to access benefits whilst remaining closeted; • Implement anonymous voice mechanisms to allow input from these employees; • Learn from employees why the workplace or industry may be unsuitable to come out in.
Dodging	• Celebrate and normalize LGBT identities at work • Ask role models to share their stories; • Initiate the start of an LGBT network
Normalizing	• Emphasize the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, • Celebrate the diversity already present in the company.
Differentiating	• Have practices in place that reward employees for their input; • Ask those who differentiate to become role models at work for other LGBT employees; • Develop mentoring programs with these employees to encourage more LGBT employees to come out at work.
Radicalizing	• Learn why employees are using a radicalizing strategy and what changes are felt necessary; • Meet with employees to discuss changes to workplace culture, policies, and practices; • Develop other voice mechanisms to allow participation and input in the organization. • Eliminate sources of negative enviroment

__LGBT Networks and the Separating/Integrating Framework__

For LGBT networks, the main implication of the separating/integrating identities framework presented in Chapter 8 is that not all LGB organizational members will want to join the group. Those using the first two strategies, Concealing and Dodging, would most likely not want to join such a group, as doing so may run the risk of bringing their sexual identity into the workplace. People that use the third strategy presented in the framework, Normalizing, may also not want to join, because in doing so they may be in effect de-normalizing their sexual identity, by pulling focus to it and joining a group based on that fact. Other employees who Normalize may join an LGBT network for the benefits that being in such a group can bring (as outlined in Chapter 9), and work to normalize their membership in itself. Those that Differentiate in this study were all leaders of their LGBT networks; part of their role in the workplace was built around being involved in the LGBT network, and inclusion initiatives. In some respects, they represent the conventional, organization-sponsored approach to diversity, compared to those that Radicalize who use more subversive efforts; because of this, the former subgroup might only want to be involved in workplace-sponsored LGBT networks, similar to Githens & Aragon's (2009) Conventional Approach, while the latter may scorn that option and choose a more grass-roots, union-like group, similar to the Queer/Radical Approach (Githens & Aragon, 2009).

An LGBT network may therefore appeal to only some LGB people within an organization, depending on its goals and style, while others, for identity management reasons, may not wish to join. In addition, this implies that increased organizational sponsorship of LGBT networks may not always be a good thing. Too much organizational involvement may turn away those who

prefer a group to take a more independent and neutral approach, rather than being tied to the organization's interests. Some organizations may therefore have to reduce the amount to which they get involved in the LGBT network in place, and vouch for its independence and separation from management. These are all, of course, conjectured implications, based on the idealized archetypical strategies presented in Chapter 8; in reality, the multiple interacting layers within identity management (shown in Chapter 7), comprised of unique factors and influences, may affect one's decision to join or not to join an LGBT network in their organization. This complexity highlights the challenges here that are influenced by the heteronormative value system entrenched in many workplaces, which characterises LGB identities as deviant or lesser-than, and the extra meaning seemingly simple choices like joining an LGBT network take on.

The Power/Identity Framework

Chapter 5 outlined the theoretical components that were used in the analysis of the interview data. These interlinked theories form a framework that set the context for the findings chapters, and is shown in Figure 20. As outlined in Chapter 4, one of the major goals of Critical Realist research is the uncovering of underlying mechanisms (in the Real realm) that trigger events (in the Actual realm). By studying these events, and the experiences of those who have observed them (in the Empirical realm), we can make assumptions about what these mechanisms are. The major mechanism that this research uncovered was that of power, which links the framework and complements the theories that had already been identified. After analysis (and re-analysis) of the data and findings, power emerged as an underlying cause of many of the events observed and

remembered, positioning LGB employees as a form of the Stranger, and urging them to make decisions how much to integrate their sexual identity with their workplace identity. The highlighting of the role of power is a contribution in itself, helping to explain the experiences of the LGB participants interviewed, and also has ramifications for other minority groups who may face similar culturally engrained power relations that discredit their identity.
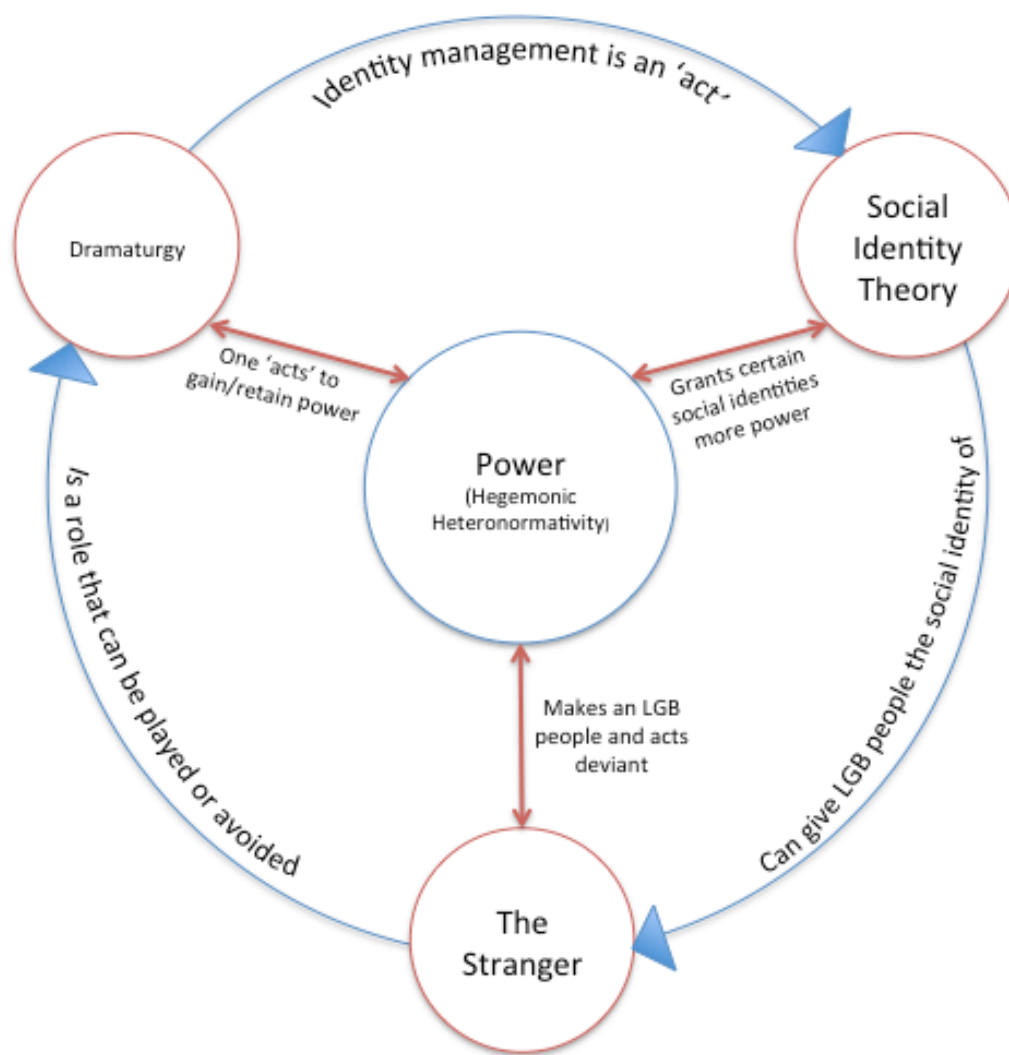
Figure 20. Showing the theoretical framework used in the analysis of the interview data.

The comprehensive theoretical framework in Figure 20, showing the relationship between power and identity management, was formed to analyse the interview

data for this present study. However, it may also be applied in other, non-LGB contexts.

It shows the interconnection of power and identity; hegemonic heteronormativity granted more power to certain social identities, and rendered LGB employees as a form of the Stranger. To combat their discrediting, the LGB participants interviewed used identity management processes to separate, reduce or highlight their Stranger status in comparison to their workplace identity, using a different 'performance' depending on the context, to gain or maintain power. One can theorize that these processes are not unique to LGB employees but rather are common to other marginalized groups, for example, female employees in a patriarchal culture, or people of colour working as part of a predominantly white staff. These groups too can face the discrediting of their social identity by working as a minority in a hegemonic culture; they too can be treated as a form of the Stranger; and they must also manage their identity to gain or maintain power.

