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"We're Not Like These Weird Feather Boa-Covered AIDS-Spreading Monsters": How LGBT Young People and Service Providers Think Riskiness Informs LGBT Youth–Police Interactions

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Abstract Research has suggested that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people are "at-risk" of victimization and/or legally "risky." Relatively few studies have examined the social construction of risk in "risk factor" research and whether risk as a concept influences the everyday lives of LGBT young people. This article reports how 35 LGBT young people and seven service provider staff in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia perceived LGBT youth–police interactions as reflecting discourses about LGBT riskiness and danger. The participants specifically note how they thought looking at-risk and/or looking risky informed their policing experiences. The article concludes with recommendations for improving future policing practice.

Introduction

> These people are broken you know, some of these are homeless, at risk of homelessness, you know have lots of drug addictions, you know have suicidal tendencies or have tried, self harm issues, sexual abuse and I think they try and cut off and think oh well everyone suffers that in the community or in the poverty areas, we just can't put aside one group like LGBT (Xavier Downs,[1] 23, same-sex attracted male, staff).

This quote from Xavier Downs, a staff member at a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT)[2] youth service provider, reflects common ideas discussed in research about LGBT

[1] Please note the participants in this study nominated their own pseudonyms.

[2] LGBT refers in this article to young people who identify with a broad range of sexually and gender diverse subject positions, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, questioning, queer, same sex attracted, intersex, and pansexual.

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young people[3] in a contemporary context. Homelessness, drugs, self harm, suicide, and sexual abuse are issues raised routinely in relation to how LGBT young people experience the world. In fact, it is almost taken for granted now that an LGBT young person will experience some form of victimization before they become an adult. In this way, researchers focus on LGBT young people as an "at-risk" (see review of early work by Savin-Williams 1994) and "risky" (see for example Jordan 2000; Whitbeck et al. 2004) group. Researchers appear interested in how LGBT young people are at-risk due to the likelihood they will encounter victimization and that being victimized will lead to secondary risky behaviors (for example, trading sex for food/temporary accommodation). Secondary risky behaviors are a concern because they may attract police attention, can be illegal, and this can lead to further forms of victimization and criminalization (Remafedi 1987).

Research that thinks outside this risk paradigm is only fairly recent. These researchers challenge the tendency of existing research to constitute LGBT young people as inherently risky and therefore problematic (Marshall 2008). Armstrong (2004: 110) argues that the dominance of risk perspectives like this "has resulted in an almost total absence in the risk literature of any consideration of the social construction of risk." He also argues that the negotiation of the cultural, social, and economic contexts of risk by young people has been overlooked in risk approaches and we need research elaborating how they constitute and understand risk in their everyday lives (Armstrong 2004). Relatively few studies have critically engaged with how research on risk and risk factors shapes the everyday lives of LGBT young people (Marshall 2008; Talburt 2004), and even fewer have examined how young people themselves create and construct ideas about risk (Austen 2009).

Challenging mainstream discourses about riskiness could itself be considered a "risky" move. We are in some ways challenging the many years of advocacy work that has been done to raise awareness about the riskiness of the lives of LGBT young people (Dwyer 2014). The discrimination experienced by LGBT young people has only very recently been legitimized by authorities like police and governments. To challenge this is to surely challenge the progress we have made towards a safer existence for them. This article does not intend or attempt to undo this important work. It is still profoundly important to make visible the issues LGBT young people experience. It is also imperative, however, to consider a point made by Moran and Skeggs (2004: 5): "recognition politics is always reliant on a scopic economy, that is, it assumes that groups can be made visible, want to be made visible, and that visibility can enable a claim to be made on the state." Gaining recognition of the riskiness of LGBT young people's lives means making this riskiness visible and knowable. However, we cannot also assume that this visibility will be necessarily productive for these young people.