10.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the major contributions that this research makes to existing literature and research on LGB employees in the workplace. Contributions to theory are made in three major ways in particular. Firstly, the presence of heteronormativity and how it manifests, leading to the possible exclusion of LGB workers, is outlined. Participants shared how in some cases they faced incident of interpersonal heteronormativity with colleagues; in other

cases it was engrained within the organisation they worked in, and made them question how well they belonged there.

Secondly, the various strategies in which an LGB employee may separate or integrate their LGB and workplace identities were categorised and explored, ranging from separating one's identity through Concealing, to highlighting one's identity through Radicalising.

Thirdly, this analysis shows how LGBT networks can lead to greater voice and lessened feelings of exclusion for some LGB employees, and signal an organisation's acceptance of LGB identities in the workplace.

This research study was conducted from a Critical Realist perspective. From this, different aspects of the experiences of LGB employees were elucidated, with power emerging as a mechanism behind many of their identity-related experiences. Contributions to practice are made in a number of ways. Firstly, in the identification and conceptualization of the Ascertainment period, which has similarities with, but is distinct from, the induction period that all employees go through when they first join a workplace. Secondly, in the development of the power/identity framework, which could hypothetically be used in the study of other marginalized employee groups, and shows the interplay between social identity, identity performance, and marginalization, all underpinned by power relations.

Table 9. Summary of the Contributions of this Study to Theory

Confirmed Extant Knowledge	Added to Extant Knowledge	Contributed to New Knowledge
• Showed how heteronormativity affects LGB employees' work experiences (Rumens, 2010a). • Confirmed the centrality of identity in the work-lives of LGB employees (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). • Confirmed the presence of Mizzi's (2013) heteroprofessionalism in workplaces.	• Added to discussion on strategies of identity management (Button, 2004; Shallenberger, 1996; Woods, 1993), by exploring in detail different strategies of identity management. • Showed in more detail how LGB identity management is influenced by many different factors and at many different levels. • Added to the research on diversity and inclusion in the workplace (e.g. Brenner et al., 2010; King & Cortina, 2010; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002) • Added to knowledge on cultural and/or systemic discrimination and exclusion, in the form of heteronormativity (Butler, 1990; Hart, 1994; Rich, 1990; Rumens, 2010a)	• Identified and developed the *Ascertainment Period*, which has similarities to the induction period but is particular in a number of ways for LGB employees. • Developed a new framework of archetypical identity management strategies used by LGB employees in the workplace, adding more detail to previous similar frameworks (Button, 2004; Clair et al., 2005; Woods, 1993) and adding a new strategy.

Table 10. Summary of the Contributions of this Study and Recommendations for HR Policy and Practice

Confirmed Extant Knowledge	Added to Extant Knowledge	Contributed to New Knowledge
• Confirmed that LGB employees face various types of discrimination and marginalisation in the workplace; a multi-faceted approach is therefore needed to combat it, for example, using an LGBT network or similar group as a source of knowledge about the lived work experiences of those employees in the organisation; providing a complaints procedure individuals; critically auditing the workplace in relation to how heteronormative or homophobic discourse or culture may be manifesting.	• Highlighted how discrimination may not be blatant or overt, and how employees may feel they can't approach their HR department to make a complaint, suggesting that other ways of using voice in the organisation to combat discrimination should be studied and implemented, such as education or role-play. • Adds to the business case for non-discrimination in the workplace, showing how organizational support of LGB employees can impact positively on their identity management, which has positive benefits for both the individual and the organisation (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; King et al., 2008; Madera, 2010). • Showed the variance in identity management strategies used by LGB employees, highlighting how certain diversity initiatives may not appeal to all LGB employees; organisations should therefore take a number of different approaches in supporting their LGB employees such as: allowing those concealing or dodging to avail of benefits concerning same-sex partners in private, with maximum confidentiality ensured;	• The Ascertainment Period was observed and coined in this analysis, and shows how LGB employees take time to ascertain the level of support for LGB identities in the workplace before choosing their identity management strategy. To ensure that LGB employees spend as little time as possible ascertaining, workplaces should actively and constantly publicly affirm their support for LGB diversity and inclusion.

providing autonomy yet recognition and voice for LGBT networks; showing support for events like Pride and International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

- Building on work by Colgan (2016), Colgan & McKearney (2012) and Githens & Aragon (2009), this analysis showed how LGBT networks can provide a variety of positive identity functions for LGB employees, including social support, moderation of the Stanger status, and voice. Organisations should ensure that an LGBT network is in place, and that it is supported but given autonomy, to maximises its benefit.

Chapter 11. Conclusions, Limitations, & Recommendations for Future Research

"There will always be more questions. Every answer leads to more questions. The only way to survive is to let some of them go".

David Levithan[xi]

11.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes this dissertation, in highlighting the research gap and questions that were to be addressed, how these were addressed, and the findings from the research. The limitations of the research project are also outlined and how these were addressed. Finally, the recommendations that can be made for future research are shared, following my experiences in conducting this research and my knowledge of the topic and area.

The research questions that guided this study were, as outlined in Chapter 1:

> *RQ: What affects an LGB employee managing their identity in the workplace?*

> *SRQ1: How do people differ in the management of their LGB identity in the workplace?*

> *SRQ2: How does hegemonic heteronormativity manifest in the Irish workplace and what effects does it have on the identity management of LGB employees?*

> *SRQ3: What role does the LGBT employee network play in the lives and identity management of LGB employees?*

With reference to the main research question, Chapter 7 outlines how identity management is present and influenced at multiple levels, including the micro, relational, organisational and collective levels, reflecting how identity is often characterised in the literature as being comprised a number of components,

including the individual self-concept, the self-concept derived from interpersonal relations, and the self-concept derived from membership of a group (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). At the individual and relational level, the influences of the overlap between one's personal life and one's work life on identity management, including the fear of being outed, was explored, and it was noted that people in Ireland could be affected more because it is a small country. At the organisational level, the Ascertainment Period was coined to define the time when one joins an organisation and works out, form a variety of cues, the level of support there for LGB identities. This finding implicated the workplace itself in influencing identity management. At both the individual and organisational levels, identity management in relation to employee voice in the workplace was explored, showing how the active management of one's identity may affect their propensity to use their voice. At the relational and collective level, the manner in which one came out was under scrutiny, with some participants explaining that they took a normalising method, rather than be dramatic or enter into a 'ceremony' or 'routine'.

Chapter 8 looks at the different ways in which an LGB person can manage their identity, and in doing so address the first sub research question. A number of archetypical strategies, which could be used in unison throughout the workplace, or at different times or workplaces during one's career, were identified. Building on previous research (e.g. Button, 2004; Woods, 1993), a framework was constructed, showing how one's LGB identity could be separated, integrated or highlighted in the workplace. This chapter also addressed the main research question, with the antecedents behind the choice of identity management strategy, and the consequences of this choice, explored too.

Chapter 6, which also concerns the second sub research question, shows how heteronormativity, which positions heterosexual identities as the ideal norm and non-heterosexual identities as deviant or aberrant (interpreted in this study as a form of The Stranger, Simmel, 1908), manifested in the workplace for the research participants. It affected their identity management in a number of ways, leading them to question their role and fit in the workplace, affecting their social relations with heterosexual colleagues, and discouraged them from joining certain professions or industries.

In answering both the main research question and the third sub research question, Chapter 9 explores the role of LGBT networks in the identity management of both network members and non-network members who are in the respective workplace. The analysis shows how these groups can act as moderators of the Stranger status that some people can feel in a heteronormative workplace, provided a source of support and sociality, could be used as a voice mechanism for its members, and signalled (to both members and non-members) that the organisation had a level of support and acceptance for LGB employees, which in turn influenced these employees' identity management.