This article highlights the tension between the need for recognition of LGBT youthful riskiness and how categories of LGBT youthful riskiness (such as homeless and substance abuse) then become taken for granted. The article will particularly elaborate some of the

[3] The term "young people" is used in this article, rather than the term "youth," for three key reasons. First, "youth" is a relational concept anchored to socially constructed ways of thinking about young people and age appropriate development (Nilan et al. 2007). Second, it is also a term used by the media to describe many diverse groups of young people in mostly negative ways (particularly in relation to breaking the law) and as a homogeneous category of "youth" in need of regulation and control by police (Carrington and Pereira 2009). Third, the service provider staff interviewed for this project noted explicitly their dislike for the term youth (for the reasons I note above) and when the researcher was in the process of developing the project in conjunction with some of these service providers, they requested that youth be changed to young people in the proposal, the ethics application, and any publications emerging out of the interviews.

unintended outcomes that may emerge from this tension. France et al. (2012) have highlighted the unintended outcomes of making the riskiness of young people the focus of regulation. In their interviews with young people who are in some way engaged in youth justice supervision in the United Kingdom, they found many examples where the young person was being supervised as at risk of offending behavior and their frustration with this process actually lead them to offend:

> Jason (13)…expresses his anger about a life-changing decision that he is unhappy with to a social worker by hitting the wall in the social work office with his fist. The social worker calls the police and Jason is taken to court for violent behavior (France et al. 2012: 65).

This is an unintended consequence of recognizing and seeking to manage risk in the life of a young person. Although we could assume that recognizing and ameliorating youthful riskiness is a positive move, we cannot equally assume that the outcomes of these processes are going to be necessarily positive for the young people involved. Just as there is danger in challenging discourses of riskiness, so too is danger inherent in assuming that discourses of risk will only produce enabling outcomes. This article moves towards challenging these discourses of LGBT youthful riskiness to begin to document some of the unintended consequences that come with recognizing and making visible this riskiness.

Another key tension in this article is the lack of an alternative language with which to articulate the notions of risk discussed by the participants. The article ultimately seeks to challenge discourses of risk, yet at the same time the author acknowledges the discomfort with drawing directly from, and using the language of, risk to elaborate these experiences. This key point of discomfort in some ways works within the parameters of what Foucault called "an ethics of discomfort" (Foucault 1997). Aligning with the work of Harwood and Rasmussen (2004), this article embraces the discomfort produced in a way that aligns with Foucault's suggestion that one "never consent to being completely comfortable with your own certainties" (Foucault 1997: 144). Working within discomfort raises questions around how "everything perceived is only evident when surrounded by a familiar and poorly known horizon" (Foucault 1997: 144). This article has been shaped by risk as a familiar horizon, but one that some would suggest is perhaps still poorly known and elaborated because it is consistently thought about as a fact that exists independently. It is hoped this article will contribute—albeit in an uncomfortable manner (Foucault 1997—see theoretical framework below)—to debates about youthful riskiness and how risk might work as a broader discourse that manages the lives of LGBT young people, just as the work of Hughes (2011) explores how discourses of risk shape the lives of young people more broadly in terms of anti-social behavior policies.

This article therefore draws on qualitative interview data from 35 LGBT young people and seven service provider staff in Queensland, Australia, to examine how they thought LGBT young people's experiences with police reflected discourses about LGBT riskiness and danger. First, the article provides an overview of the key themes in "risk factor" research to demonstrate how LGBT young people are situated in the research as at-risk and risky, followed by an explanation of the methodology used for the study. Second the article elaborates a poststructural theoretical framework for thinking about risk as discursively embodied by LGBT young people. While other researchers have examined how young people can be constituted in terms of risk (Hughes 2011) and have examined how risk can be managed through the use of embodied practices (Kristensen et al. 2013), to date no research has theorized risk as something that can be embodied. The article then employs this framework to examine how discursive understandings of riskiness informed the

participants' experiences. In particular, the participants elaborate what it means to "look at-risk" (in terms of involvement with drugs, for example) and "look risky" (in terms of police suspicion of illegal activity). While many experiences of LGBT young people mirror those of other young people, the participants note how they believed that specific ideas about LGBT stereotypes informed their interactions with police.

Research About LGBT Young People and Risk

Distinctions between categories of risk are not always clear in research about LGBT young people, yet they are undoubtedly constituted as a risk in the literature. Researchers situate these young people in terms of risk in two ways. In one way, they are discussed as "at-risk" and being vulnerable and needing protection. The first section below discusses this way of thinking about LGBT young people and how it is typically defined in research grounded in risk factor paradigms. A smaller area of research is also elaborated which runs alongside, and sometimes in conjunction with, risk factor paradigms examining how LGBT young people align with ideas about being "risky." This research works through understandings of dangerousness and criminality and emerges from a combination of risk factor and criminological perspectives. The second section then turns to a more marginal literature that disrupts the taken-for-granted idea that risk is necessary for thinking about LGBT young people.