11. 2 Limitations

This research, like all research (Salthouse, 2011; Schebaum & Shockley, 2015), has its own in-built limitations related to the methods used, the participants sampled, and the topic of focus. For example, the design of the systematic literature review leads to the filtering out of articles not in the English language, and so some research may be overlooked. This section outlines other particular

limitations that were encountered over the course of this project, and the ways in which I attempted to overcome or address them.

Reaching Those Who Haven't Disclosed

A limitation of this study is that the stories of those not wishing to disclose their sexuality may not be discovered. This is a limitation common to many LGB research studies (Meyer & Wilson, 2009; Meezan and Martin, 2003; Rankin, 2007; Roberts, 2011), and the depth and scope of this research may suffer from not including the perspectives of those who have not come out. A number of considerations may lessen the severity of this limitation, however.

Firstly, the structure of the interviews allowed participants to discuss their identity throughout their life, from early identity development to current identity management. In this way, their experiences with not being out in the workplace were indeed included – however, in the form of recollections of historical events rather than a discussion of current practices. While this may run the risk of revisionist hindsight (Thompson & Holland, 2003), it still affords the chance to examine the inner processes involved in identity non-disclosure.

Secondly, using my personal networks, it was possible to reach a number of people who weren't out in their workplace, one aspect of the 'insider advantage' (LaSala, 1998) that my being in the LGBT community affords me. Two out of the three participants that arose from my personal networks were not out in the workplace. While this is a relatively small number, it still allowed me to compare their experiences of identity management with the recollections (described above) of those who were at some stage not out in their workplaces.

Generalizability

The overall objective of this research study was to understand more about the influences on LGB employees' identity management in Irish workplaces. This study is non-generalizable for a number of reasons. As a qualitative study, the sample size of twenty-nine is too small to make generalizations; however, the analysis was able to clearly identify five archetypical strategies of how an LGB employee may integrate or separate their identities in the workplace.

The study took place in Ireland, which is particular in its context, given the recent legislation on same-sex marriage (2015), the referendum on marriage equality (2015) and repealing of section 37.1 from the Employment Equality Act (2015). This particular context and the timing of the research undertaking render this study non-generalizable. However, as my findings have underlined, given the different identity management decisions of LGB employees at work, the proposed continuum (see Chapter 8) could equally be researched in different country and organizational contexts for comparative purposes, particularly in light of recent advances in same-sex civil marriage rights in other countries, which may be possible to do with quantitative measures and scales, given the level of description and depth present within the interview data. The advantage of an in-depth qualitative exploratory approach is that it unearths topics that may not have been considered had the topics from the systematic literature review been addressed in isolation. The conceptualization of LGB identity management in the work place as a presentation of self, using Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor, allowed me to construct the blending identities continuum (see Figure 17)

highlighting the degrees of identity separation and/or integration which LGB employees perform in their everyday lived experiences in the workplace.

Usefulness and Limitations of Philosophical Stance

The adoption of the critical realist philosophical stance in the design and execution of this research prompted the search for underlying mechanisms, resident in the Real realm, that play a role in the identity and workplace experiences of LGB employees. While other philosophies might reasonably have been used in this research project – for example, social constructionism – the value that is added by critical realism is the highlighting of these underlying mechanisms. In identifying the influence of power, this research becomes much more than a study on LGB identity in the Irish workplace in this very specific temporal and historical context (as described in Chapter 4); ruminating on the role of power in identity management becomes a much broader and general issue that could realistically be applied to anyone, not just in the LGB community. Building on this research one can question, for example, how power operates behind the scenes in the identities of members of the African community working in locations where they are a minority or, in the case of a non-minority, in the identities of straight white male employees. The move in focus from the Empirical realm, routed and shaped as it is by the voices and experiences of the LGB participants interviewed, to the Real realm, which consists purely of general structures and mechanisms, makes this study more pertinent and valuable to a range of identities and contexts. This study can therefore not only form contributions for LGB employees, but for employees and their identity management in general.

While identity was always shown to be an integral part of LGB employee's work experiences (from the systematic literature review stage onwards), the identification of power as a major underlying mechanism occurred late in the research process, through analysis and re-analysis of the data and the findings that had been developed. Critical realism prompted (and indeed required) this repeated contemplation. Without the critical realist influence, it is quite possible that the role that power plays in the work-lives of LGB employees could have been unnoticed or not highlighted to such a great extent.

Critical Theory was used in this thesis to highlight issues of power, domination and inequality– this thesis adds to critical scholarship in that it shows the domination of one hegemonic culture, heteronormativity, at play in the workplace. This was discovered through the interviews with those are relatively powerless and discredited in this system – it is possible that it would not have been discovered if those in relatively more power, such as HR practitioners or other organisational representatives, were interviewed instead. This research therefore highlights and confirms the need to base research on disempowered populations closely around these populations, and not those (potentially more readily accessible) people who have more power and who therefore will be less likely to have knowledge of dominance and hegemonies at play in their contexts. Similarly, feminist theory highlights the voices of the marginalized, and in particular how their automatic epistemic privilege can better describe and detail the system as a whole. This had influences on the design, most notably perhaps the decision not to interview HR practitioners or organizational representatives. This research project confirms how interviewing those at the margins can provide rich descriptive data that may not be obtained through contact with more official

sources – two pertinent examples would be Claire's discussion of the subtle discrimination she experienced when she entered into a civil partnership with her partner, and Yvonne's discussion of the failed meeting she set up between her LGB colleagues and the senior management when the former felt they couldn't complain:

"[T]here's no obligation to have them so you can't sort of say I've been discriminated against, it's really subtle, but you feel it...and then like, a month later a [heterosexual] colleague was getting married, and there was a big thing about him, and tea and cake in the office and mine was blatantly ignored... [It] kind of hurt actually. That hurts. Because it was deliberate, that was a deliberate thing to do." **– Claire**

"When you have an environment where you have people that are really pissed off but they've got this chance to talk to the general manager who indirectly has an influence on the continuity of their job, these people don't – they've never put themselves out there before, they don't wanna brand themselves or label themselves as "those gay noisemakers!'" **– Yvonne**

Although I found Critical Realism to be an apt and valuable philosophical influence in this project, it must be acknowledged that other philosophies could offer a suitable alternative, and that critical realism itself has some limitations. For instance, an important aspect of Critical Realism is the search for the mechanisms (in the Real realm) that trigger events (that occur in the Actual

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realm). These mechanisms are not observable (indeed if they were observable they would not actually be mechanisms), but can be conceptualized and described by abstracting from the events of the Actual realm and the experiences and observations of these events that are present in the Empirical realm (Bhaskar, 1975). However, the Critical Realist perspective also holds that the social world is much more complex than the physical world; it is therefore impossible to conduct social science research in the same closed-system manner in which much physical science research is carried out – that is, by reducing the amount of influences that may interfere with the phenomenon of study and looking at only one particular causal relationship. In the social world, there is such a multitude of influences at play that these restrictions are impossible to carry out.

This complexity makes the focus on generative mechanisms difficult and perhaps impossible. For example, while this research highlighted power as a generative mechanism affecting the identity management of LGB employees, it is possible (and probable) that many more mechanisms are in play. These two propositions of critical realism (that social life is by nature extremely complex, and the stratification of reality) work against each other in such a way that by adopting a critical realist perspective in the first place, one is already admitting that they cannot and will not know everything about the phenomenon they are investigating, a fact that may reassure the more humble researcher but dismay the perfectionist one.

11.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This section provides an overview of recommendations for future research on LGB identity issues. This ranges from recommendation for methodology in this type of research, to recommendations for the research body as a whole.

Recommendations for Sampling and Recruitment

Under-represented Populations

As noted in the literature review presented in Chapter 2, there is a dearth of literature on LGBT workers in business and management studies. The gap is even more pronounced when it comes to the transgender population, which tend to be excluded in the literature that does exist (cf. Pepper & Lorah, 2008; Law, Martinez, Ruggs, Hebl & Akers, 2011; Sangganjanavanich & Headley, 2013). Only 17% of the articles that resulted from the original systematic search used a sample of transgender workers along with the LGB sample in their research; with the majority of these focused specifically on transgender workplace experiences and careers.

One possible reason that transgender people are not included in studies with lesbian, gay and bisexual workers may be the perceived large differences in experiences and career paths, and a subsequent lack of generalizability across subgroups (Parnell et al., 2010). Another reason for the lack of inclusion of transgender workers may be the difficulty in actually accessing a sufficiently large sample (e.g. Schneider & Dimito, 2010). The transgender community is relatively small compared to the lesbian, gay and bisexual populations, and may therefore lack visibility and a political voice even within LGBT organizations (Barclay & Scott, 2006). Access to this population may be much more difficult

for researchers, especially if they approach only general LGBT groups and organizations. The discrimination and stigma surrounding being transgender may also mean that these people are much less comfortable in being "out" in public, and so convenience sampling using personal networks may be harder. "Going Stealth" (i.e. deliberately hiding one's transgender status post-transition) is a particular aspiration of many, but not all, transgender people (Davis, 2009), and thus for them, association with research surrounding LGBT careers may not be desirable.

However, it is recommended that researchers decide carefully on including or excluding transgender participants from their studies. This choice, I believe, depends on the topic of interest. For example, in this study, I originally planned to interview transgender participants. After analysing the data collected thus far (including an interview from a transgender employee), I decided that the phenomenon I was researching, identity management, while different for everyone, is extremely different for transgender people. Internally, they must face different identity development processes; externally, they have different challenges and obstacle to overcome in society and in the workplace. In short, identity construction and management is very different for transgender people compared to LGB people (Brewster et al., 2012). While this is a limitation of the current research, I feel it necessary, as focusing on transgender identity as well as LGB identity would lead the research down two different paths.

However, were I not focusing on identity in particular, I may not have had to make the decision to exclude transgender participants. For example, topics such as discrimination and stigmatization, which are based on heteronormative ideals,

are common to all members of the LGBT community. Thus, including transgender participants would not confuse the research focus. In research that explores phenomena that, like these, could apply to both LGB and T people, researchers should ensure that a balanced and representative sample of transgender participants is included, although keeping in mind the challenges that this may represent.

Another subgroup largely ignored, to an even greater extent than transgender workers, is bisexual workers (Lonborg and Phillips, 1996). Whilst a large majority of the papers reviewed here include bisexual people along with the gay and lesbian sample, it is important to consider if bisexual workers, by virtue of their ability to discuss their "heterosexual side" openly and honestly, whilst hiding their emotional and sexual attraction to those of the same sex, therefore "passing" (Parnell et al., 2012), may face different scenarios and have different experiences, particularly with identity management strategies, than gay and lesbian workers. With only one of the papers within this review focusing specifically on bisexual workers (Green et al., 2011), there is clearly a need for further research in this area.

The sample interviewed in this study included a bisexual female employee and a bisexual genderqueer employee. However, these interviewees did not discuss in particular their bisexual identity, and so no findings specific to this population were observed. This may be a result of the small number of bisexual participants, or perhaps of the research design and focus – the questions, perhaps, prompted these participants to focus more on their same-sex attractions and the consequences of that rather than their opposite-sex attractions. Further research

could therefore sample bisexual employees only (to ensure that a large sample is recruited), and ask questions specifically regarding one's bisexual identity, and the unique issues and experiences that are associated with it. For example, bisexuality as an identity is often not legitimized in society (Ella, 2014; Yoshino, 2000), with bisexual people in a relationship with an opposite sex partner cast as heterosexual, and those in a same-sex relationship case as homosexual ("bi-erasure"). Future research could address the implications for challenges such as these in the workplace.

Sampling, Recruitment and Data Collection Methods

Gaining access to the LGBT community can, like with any "hidden population" prove hard for the researcher (Herek, 1989; Berk, Boyd & Hamner, 1992; GLEN, 1995). A prominent problem reported within the research methodologies reviewed was the difficulty in accessing a non-purposeful representative population of LGBT participants. A large number of the authors used purposeful (McDermott, 2006) or snowball sampling (O'Ryan & McFarland, 2010), utilizing their personal networks and local transgender groups or organizations. These sampling methods have both advantages and disadvantages. Snowball sampling, where initial participants help to recruit more participants, may be useful for researchers in accessing a statistically small sample, such as the transgender population, whilst purposeful sampling may be useful to demonstrate a large range of experiences and factors to fully enhance the understanding of the "lived experiences" (Moustakas, 1994:55). Berg (2004) praises the use of snowball sampling in cases where alternative sampling methods would not be

effective in gaining a sufficient number of participants, and where the depth of data, rather than the frequency of phenomena, is of importance.

However, any findings obtained through the use of snowball or purposeful sampling cannot be generalized as easily without further research on a wider scale. By using transgender groups as a recruitment base, a common tactic in the articles reviewed, and therefore limiting the potential participant pool to those who are actively involved in such groups, researchers may be performing selection bias. To counter possible selection bias, a researcher may have to ensure, through the use of snowball sampling, that those who are not active members of community groups are reached. This may require ethnographic research (refs of ethnographic research material) or participant observation (refs of participant observation as a research method) in order to build a deeper rapport and trust with current participants in order to gain access to possible future participants.

Areas of study

Research carried out in the United States dominates much of the literature pertinent to this review, with over two thirds of the papers in the literature review in Chapter 2 containing empirical research or specific concepts emerging from this country. As American states differ greatly in the presence and scope of LGBT anti-discrimination laws, as well as cultural, religious and social perceptions of LGBT people and civil rights legislation, this may prove

problematic when attempting to generalize U.S. studies for other countries, and even other states. Many of the studies in this review were performed using participants from only one or two states, and thus may not be generalizable to another, less or more liberal state or area.

At a European level, research on the careers or workplace experiences of the LGBT population is scant in comparison to the USA, with only a relatively small number of articles containing data from European participants (e.g. Ozturk, 2011; Rumens, 2008; Green, 2011). Further research would benefit from a larger European context, as the disparity between European states in perceptions of LGBT people is such that data collected in one may not be generalizable to another. For example, the UK, which makes up the majority of the twenty European articles (70%), provides a high level of protective anti-discrimination legislation for LGBT citizens. In contrast, various other European states (e.g. Armenia, Macedonia, Russia, and Turkey) have no such legislation, and LGBT workers may have their employment legally terminated due to their sexual or gender identity. It is clear, therefore, that this lack of protection will have a large influence on how an LGBT employee manages and discloses their identity. While other countries like the UK may reside within the same geo-political landscape, research into the careers and workplace experiences of LGB employees in more progressive countries may not be of any practical use in less progressive countries.

In a similar manner, the country's unique historical, political and religious culture may affect how LGBT people are treated. For example, as discussed in the introductory section, Ireland has a unique mixture of religious adherence and

growing liberal attitudes. This research has provided a view on the work lives and careers of Irish LGB employees, by listening to and analysing their lived experiences, told to me in their own words. Similar research within specific countries or smaller geographical contexts would be of use to HR practitioners, managers and civil rights groups in these areas and would be beneficial in terms of comparative analyses across countries, which would help direct a future research agenda in this area.

In addition, further studies situated in specific contexts where the acceptability of LGB people in the work environment may be more or less advanced, would be most interesting. Similarly, comparative studies, using non-LGB people as the control group, when considering different human resource management support practices, such as diversity initiatives, on-boarding of new recruits, and mentoring strategies, would facilitate deeper understanding of the specific challenges and concerns that LGB workers may face over their organizational careers, compared with their heterosexual counterparts.