Being "At-risk" and "Risky": Risk Factor Research Paradigms

A plethora of "risk factor" research argues LGBT young people are at-risk of homophobic-based victimization (including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse) from people such as parents, peers and teachers (Cochran et al. 2002; Cull et al. 2006; Guasp 2012; Hillier et al. 2010; Human Rights Watch 2001; Jordan 2000; Noell and Ochs 2001; Safren and Heimberg 1999; Thorpy et al. 2008; Whitbeck et al. 2004). This framework defines young people at-risk according to how "their life circumstances threaten physical, psychological or emotional well-being and preclude or limit the normative developmental experiences necessary to achieve healthy adult functioning" (Colthart 1996: 31, cited in Kelly 2001: 24). They are defined this way with few exceptions (Haskell and Burtch 2010). For example, research in the United Kingdom (Guasp 2012) suggests at least 55 % of lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people experience homophobic bullying at school, a situation reflected in recent Australian research showing 61 % of same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people being verbally abused and 18 % being physically abused due to homophobia (Hillier et al. 2010). A key concern of research like this is how primary victimization like this leads to secondary risks. For instance, Australian research found that, of 164 participants aged 12–20 years, "37 % of lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) young people had attempted suicide, 82 % had considered suicide, and 59 % had self harmed" (Thorpy et al. 2008: 7). This creates a complex skein of risk and a certain discursive idea of an at-risk LGBT young person. This research then extends beyond the outcomes of being at-risk towards how these outcomes can make these young people risky.

Other research focuses on the outcomes of victimization in terms of how this makes LGBT young people risky, dangerous, and potentially criminal. For instance, researchers highlight the main secondary outcomes of victimization like homelessness (Cull et al. 2006) and health and sexual risk behaviors (Bontempo and D'Augelli 2002). Researchers are also concerned with behaviors enacted in public space, such as prostitution and

"survival sex"[4] (Whitbeck et al. 2004) and substance abuse (Jordan 2000). These may situate LGBT young people as risky because they are "potentially dangerous and needing close regulation and control" (Armstrong 2006: 272) from governing authorities. These activities breach legal boundaries of appropriate public behavior, and therefore, are dangerous and/or criminal. This is evidenced in past research (Remafedi 1987) and more recently Himmelstein and Bruckner (2011) who found lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people were more likely than heterosexual young people to be stopped by police, expelled from school, and convicted for offences as adults. They concluded this may contribute directly to the criminalization of nonheterosexual youth (Himmelstein and Bruckner 2011: 55). Precisely *how* LGBT young people are criminalized is as yet unclear suggesting a need for further research in this area. However, to contend these young people may somehow develop into criminals in the future (because they have been victimized in the past) may overlook what Armstrong (2004) highlights—that all young people may negotiate risk and this may have many outcomes for them depending on their social, cultural, and economic context.

Challenging Risk Factor Research: Critical, Poststructural Paradigms

"Risk factor" paradigms have been criticized for how they *socially construct* LGBT young people as inherently risky, disempowered victims (Talburt 2004). Criticisms have targeted how negative risk discourses situate LGBT young people as needing abuse reduction/resilience strategies, and direct attention away from why homophobic abuse happens (Marshall 2008: 96). Poststructural risk theorists have similarly criticized risk factor paradigms for presenting risk as inevitable. Victimization and being "at-risk" of victimization has become the trope of LGBT youthfulness in contemporary times. Marshall (2010: 67) suggests LGBT young people being "at-risk" of being victimized is now naturalized in "public debate, police development, governmental funding decisions and educational approaches" related to LGBT young people. This way of thinking about LGBT young people appears to be so taken for granted that it is almost presented as the *only* acceptable way to think about LGBT young people. This approach can focus "on all the bad things that can happen" (Marshall 2008: 96) and gloss over any positive outcomes for these young people. By adhering to this trope of LGBT youthful victimhood, we are working through essentialist ways of thinking about LGBT youth (Marshall 2010). Healthy, happy heterosexual young people create a binary contrast with LGBT youthful victimhood, and very rarely do we encounter the unspoken "normal," well-adjusted LGBT young person (Talburt 2004).

In saying this, this article does not suggest risk factor and criminological paradigms are somehow profoundly flawed and therefore should be dismissed. On the contrary, risk factor research sets an important groundwork for making stronger cases for support for LGBT young people in every area of their lives, and there seems more work to do to understand better the criminological outcomes of being "at-risk." Rather, this article argues that while these approaches have inherent value, it is equally important to challenge the ideas they champion and to dismantle the taken-for-granted nature of the ideas they produce. Questioning the impact, for instance, of being typecast as a victim (Marshall 2010) is equally as important as understanding how an LGBT young person is victimized in the first instance, something which I have elaborated elsewhere (Dwyer 2011). Further to this, while these categories of risk have been divided for the purpose of writing this article, it is

[4] Survival sex refers to the practice of exchanging sex for food or shelter (Whitbeck et al. 2004).

important to question the seamlessness of these approaches as they are not clearly distinguished from one another. As elaborated below, being "at-risk" and "risky" frequently collide and intersect in the narratives of LGBT young people.

Theorizing Young People's Embodied Riskiness

Working through discomfort (Foucault 1997), and in order to challenge riskiness and think outside risk paradigms, this article rethinks risk in terms of a poststructural framework aligning with the concept of governmentality. This Foucaultian (1991) concept, elaborated by Dean (1999), makes it possible to think about risks as knowable only in the terms of the discourses that define them and to interrogate how risks are presented as pre-existing, objective scientific facts (Armstrong 2004). A governmental perspective reconceptualizes risk to better understand how young people are classified and categorized in terms of socially constructed scientific knowledge about risk. This makes possible an alternative narrative highlighting how they are implicitly expected to manage themselves as risk avoidant by being enterprising subjects "responsible for future life chances, choices and options" (Kelly 2000: 468). Youthful "riskiness" is therefore socially constituted as those "unable or unwilling to enterprise their lives or manage their own risk, [and] incapable of exercising responsible self-government" (Rose 2000: 331). Riskiness can imply two discursive positions, as evidenced in the research discussed above: vulnerable and "at-risk," or dangerous and "risky," and at times a combination of these. Discourses of risk therefore evidence governmental processes that have "placed the individual within a disciplinary nexus of risk" (Armstrong 2004: 113), and young people's lives are intervened upon on this basis (Gray 2009).

This article extends these understandings of risk to demonstrate how riskiness may be discursively *embodied* by a young person. Earlier work has demonstrated the fundamental role of the body, and specifically non-heteronormative bodies, in shaping violence against LGBT people (Mason 2002) and interactions that LGBT people have with police (Dwyer 2011). These studies highlight how the body can work as "the inscribed surface of events" (Foucault 1984: 83) *marked* by discourse as a material *text* (Kirby 1997). I argue that discourses about riskiness, vulnerability, danger, and suspicion can be embodied, with the body performing discursive knowledge of what it means to look risky. The body performs in ways that can be visibly *read* and subjectivity is *done* (Butler 1990). This notion is evidenced in early work by Kamler (1997: 369) in her discussion of the embodiment of law discourses by a lecturing law professor who:

> not only demonstrates his knowledge of the law…he *is* the law. His body can itself be seen as a text which is read by students and has material effects on their bodies. He is silver haired and silver tongued. He wears finely tailored black suits, crisp white shirts, maroon striped ties with the Law school insignia…He looks distinguished, formal, carries a trim physique, an air of affluence that entices students with unspoken rewards they may find in their future profession.

Reconceptualizing risk as discursive knowledge highlights how riskiness might be enacted bodily as discursive text which may, in turn, produce a range of material effects for LGBT young people. As Gray (2009: 445) suggests, "'risky' individuals are not simply left to their own devices as exclusion, like inclusion, encompasses a wide range of regulatory strategies." What we are unclear about is to what extent police have a role in initiating these forms of regulation.

Within this framework, a qualitative approach was employed to conduct semi-structured interviews with 35 LGBT young people aged 12–25 years[5] from two LGBT youth service providers in Brisbane between November 2008 and May 2009 and seven staff working for these service providers. The research question was: How do LGBT young people experience policing in Brisbane, Queensland, and what are the outcomes of these experiences? Ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Queensland University of Technology.

Participation for the study was sought through LGBT youth service providers in Brisbane, Queensland. Due to the apparent lack of support for LGBT young people in schools and other governmental institutions in Australia (Hillier et al. 2010), the majority of interviews were conducted with young people accessing the only specifically LGBT youth service for young LGBT people in need of support. As such, the young people involved in interviews were diverse and could be considered marginalized.