Future Research Topic Recommendations

Recent Civil Rights Developments

Recent developments in the LGBT civil rights movements have meant that HR practitioners are facing new scenarios in the management of this workplace population. Same-sex marriage has been legalized in twenty-three countries (twenty-four by March 2017) (Pew Research Center, 2016), whilst joint-adoption rights for same-sex parents are present in twenty-five countries. This list has continually grown over the last decade; with these changes in legislation comes a host of potentially sensitive situations for both LGBT employees and HR practitioners, and it clear that HR managers in particular cannot afford to ignore

them. For example, whilst same-sex partner benefits, comparable to those enjoyed by the partner of a heterosexual employee, may now be a legal imperative in these countries, much of the literature reviewed (for example, Giuffre et al., 2008; King et al., 2008; Kwon and Hugelshofer, 2010) shows that interpersonal discrimination against LGBT co-workers is still a pressing issue in organizations today. The potential risks of disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity may deter an LGBT employee from availing of one of their rights. Similarly, a lesbian employee, having recently become a mother, through an adoption process, surrogacy or the pregnancy of her partner, must disclose her sexual identity to avail of maternity leave. In scenarios such as this the HR department may have to put in place or extend policies of strict confidentiality and data protection.

Future research tracking the changes in legislation and corresponding in-company HR policies is required, to ensure civil rights are afforded to all employees. For example, research in this vein could involve reviewing the legislative changes and surveying or research organisations to see how their policies have (or have not) been updated to keep in line with these changes.

Postmodern Sexual Identities

A growing topic of relevance to research on sexuality and the workplace that has so far had limited discussion in the literature is the rise of "newer" sexual and gender identities, such as *genderqueer, queer* and *intersex. Genderqueer* is a term that encompasses gender identities that exist outside of the conventional man/woman gender binary. Those who identify as genderqueer may therefore

refer to themselves as both man and woman, neither man nor woman, *genderfluid* (moving between genders), or of a third gender (for example, the *hijra* tradition in India).

The queer identity is a sexual identity that rejects heterosexual/bisexual/homosexual labels. It is used as an umbrella term to refer to those who identify as one of a variety of sexual identities that do not fit into the concept of binarized sexual orientation labels of homosexual/heterosexual. While the queer identity is being acknowledged by some researchers of LGBT issues at the beginning of interviews or surveys (Giuffre et al. 2008, Willis 2012) within the demographic sections, it has had little impact on theoretical discussion or considerations.

Intersex refers to a person with sex chromosomes, external genitalia or an internal reproductive system that is not considered conventional for either males or females (Davis, 2009). Intersex chromosomes involve combinations differing from XX-female and XY-male, such as individuals with Klinefelter syndrome (XXY/XXXY) or XYY syndrome. Those with ambiguous genitalia are usually subject to surgery at birth to reconstruct solely male or female genitalia. However, endocrinological, social, and psychological factors are also related to one's biological sex (or intersex), and thus "gendering" a child may prove unsuccessful using surgery alone (Newman et al., 1992). These individuals may subsequently discover their intersex status and start to identify publicly as such, which may have implications for their workplace relationships and their career.

Wide-spread knowledge about these identities is still limited, unsurprising perhaps, given their relative infancy compared to the more well-known lesbian,

gay, bisexual and transgender identities, and may therefore incite confusion or even disdain from those not previously educated on the subject. As explored in Chapter 2, critiques of the concept of the 'gay-friendly' workplace highlight how the term, and its associated discourse, are anchored and based around only particular minority sexual minority identities, such as gay men (Rumens, 2014), while non-normative sexual identities may be ignored (Williams, Giuffre & Dellinger; 2009). One issue with exploring the spectrum of queer identities may be the lack of education and knowledge about them. While many of the difficulties and opportunities encountered by the LGBT community in the workplace and throughout their careers may be theoretically extended to these newer identities, further study is still required to discover if this is possible, if there are significant differences, or indeed, if a coherent and definitive structure can be placed on the experiences of those with these identities.

Research Building on this Study

The goal of this research was to explore on a broad level the workplace experiences of LGB employees in Ireland; only a small number of studies have explored this, and at that, only in particular professions (e.g. Neary, 2013a, 2013b, 2016, looks at LGB teachers in Ireland). A qualitative research design was chosen to allow me to fully investigate the participants' experiences. This study thus introduces a number of concepts and frameworks that are novel and rich, given the amount of information shared in the interviews. Further investigation is warranted to consider these concepts with larger sample sizes and across countries, which will help confirm their usefulness and viability as theory.

Chapter 7 explores LGB identity management in the workplace and shares how the individual LGB employee takes place and is influenced at different levels

within the workplace. It shows how identity management decisions are influenced not only by individual preferences, but also by factors at the relational level, such as family and the personal life/work life overlap. It is also implicated at the organizational level, in that it can affect LGB employee voice, and is influenced by the Ascertainment Period. Future research could use the Audience/Actor/Setting framework to explore at each level different work experiences of LGB employees. The Ascertainment Period is a new concept and thus warrants future research. This time was characterized by an employee's indecision on whether to separate or integrate their sexual identity into the workplace. By conducting research focusing on these specific periods in one's career, much can be learned about how a workplace can help signal their openness to LGB diversity and inclusion, and in doing so reduce the amount of time needed for an employee to make their decision, leading to a quicker adjustment to, and integration in, their new organization.

The identity separation and integration framework, presented in Chapter 8, shows different strategies by which an LGB person can assimilate or disconnect their sexual and workplace identities. In order to test the sub-groupings of LGB employees within organizations that we introduced in this paper, quantitative surveys could be conducted to see if these categories are valid across different countries and larger sample sizes. The political and social climate in which an LGB person is in may affect the strategy/strategies that are used in the workplace. In workplaces within jurisdictions that are more hostile to sexual minorities, for example, a larger proportion of people may choose the extreme strategies, with some separating their sexual identity completely (Concealing) and others attempting to overthrow the unfriendly climate (through Radicalising).

This Irish study shows the majority of people using the Normalising strategy; they do not feel they have to separate their sexual identity from their workplace identity, or that they have to emphasize it to achieve equal treatment. By comparing Ireland with a more hostile jurisdiction, one can see how the separating/integrating identities framework could be used as a measure of how comfortable employees feel at work. Quantitative surveys of employees in particular organizations or industries could therefore show how well a company is doing with regard to their LGB diversity and integration policies and practices.

This research presents the LGB employee as a form of the Stranger (Simmel, 1908) in the workplace, linking it to hegemonic heteronormativity. Heteronormativity affected the way in which colleagues related to the research participants, leading to their exclusion and marginalization, and placed restrictions on how the participants felt they could speak, act, or dress. This type of subtle discrimination is of particular concern, because at many times the participants felt they couldn't make a formal complaint about it. By presenting the LGB person as the Stranger in the workplace, this research pulls focus onto the covert and institutionalized manner by which some LGB employees feel discriminated against, and warrants a future research agenda that explores in more detail how hegemonic workplace heteronormativity can exclude and stigmatize. Research of this type could then be used to form recommendations for HR practitioners who may not be aware of this marginalization, and who could then form policies and practices to address it.

As noted above, this study adds to the small amount of research on the role and function of LGBT networks, as presented in Chapter 9. Given this relative dearth,

and the growing number of these groups in organizations, much more research is needed to explore their role in the workplace, and if they provide adequate voice for their members. While our broad exploratory study happened to contain a number of interviewees that had had experience with LGBT networks, who could thus share their experiences, more targeted projects with a larger amount of participants in networks would provide more varied perspectives.

As noted before, this study deliberately took a broad exploratory approach to researching the identity management experiences of LGB employees, and did not, therefore, look at any particular industry. Future research could look at particular industries to examine if particular workplaces or professions offer differing experiences for lesbian, gay, or bisexual employees.