At present in Australia, we have no national statistics on how many people identify as LGBT in Australia. As such, we have no way of accurately knowing how many LGBT people would be representative in a study of LGBT issues. The young people and staff identified in many disparate ways. Most participants in the study identified as either male (19) or female (16), and those who identified as transgender specified if they were male-to-female (2), female-to-male (1), with no participants choosing transgender as a category listed. Two participants chose to identify as other, and they described themselves as "mostly female often unsure sometimes male" (1) or "no gender" (1). Although most young people identified as gay (16), lesbian (13), or bisexual (5), a few participants identified as queer (2), as pansexual (1), as same sex attracted (1), and as straight (3). Most young people were of Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic background, with a few participants identifying as Aboriginal or other cultural background (e.g. South American, Maori, Filipino). According to service providers, young people accessing their services lived in all areas of Brisbane CBD and surrounding urban areas, with some coming from more outer lying areas of South East Queensland (such as Toowoomba). The interview data is therefore specific to this localized context. All data was audio recorded and transcribed using participant-nominated pseudonyms and quotes were edited to remove "ums", "ahs", and repetitious phrasing (for example: "then we, then we went to the park" would be edited to "then we went to the park"). Data was then coded using NVivo qualitative data management software and thematically analyzed. This data was analyzed using the theoretical framework outlined above.

"Damaged Goods": The Importance of Stereotypes of Riskiness

The analysis highlights a social space obsessed by risk and actuarial risk prediction/assessment, and considers how the recognition of LGBT young people has moved into a new phase where risk marks the bodies and may be "detected" by police as agents of risk regulation. Those interviewed expressed concern that police may be working through stereotypes of LGBT riskiness in policing public spaces. Their accounts of this were not tidily explained away as LGBT young people putting themselves in risky situations, with some narratives highlighting how LGBT young peoples' experiences may not be neatly delineated from the experiences of young people in general: "I don't think that the police

[5] The age range of 12–25 years old is defined as a young person in this study in accordance with the age range of the young people supported by the service providers.

relationship with young people generally is any good" (Fallen Angel, 44, lesbian female, staff). Even so, there were points where participants expressed how they thought police were informing their practice, and therefore their interactions with LGBT young people, with more mainstream stereotypes about LGBT communities.

One key example of this was the notion that LGBT people use more drugs than in the general population. This is not to say, for instance, that links between drugs and some LGBT communities are not well supported by research (see for instance Jordan 2000; Noell and Ochs 2001). However, participants took issue with how they thought police were *reading* their bodies as LGBT and therefore *assuming* they were necessarily involved in those activities. While again we have no evidence directly from police demonstrating if this was how they were working, the participants' accounts suggest this may be enacted between LGBT young people and police to some extent.

Participants' discussions reflected two core themes of risk elaborated in the "risk factor" research detailed above—that is, at-risk (vulnerability/protection) and risky (suspicion/danger/criminality), although this distinction was never a neat one. However, comments implied riskiness was something embodied by an LGBT young person. As such, the key discursive ideas reflected the importance of looking at-risk and looking risky. According to participants, their experiences of policing were filtered through police assumptions about LGBT status and how they looked vulnerable and/or suspicious.

Looking At-risk: Youthful Vulnerability and Police Protection

Service provider staff and LGBT young people both noted how police might be looking at and reading the bodies of LGBT young people as at-risk in terms of being youthful and/or homeless and being in need of protection from community homophobia. To some extent, participants talked about how broader ideas about youthful vulnerability informed police–LGBT youth interactions, and that these interactions were very similar to what young people in general may experience in public spaces with police. For instance, LGBT young people talked about how police interactions happened in relation to cigarettes and begging and how this resulted in "court orders" (Sarah, 17, male to female transgender). Homelessness too featured in the participants' encounters, with homelessness clearly intersecting with identifying as gay or transgender:

> I know quite a lot of them are homeless gay people that I know get in a lot of trouble because they have to sleep outside but that just makes no sense at all because there's nowhere to sleep so you have to sleep outside and then you get in trouble for sleeping outside (Nikolas, 18, gay male).

> We would constantly get moved on like yeah if you're in an area and obviously you look homeless and you smell homeless (Xavier, 22, female to male transgender).

These comments clearly demonstrate the role of social class in the lives of LGBT young people. Although research situates homelessness as a secondary outcome of the victimization of LGBT young people (Durso and Gates 2012), homelessness appears to be a central issue for the embodiment of risk by these young people. Homeless LGBT young people perform what it means to be at-risk and therefore in need of government regulation and protection. However, it is not entirely clear if being homeless or being LGBT was the key factor in the interactions described above. This was an issue raised by staff of LGBT youth service providers who noted how LGBT young people could have interactions with police outside the service before it opened:

> We're really stringent about not opening the doors til 12:30. If there's young people who are sitting out the front on the stairs before 12:30, without a doubt the police will come and harass them, ask them their names, what they're doing here, where they're living. And it's very obvious what they're doing here, you know, we've been here for seven years. So I actually think for the young queer people who use our service, their impression of the police is probably poorer than the kid in the suburb simply because they get harassed just trying to come here (Fallen Angel, 44, lesbian female, staff).

Fallen Angel is not entirely clear on whether or not these interactions are happening because they are young people hanging out in public spaces, or because they are LGBT young people waiting for the service to open. It seems we can only speculate about whether or not police read the bodies of these young people as non-heteronormative, but she does note that it is "very obvious" because the LGBT-specific service has "been here for 7 years." Either way, Fallen Angel notes how these interactions lead to LGBT young people being "outraged that the police ask them their names and addresses because they feel targeted." It is not entirely clear if police are doing this to protect these young people, but it is at least reminiscent of historical policing of young people in line with vagrancy and child protection laws that existed across Australia (Carrington and Pereira 2009).

In some instances, participants noted examples that they thought made it clearer that police were reading their "queerness" as LGBT young people. Comments reflected the idea that police may be reading young bodies as non-heteronormative and therefore in need of police protection from potential homophobic violence from the public:

> I was with my friends at a park and the police turned up and…He asked, "Could we question you? Just have a seat in the car." So I sat in the car with my feet hanging out of the door and he said, "You are now under our protection we've got to take you down to the station" sort of thing and they ended up taking me home…I didn't know about my rights then and I had no idea that if I even put one thing in the car, then I'm under their protection…you know to prevent us from doing bad things or something (Damien, 18, gay male).

> I think it will draw the attention of the police more sometimes because there is a lot of homophobia within the community so if young gays are being affectionate in public then that's going to attract attention from closed-minded discriminatory people so in that way looking after us (Quintin, 17, gay male).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people perceive police interactions as informed by "a 'humanistic intention' which is grounded in concerns about harm, danger, care, and support for those young people who might be at-risk" (Kelly 2001: 24). Interactions with LGBT young people demonstrate police know what it means to look at-risk and read the bodily performances of LGBT young people accordingly, just as they know about what it means to look non-heteronormative (Dwyer 2011). However, there is some ambivalence about this form of police protection, as there also appears to be a tension played out in this, a tension between protection from *doing* bad things or protection *from* bad things. Quintin acknowledged this is "looking after us," but other young people and staff suggested that the behavior sometimes moves from protection to targeting:

> I live out at Redcliffe and there are not many gay people in Redcliffe. In fact I'm probably one of about ten, well that I know of. It's just like screwy because when I walk around Redcliffe and I dress in really tight jeans and a tight singlet and I look really camp and queer, sometimes I'm more subject to get pulled over, I'm more

> subject to be the one that not just the police but general people in the community tend to target me because they think that I'm the weak one (Mac, 19, gay male).
>
> They're there to protect and shit and it gets to a point where you kinda get pulled up for no reason a few too many times. This isn't really protecting—this is more like targeting (Ticket, 19, lesbian female).
>
> I think when you've got a few thousand queer people marching or queer people and supporters marching and there's a line of police either on motorbikes with their helmets on. To me it just feels, it's not welcoming and it is intimidatory and it's almost like a challenge to the protestors like "You better remain peaceful or look we're here already"…It feels like they're there to stop us from either hurting or upsetting other people. It doesn't ever feel like they're there for our safety (Ben, 34, gay male, staff).

This data does not tell us about whether or not police intended to target these young people in this way, or even if they were working through the humanistic intention noted by Kelly (2001). Most would suggest that, given the moves towards community policing in international contexts (see on this topic, Putt 2010), working through a humanistic intention would be a positive move forward for policing. For the young people involved, however, these experiences can be thought of as targeting, even though they are tentative about this. More research needs to investigate the complex details of relations between LGBT young people and police to better understand them, but notions of targeting were similarly discussed by participants in terms of looking risky.

"They've Just Seen Me and Thought What a Ratbag": Looking Suspicious and Policing Riskiness

In contrast to, but by no means separate from, looking at-risk, LGBT young people and staff noted how LGBT young people experienced policing because they looked risky and therefore potentially criminal. The most common term participants identified police using in interactions of this type was "suspicious." Participants noted how they disliked this non-specific term:

> "Suspicious" is such a great term it's like when your parents say nice…"nice" can mean so many things. "Mum I'm going to get a tattoo." "Um that's nice"… "suspicious" you could use to cover all manner of sin (Ticket, 19, lesbian female).