Table 11. Possible Future Research Directions

Component	Focus
Research Approach	• Longitudinal studies that could chart one's identity management strategy over time and throughout one's career. • Ethnographic methods, such as participant observation, to observe heteronorms manifesting in the workplace.
Populations	• The unique workplace experiences of transgender employees, including their identity management, and how it compares to and contrasts from that of LGB employees. • The unique workplace experiences of bisexual employees. • The workplace experiences of those with non-traditional sexual and gender identities, e.g. queer, non-binary. • Specifically investigating within-group differences in experiences of the LGBT+ community. • Investigating the experiences of those with multiple minority intersectional identities. • Those who haven't disclosed their sexuality to anyone, perhaps using data collection techniques that can assure their anonymity.
Contexts	• Research in countries with less progressive or discriminatory policies e.g. Russia, Turkey, to explore work experiences where LGB identities are much more stigmatized or criminalized. • Research in under-studied areas, such as Asia, where LGB identities are not stigmatized to the same extent but not openly discussed to the same extent as progressive western countries. • Research into jurisdictions with recently enacted progressive LGBT-related legislation (e.g. post Marriage Equality), specifically exploring the impact of this on the identity management of LGB employees in the workplace. • Further investigation into the currently underexplored role of LGBT networks in the work-lives and identities of LGB employees. • Research into particular professions or industries, to investigate if LGB experiences differ from industry to industry.
Theories	• Using the Audience/Actor/Setting framework to explore at each level the different work experiences of LGB employees. • Further testing of the identities separation/integration framework, perhaps with quantitative studies, particularly in different contexts where the numbers of participants using each strategy may be completely different than in the Irish context. • Testing of the power/identity framework with other groups who have a concealable stigmatized identity, e.g. those with mental health problems, former convicts.

	• Further investigation of the LGB person as a form of Simmel's Stranger.
	• Further investigation of the Ascertainment Period, how LGB employees experience it, and how workplaces can signal their inclusivity to new LGB employees.
	• Further investigation into heteronormativity and heteroprofessionalism, and how they manifest in the workplace.

11.4 The Research Journey

In this concluding section, I want to highlight my own experience of this process, and how it has influenced some of the decisions I have made in conducting and writing up this research. Inevitably, some of the research designs I have made have arisen because of my own personal beliefs and standpoint – this section highlights them.

Firstly, the way in which this thesis was written was influenced by my own preferences. From early in the research process I knew that I wanted to write in the first person, using the more personal 'I'. This was advised against by a number of people who reviewed my work, who were more used to the typical and (I thought) staid, formal use of 'the researcher' in business and management research. Thus, early parts of what was then included in this thesis, such as the systematic literature review, were originally written in the first person, and then changed to the third person. However, after writing major portions of what now is Chapter 4, on research approach, I felt using the third person was disingenuous, after discussing in so much depth "the role of the researcher", the "insider status" that I have in this research (LaSala, 1998), and feminist perspectives on standpoint and how it affects the research. As evident, I changed the third person back into the first.

Another aspect of the research that was influenced by own personal views was using the critical realist stance. While other philosophical perspectives could arguably have been used, it was critical realism, and in particular aspects of it such as the stratified nature of reality, that appealed to me most. This, I believe, arises from my previous experience (and Bachelor's degree) in Biomedical

Science; while I can see the value and benefit of social constructionism in a project of this nature, and indeed half-decided to use it, I was always aware of my belief in something outside of our social consciousness. This was even before I had read about the critical realist perspective; when I did, I was very much convinced that this was the correct path to take.

The process of undertaking a PhD was isolating yet ultimately rewarding. While I did not feel lonely as such, it always struck me how enjoyable it was to meet with other PhD students, especially those doing research on LGBT issues, and discuss our respective projects. My Fulbright experience, which was in many ways life-altering, reaffirmed for me the hugely positive role that others have to play in one's research. In the Williams Institute at UCLA, I was no longer the only person in the proximity conducting sexual minority research; in fact, I wasn't even the only person conducting research on LGBT workplace experiences. These experiences highlighted the benefit of having a research cluster or group that met regularly, and I was glad to see one such group develop, albeit rather too late for me, in Maynooth University in 2015.

The PhD 'journey' is presented just like that – a journey, from Point A to Point B, from writing a proposal to crossing the stage at graduation. The 'structured' element of the PhD in Maynooth University also added to that anticipation of continuous onward and upward progression. The thesis that you read now is laid out and progresses naturally from section to section and chapter to chapter. In reality, however, my experience (and I know many others' experiences) was much more complex than that. At times, especially when writing on research philosophy or recoding the interview transcripts, it felt like I was going backwards in the process, and my PhD 'journey' was in fact more akin to a series

of starts and stops, zigzags and doubling-back, falling down chasms and eventually climbing (or being pulled) out of them. Qualitative research is 'messy', that's the popular adjective, but there is always a little perfectionist voice in your head that argues that it won't be messy for *you*, because *your* research design is so carefully formulated and *your* coding start list is so well drawn up, and you eagerly await a fully formulated gem of inspiration to fall into your lap. In reality it was more like holding onto the leashes of a hundred small puppies, excitedly pulling you in every direction, leading you down dead-ends and up mountains, and being, yes, 'messy'.

I was warned in my early seminars that, unlike in an undergraduate degree, during a PhD, 'life happens'. This was certainly my experience: I met some amazingly interesting people and heard about their complex and not always happy lives, attended a large number of LGBT events and worked as a volunteer at some of them, ended a relationship and started a new one, experienced a family member's illness and death, moved house five times, and lived in rural Donegal and not-so-rural Los Angeles. Ultimately, this PhD was a continuous thread that impacted on my life, but my life also impacted on it. My standpoint, as feminist philosophers would observe, has fundamentally been altered since I started this journey in October 2012; I have poured part of myself into it and have, regardless of the end result, been shaped and influenced by it in turn.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Details of the Systematic Literature Review Process

Appendix B. Criteria Used for Inclusion/Exclusion of Articles in Systematic Literature Review

Appendix C. Details of the Participants Interviewed

Appendix D. Topic Guide for use in Interviews

Appendix E. Biographical Information Form, Information Sheet and Consent Form Given to Participants

Appendix F. Supervisor's Letter Given to One LGBT Network

Appendix G. Ethical Approval for this Research Project from Maynooth University

Appendix H. Information Regarding Legislation Pertinent to this Research.

**Appendix A. Details of the Systematic Literature Review Process**

Table A1. The Search Terms Used in the Initial Study and the Additional Synonyms Added in the Pilot Study

	Initial study terms	**Additional terms used in pilot study**
Sample	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender	Lesbian, lesbians, gay, gays, bisexual, bisexuals, transgender, transgendered, transsexual, homosexual, homosexuals, homosexuality, bisexuality, sexual orientation, sexual identity, sexuality, sexual minority, same-sex, same-gender, queer, queering, female-to- male, male-to-female, LGBT, GLBT, GLB, LGB, heterosexism, heterosexist, identity disclosure, coming out, come out, homophobia, homophobic, workplace closet, stigma
Setting	Workplace, work, employment, employee	HRD, human resource development, human resources, human resource management, workplace, work, working, employment, employee, employer, employed, job, career, organization, organizational, workforce, diversity, vocation, vocational, career development

Table A2. The Results of the Searches Across the Three E-Databases Used.

Database	Result from query	Duplicates removed	Articles removed manually	Total resulting number of articles
Academic Search Complete	1,264		1,131	133
Business Source Complete	507	48	366	93
Thompson Reuters Web of Science	6,647	80	6,530	37
Total	8,418	128	8,027	263

Appendix B. Meyrick's (2006) criteria for judging rigour & quality of qualitative research.
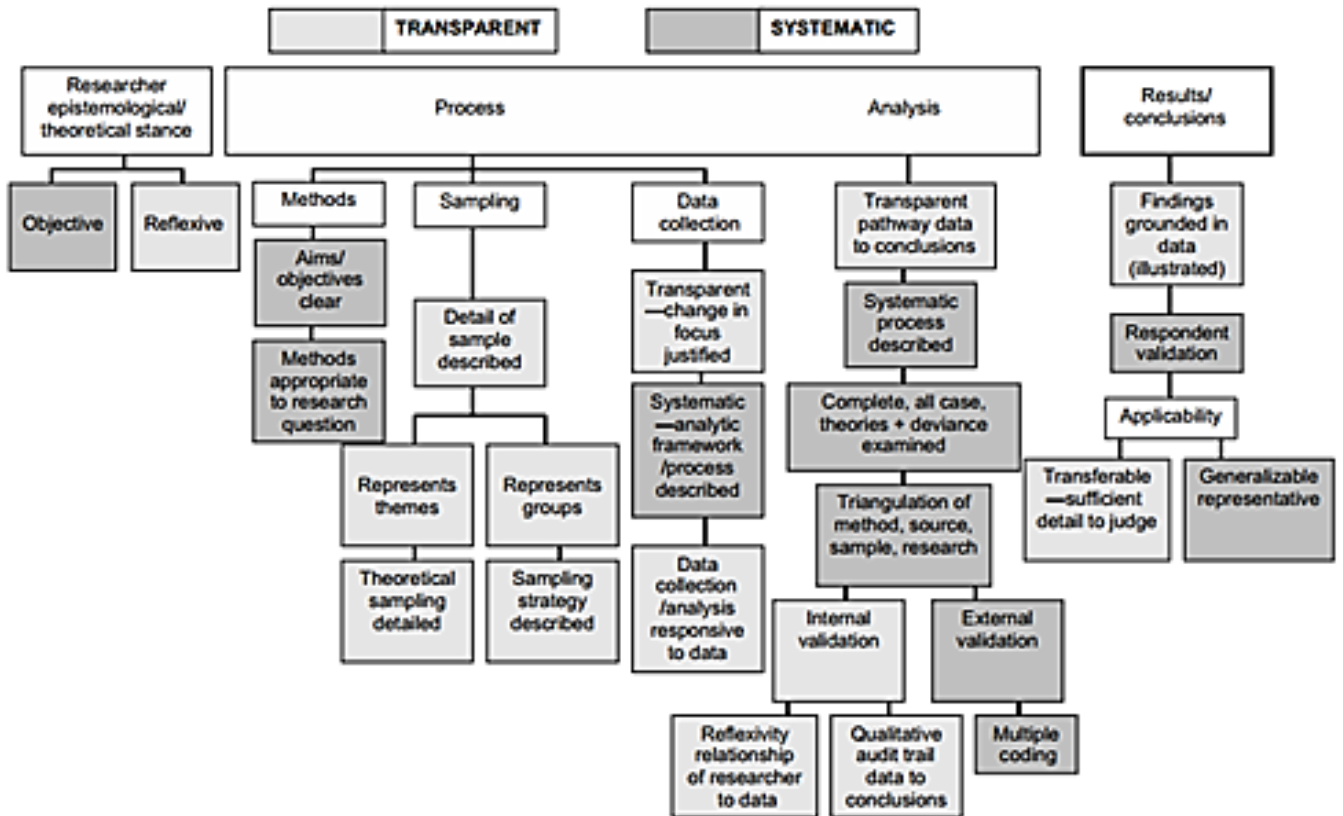
Appendix C. Details of the Participants Interviewed

Pseudonym	Age	Sexuality & Gender ID	Industry/ Sector	Organization	Role	ID Strategy	Interview Conducted
Adam	23	Gay Male	Academia	Small college	Lecturer	Normalizer	Before Referendum
Áine	45	Bisexual Female	NGO	Small national NGO	CEO	Normalizer	Before Referendum
Alan	50	Gay Male	Local Authority	Large local authority	Senior civil servant	Normalizer	Before Referendum
Amy	34	Lesbian Female	Telecommunications	Large MNC	Mid-level marketer	Normalizer	After Referendum
Aoife	38	Lesbian Female	Local Authority	Large local authority	Junior civil servant	Radicalizer	Before Referendum
Brendan	39	Gay Male	IT Consulting	Large national company	Mid-level consultant	Normalizer	After Referendum
Brian	41	Gay Male	Publishing	Large MNC	Mid-level manager	Normalizer	Before Referendum
Cam	31	Bisexual, Genderqueer	Academia	Large university	Lecturer	Dodger	After Referendum
Cillian	27	Gay Male	Retail Marketing	Large department store	Junior marketer	Normalizer	Before Referendum
Claire	49	Lesbian Female	Local Authority	Large local authority	Senior civil servant	Radicalizer	Before Referendum
Conor	39	Gay Male	Management Consulting	Large MNC	Mid-level consultant	Normalizer	Before Referendum
David	26	Gay Male	Digital Media	Small national company	Junior accounts manager	Differentiator	After Referendum
Devon	31	Lesbian Female	Multiple: security, retail	Multiple	Multiple	Normalizer	After Referendum
Donna	24	Lesbian Female	IT	Large MNC	Junior HR manager	Normalizer	Before Referendum
Emma	27	Lesbian Female	Professional Services	Large MNC	Junior recruiter	Concealer	After Referendum
Fintan	26	Gay Male	Education	Small secondary school	Contract Teacher	Dodger	Before Referendum
Geraldine	39	Lesbian Female	Professional Services	Large MNC	Partner	Differentiator	Before Referendum
Ian	30	Gay Male	Student, previously: hospitality	Previously: small hotel	Previously: accountant	Dodger	Before Referendum
John	33	Gay Male	Motor/Transport	Large MNC	Mid-level manager	Differentiator	Before Referendum

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Jennifer	38	Lesbian Female	Cleaning Services	Self-employed	Cleaner	Concealer	After Referendum
Kate	28	Lesbian Female	Health Service	Doctor's Surgery	Secretary	Normalizer	After Referendum
Kevin	59	Gay Male	Management Consulting	Large MNC	Senior consultant	Differentiator	Before Referendum
Laura	24	Lesbian Female	Retail Management	Large MNC	Junior office worker	Normalizer	After Referendum
Liam	47	Gay Male	Criminal Justice	Irish civil service	Senior Civil Servant	Concealer	Before Referendum
Matthew	48	Gay Male	IT	Large MNC	Contracted consultant	Dodger	Before Referendum
Paul	67	Gay Male	Media	Large national company	Retired	Dodger	Before Referendum
Shane	40	Gay Male	Public Relations	Small national company	Senior	Normalizer	After Referendum
Stephen	32	Gay Male	Education	Large secondary school	Permanent Teacher	Differentiator	Before Referendum
Yvonne	33	Lesbian Female	IT/Software	Large MNC	Senior manager	Differentiator	After Referendum

Appendix D: Topic Guide for use in Interviews

Topic	Sample Opening Questions	Notes/Relevance	Developed from:
Opening questions - participant's career & workplace	Tell me about your career Describe an average day in your current role Describe your workplace	*Open ended, general questions to find out about the participants' work life and career. Sets context for interview, and provides starting point for many other questions*	Background Research
Identity Management	How open are you about your sexuality/gender identity at work/previous workplaces? Were there any factors that made you decide to come out at this time? How was your coming out experience at that workplace?	*Discussion of identity management strategies and/or transition.*	Systematic Literature Review
Identity Development	When did you first realize you were LGBT? When did you first come out to anyone? How was your coming out experience?	*Discussion of coming out and relevance to education or work*	Systematic Literature Review
Discrimination	You talked about a negative experience you had?	*If discrimination/stigma is mentioned, ask participant to tell the story, if they wish.*	Systematic Literature Review
Networks (if applicable) and/or other LGBT workers	Are you a member of the LGBT network in your workplace? (if applicable) Why did you join? What do you think the aims of the network are?	*Discussion of the importance, if any, and aims of the LGBT network in the workplace.* *If participant mentions other LGBT workers,*	Systematic Literature Review, Pilot Interviews

	Has their (other LGBT worker) affected your experiences at work?	*discuss any effects their presence in the workplace might have, or the participant's presence on others.*	
Decriminalization of homosexuality, 1993	How did decriminalization affect you? (if applicable)	*Discussion about decriminalization, with older participants.*	Background Research
Closing Questions	Apart from what we've discussed, do you think your sexual identity has affected your career? Do you have anything to add that you think may be relevant to the project?	*Gives participant a chance to add anything they feel is relevant.*	Pilot Interviews

Appendix E. Biographical Information Form, Information Sheet and Consent Form Given to Participants

Biographical Information

Pseudonym:...