Looking suspicious was one of the most common themes noted in participants' comments. LGBT young people particularly resented how police were able to request personal information from them and search their belongings on the basis of suspicion alone:

> I don't like the way they can just come up and request ID and ask you to empty your pockets just because you look suspicious…If you go into work you can get pulled up or if you're a couple of minutes late then they're making you a half an hour late for work (Hot Stuff, 18, bisexual male).
>
> They always tell me that when they check my bag you look suspicious…they just like to search my bags a lot 'cause basically I look suspicious (Tayden, 19, pansexual).

Participants highlight how being suspicious was about looking visibly suspicious and suggested police interactions reflected assumptions about what it means to look suspicious. For some it happened that often that they had techniques to deal with this situation: "I was like, why are you searching my bag? But I didn't say anything because I thought yep get it over and done with. It works best that way" (Jypsie, 17, bisexual female). Clothing was mentioned as a discursive bodily indicator that LGBT young people thought influenced their experiences with police, and even some staff reflected on this particularly young females identifying as lesbian:

> Even now, I just feel so much more watched and that's so bizarre. Just cause I'm not you know, not the traditional looking woman, they just pick up on that, better keep an eye on them they might be shifty kind of thing. It drove me nuts when I was young…I know that it's definitely something that I've been really conscious my whole life because looking queer is gunna create possible conflict with police (Penny, 32, lesbian female, staff).

> If you're dressed up with full piercings…they tend to take more notice and tend to hang around because you do look like you're going to do something bad (Romeo, 18, lesbian female).

These comments highlight how some LGBT bodies are marked as dangerous and requiring police regulation and clothing emerges as a discursive bodily marker of this criminality. Armstrong (2006) argues this is a key part of a "risk factor approach" that positions all young people as potential criminals. While these accounts are not unlike the experiences of young people in general, LGBT young people's experiences are divergent when looking risky is combined with non-heteronormative embodiment.

Policing That Blurs the Divide Between Risky and At-risk: LGBT Drug Use

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people's experiences with police implied police read their bodies as risky especially regarding drug use. Participants' experiences suggest police combined understandings of non-heteronormative embodiment and assumed drug use to produce a risky LGBT subject in need of surveillance. The LGBT young people interviewed suggested police practice might be informed by research about higher levels of drug use by LGBT communities. As mentioned earlier, some research argues this is a key issue for LGBT communities (Jordan 2000; Noell and Ochs 2001). However, LGBT young people resented how police appeared to assume this and staff noted how they thought this happened more often with LGBT young people:

> I've seen it happen. They will openly go up to a young person and say, "Open your wallet. Let's see if you got any drugs or recreational party things on you." They'll go through the phone and stuff (Xavier Downs, 23, same-sex attracted male, staff).

> I was all dressed up looking great rainbow on my face and the police came straight up to me and asked do you have any drugs…There are more police officers at queer events asking about drugs I have been to straight events and honestly I didn't see as many police officers (Damien, 18, gay male).

> I think possibly the subculture with the highest drug use is possibly ravers and as a gay punk raver (laughs) they always think that I'm either on drugs or selling drugs or drunk (Ticket, 19, lesbian female).

The excerpts above suggest LGBT young people and staff think that police are reading and responding to young non-heteronormative bodies as risky, drug-using bodies needing surveillance and regulation. These bodies perform (Butler 1990) discourses of riskiness, and may be read according to research links between LGBT communities and drug use. This may be interpreted as a promising move if this is what police precisely intended, as advocates have worked very hard to ensure that police inform their practice with research about LGBT issues (see Tomsen 2009 for a discussion of the issues in an Australian context). Yet young people's experiences in this study reflected how they were situated as risky, potentially illegal bodies, bodies that demand increasing governmental intervention (Gray 2009). Two separate interview accounts from lesbian partners at the time were perhaps suggestive of these forms of governance. They discussed police reactions to one of them who was insulin dependent:

> They asked me if they could go through my pockets and…you know they were suspicious of my um I have type one diabetes so they were suspicious of my needles and insulin (Jimmy, 20, lesbian female).

> This one cop there a few times last year he would be like "Excuse me what do you think you're doing right here on the street?" like not even questioning just fully accusing and we just had a bit of a go at him. It really shit me. I'm like she's gonna die if she doesn't do that so just leave her be (Ticket, 19, lesbian female).

These comments suggest policing practice may be informed covertly by an "institutionalized mistrust of youth" around implements which are recognizably related to drug use. Some might argue police actions manifest as concern about young people constituting "a certain dangerousness—to themselves and others" (Kelly 2003: 175). It is useful to think of how young LGBT bodies enact subjectivities (Butler 1990; Kirby 1997) as material texts of research discourses about LGBT drug use, and how police might read and interact with these bodies in some ways but not in others.

Conclusion

The research examined in this article demonstrates that LGBT young people have experiences with police because they do not represent "good" entrepreneurial risk-managing subjects (Rose 2000). They embody riskiness: in terms of looking at-risk, and disavowing proper personal risk prevention; and in terms of looking risky, and continuing to enact suspicious subjectivities in public spaces. Looking at-risk could emerge from notions of social class and homelessness, while looking risky seemed to emerge from gendered notions of how young women ought to be dressed. Police experiences documented in this study reflect categories of dangerousness and vulnerability that may or may not be "derived from risk analysis" (O'Malley 1996: 191). In other words, police may be working through assumptions based on discursive ideas about riskiness as developed in "risk factor" paradigms. They may be assuming that LGBT young people should engage in risk management and know about security and crime prevention to become good, risk-managing subjects. Police interactions in this study evidence how "very commonsensical notions of 'risk' are presented as if they are unproblematic" (Armstrong 2004: 108), and this is unchallenged and legitimated in police–LGBT youth interactions.

Most importantly, it seems as though police work to protect a vulnerable, at-risk public "from young people's rational, calculating choices to offend" (Case 2006: 173). In this way, police seem to expect LGBT young people to "take responsibility for the management of their own needs and risk in order to desist from crime" (Gray 2009: 452). They also seem to expect them to manage their lives in ways that do not involve engaging in risky activities like smoking or being homeless, as though these young people had a choice. The data discussed above suggests that police expect LGBT young people to do this without any consideration of contextual factors that make riskiness part of their lives. They seem to assume that some ways of living, being, dressing, and behaving are riskier than others and therefore need to be avoided.

This highlights how, although risk factor paradigms are useful, we need to work with police so that they consider "the contingency of life biographies" (MacDonald 2006: 380) and think about how youthful transitions/life courses are not necessarily riskier than others. Western nations have a history of police diversity training, but it seems we need to train police to think critically about the notion that risk is inherently negative and needs to be ameliorated and/or regulated, especially since LGBT young people are increasingly represented in homelessness statistics (Ford 2012). To embody non-heteronormativity *and* homelessness is to venture into a new complex nexus of risk, where different forms of risk intersect and inform one another. It is the work of police to ensure the safety of the general public, but we know very little about *how*, or even if, police are being trained to respond appropriately to these intersecting risks. If we think through an ethics of discomfort (Foucault 1997) to rethink risk as discursively embodied, we might be able to think beyond riskiness as a foregone conclusion among LGBT young people. The question is how we get police to think about risk in new ways that makes the certain-ness of risk less familiar, and whether or not this may help them to better understand the material effects of risk in the lives of LGBT young people.

Thinking through an ethics of discomfort may also be useful for how we can rethink risk in criminological knowledges. For some time, psychological criminological theories (such as life course criminologies) have insisted on the fixed nature of risk in the lives of young people (Nilan et al. 2007), even though research demonstrates that risk is something which can be negotiated day to day by young people (Lawy 2002) and risk is becoming less of an issue with less young people engaging in criminal activities (Armstrong 2006). Most importantly, Armstrong (2006: 270) notes how categories of risk and how researchers define them can be "suspect" as they depend on assumptions about what constitutes normal and abnormal young people. To what extent, then, do these assumptions begin to inform criminal justice practice in an everyday way, where workers begin to make assumptions about young people in criminal justice settings in ways that produce material effects on their lives? Even though the public may assume a homeless young person is a "problem" because they are hanging out in public spaces (Nilan et al. 2007), we cannot likewise assume that criminal justice practitioners and researchers may not come to make these implicit, subtle assumptions in their work. The narratives of LGBT young people and service provider staff in this article suggest that it is important for criminological researchers and theorists to think critically about these categories of understanding, especially considering that so many elements of criminal justice processes can be grounded in these categories. Most importantly, albeit uncomfortable, it highlights the imperative to at least consider that discursive categories of risk may produce material effects for LGBT young people and to meticulously document how these and other young people may experience this in everyday ways.

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