....

Age:...

....

Gender   Identity: ....

....

Sexual   Identity: ....

....

Industry   I   work   in/worked   in: ....

....

Previous   Industries   I   worked   in   (if   any):   ....

....

Information Sheet

Researcher: Ciarán McFadden	**Supervisor:** Dr. Marian Crowley-Henry
Address: Department of Management School of Business Rowan House NUI Maynooth Co. Kildare.	**Address:** Department of Management School of Business Rowan House NUI Maynooth Co. Kildare.
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- This PhD research project is concerned with the careers and workplace experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers in Ireland. You will be interviewed for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour, about topics relating to your career, work experiences, self-identity and relationships with others.

- Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any point before, during or after the interview. You may also request at any time that any data collected during your interview be destroyed. You may ask to see any section of the final thesis relating to the interview data you have provided.

- Any data collected during this interview will be kept strictly confidential, and will be accessible only to me, the researcher. You will be identified by a pseudonym in the PhD thesis and any further publications. Any information that may potentially identify you (e.g. your workplace, place of birth etc.) will also be removed.

- Interview data (audio recordings, transcripts etc.), will be retained on 2 separate hard-drives. These hard drives will be encrypted and password protected. The password will be known only to me, and no-one will be given access to this data at any point. The interview data will be retained for 6 months after the final thesis has been approved. After 6 months, the data, both physical and digital, will be destroyed.

- The thesis (and any drafts), will be read by my supervisor. The final thesis will be read by my supervisor and examiners and will be made available in the NUI Maynooth library. The study, or parts thereof, may be published in a research journal.

- You do not have to answer any question you do not want to. Although I do not envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part in this study, it is possible that discussing your experiences may cause distress.

- If you agree to take part in this study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the National University of Ireland Maynooth Ethics Committee at research.ethics@nuim.ie or +353 (0)1 708 6019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Consent Form

I, ……………………………………………………………., agree to participate in Ciarán McFadden's research study.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Ciarán McFadden to be recorded with a digital voice recorder.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I do not have to answer any question I do not want to.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the interview data, in which case the material will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

    (Please tick one box:)

    I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

    I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

Signed………………………………………………   Date……………………

Appendix F. Supervisor's Letter Given to One LGBT Network

Ollscoil Na hÉireann Má Nuad
Má Nuad, Co. Chill Dara, Éire

National University of Ireland Maynooth
Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland

Department of Business
Roinn a Ghnó

NUI MAYNOOTH
Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

16th July 2014

Re.: Your correspondence from 9th July 2014 regarding a Letter of Introduction for Ciarán McFadden from his PhD supervisor

To whom it may concern:

Ciarán McFadden is a registered full-time PhD student in the School of Business, National University of Ireland Maynooth. He commenced his studies in September 2012 and is expected to complete his studies before the end of 2016 (4 year full-time programme). I am the academic supervisor for his PhD research.

Ciarán's research focuses on the career and workplace experiences of LGBTs. To further his research, he would like to gain access to different LGBT groups in organisations. I was delighted to hear that ███████ is happy to facilitate his research, on receipt of a letter of introduction from his supervisor. I trust this letter will suffice.

If you would like further clarification regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me. You will find my contact details after my signature, at the bottom of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Marian Crowley-Henry

_____
Marian Crowley-Henry (PhD)
BBS & German, MSc Commerce, PhD Management, PGDipHE, CIPD Academic Assoc
Department of Management
School of Business
National University of Ireland Maynooth
Email: marian.crowleyhenry@nuim.ie
Tel.: +353 1 708 4756

Appendix G: Ethical Approval for this Research Project from Maynooth University

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, MAYNOOTH
MAYNOOTH, CO. KILDARE, IRELAND

NUI MAYNOOTH
Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

Dr Carol Barrett
Secretary to NUI Maynooth Ethics Committee

31 October 2013

Ciarán McFadden
Dept of Management, School of Business
NUI Maynooth

RE: Application for Ethical Approval for a project entitled:
LGBT Career Stories and the Implications for Human Resource Management

Dear Ciarán,

The Ethics Committee evaluated the above project and we would like to inform you that
ethical approval has been granted.

Kind Regards,

Dr Carol Barrett
Secretary, NUI Maynooth Ethics Committee

Cc   Dr Marian Crowley-Henry
       Dept of Management, School of Business

Appendix H. Information Regarding Legislation Pertinent to this Research.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) 1993 Bill

After a campaign by Senator David Norris and the Campaign for Homosexual Law Reform, the Fianna Fáil-Labour coalition government introduced legislation to replace the Victorian 1861 *Offences Against the Person Act,* and the 1885 *Criminal Law (Amendment) Act*, UK legislation which was in effect since before Irish independence. This removed the criminalization of sexual acts between men.

Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015

These acts ban discrimination in a wide range of employment and related areas, including pay, training, dismissal, recruitment, promotion, and dismissal. Sexual orientation is one of the 9 grounds upon which the act is based; transgender employees are protected under the Gender ground.

Section 37 (1)

This section (now no longer in effect) of *Employment Equality Act* permitted institutions with a "religious ethos" to discriminate against existing and prospective employees in order to maintain that ethos. In effect, the vast majority of the schools in Ireland are under patronage from the Catholic Church, so LGB teachers were under the most risk of facing discrimination. The section was amended in 2005 by the *Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013*.

Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2015

These acts outlaw discrimination in areas outside the workplace, including in the provision of goods and services, in the sale or lease of property, and in some parts of education.

Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution

The Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution was passed by a referendum in May 2015, and allows any two persons to get married, regardless of their gender. The Amendment passed with 62.07%, or 1,201,607, of the total votes cast.

"I suppose I shall have to live now"

E.M. Forster[xii]

[i] The quotes at the start of each chapter are from a famous real or fictional LGBT person.

[ii] Jamie O'Neill (b. 1962) is an Irish author; this quote is from his novel *At Swim, Two Boys,* an exploration of homosexuality and Irish identity around the time of the Irish war of independence.

[iii] Robin Tyler (b. 1941) is a stand-up comedian and advocate for LGBTQ rights. In 1979, a number of people in Sweden, in protest to the country's criminalization of homosexuality, did ring in 'sick' to work because they were gay.

[iv] Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900) was an Irish playwright, novelist, essayist and poet; he was arrested and incarcerated for 'Gross Indecency', i.e. homosexual relations, with men. He died in Paris, destitute, at the age of 46.

[v] Jeanette Winterson (b. 1959) is an English writer; this quote if from her semi-autobiographical novel *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit,* a coming-of-age story about a lesbian girl growing up in a conservative Pentecostal household.

[vi] Plato (428 – 348 BC) was an Ancient Greek philosopher and a pivotal figure in philosophy, science and mathematics.

[vii] David Sedaris (b. 1956) is an American humourist, comedian and author. His collection of essays, *When You Are Engulfed in Flames,* from which this quote is taken, is the sixth in a series of autobiographical works depicting his gay identity, family life, and upbringing in a conservative area.

[viii] Harvey Milk (1930 – 1978) was an American politician and community leader who became the one of the first openly gay people to be elected to public office. After fighting for numerous gay rights during his term, he was assassinated by a colleague.

[ix] Albus Dumbledore is a fictional character in the *Harry Potter* book series by J. K. Rowling. He was the headmaster of the *Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry* and, as confirmed by Rowling in 2007, was openly gay.

[x] Alan Turing (1912 – 1954) was an English computer scientist and mathematician, a World War 2 code breaker, and is widely regarded as the father of modern computing. After he was convicted for 'Gross Indecency' and was chemically castrated, he died by suicide.

[xi] David Levithan (b.1972) is an American novelist and editor. His young-adult fiction books explore LGBT themes within adolescence.

[xii] E.M. Forster (1879 – 1970) was an English novelist, short story writer, essayist and librettist; this quote is from his novel *A Room with a View,* about a girl struggling with a changing identity, in a time of great social change.