2020

The Influence of Internalized Self-Prejudice on Anti-Gay Hate Crime Motivation

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Abstract

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by

Ross Templeton

MA, Ashford University, 2011

BS, University of Minnesota, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2020

Abstract

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ) community continues to be negatively impacted by high rates of anti-gay hate crime. Gay-rights activists continue to press for public policy changes to improve equality and reduce anti-gay sentiment. However, these efforts have not succeeded in reducing the number of attacks. Little is understood about what motivates perpetrators to commit violent acts against members of the LGBTQ community. This study explored how social coalitions and individual sexual identity development impact the motivation behind anti-gay hate crime from the perspective of convicted anti-gay hate crime offenders. The theoretical frameworks proposed for this study were the coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias and the anti-gay aggression theory. This study was guided by research questions that focused on what social factors may contribute to a perceived reduction in the coalitional value of victims from the perspective of a perpetrator. This study used a general qualitative research design. The data source for this examination was the case studies that were published in *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims*. This study also used interviews of convicted LGBTQ hate crime murder perpetrators presented in the documentary *Licensed to Kill*. Data from these case studies were coded and analyzed using content analysis. The implications for social change resulting from this study may be reduced violence against, and improved psychological health of the LGBTQ community by providing gay-rights policy activists improved knowledge on what motivates anti-gay hate crimes.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late uncle Kevin, and the countless others of his generation, who lost their lives due to the AIDS crisis in the late 1980's and early 1990's. His death, and my family's confused, sorrowful, and complicated reaction to it, impacted me at a young age in profound ways that could never be expressed in words.

I also dedicate this work to my mother, my hero. She served as a role model, a confidant, and guiding pioneer to help me accept and understand my own sexuality. This work is also dedicated to all of my family and close friends who continue to support and tolerate me, even though all which that entails.

Acknowledgments

I would like to give many thanks and acknowledge the following people. Without their dedication and assistance, I would not have made it this far in my academic pursuits:

Dr. Kimberley Blackmon, Dr. Carolyn Dennis, and Dr. Michael Brewer for helping be my shepherds through this process. Without your guidance and direction, this process would seem unmanageable. Also, Dr. Scott Frampton for the assistance, recommendations, and feedback to help formulate this document.

I also want to acknowledge Dr. James Linn and Bill Hanson. My undergraduate role models and advisors. Working in the University of Minnesota Dairy Research facility during my undergraduate years is without question one of the most influential reasons I have continued my education to this point.

I wish to thank Dr. Stephen Sprinkle for allowing me to use his case studies as the data source for this study. Dr. Sprinkle's work helped motivate this study, and his work continues to promote and drive positive social change for the LGBTQ community. I also want to acknowledge the amazing work of Arthur Dong. His work helped enlighten this study, and his documentary work is inspiring.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Violence against sexual minorities motivated by sexuality prejudice is not a new phenomenon (Kehoe, 2016), and it continues to be an issue in the United States. As reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reports, there were 1,219 offenses based on sexual orientation bias in 2015 (FBI, 2015). This is an increase from 1,178 sexual orientation biased offenses committed in the United States in 2014 (FBI, 2014). Research on hate, prejudice, and violence against sexual minorities, particularly homosexuals, is also not a new intellectual pursuit, as it dates back to the Middle Ages (Boswell, 1980).

Faderman (2015) discussed the contemporary struggle that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals have endured by outlining the gay rights movement in the United States. According to Faderman, the modern struggle for equality began in the 1950s with the fight to abolish sodomy laws, then progressed into the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969, and it continues to this day. The fight for legal equalities at the state and federal levels have also been ongoing. Faderman also discussed the setbacks experienced by the LGBTQ community due to the auto-immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) crisis in the 1980s and from conservative movements like those led by Anita Bryant and the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas (Faderman, 2015).

Background

Noteworthy victories of the gay rights movement have included the repeal of sodomy laws in most states, the removal of homosexual bans on employment in the Federal Civil Service, and inclusion of sexual orientation in many nondiscrimination policies (Kehoe, 2016). More recently, the gay rights movement has succeeded in Supreme Court victories that led to marriage equality in the United States, repeal of homosexuality bans in the military, parental protections for gay parents, as well as legal rights for homosexual parents-to-be who wish to adopt. These occurrences have brought greater visibility and increased social tolerance to the LGBTQ community (Kehoe, 2016).

However, it has also brought backlash in the form of anti-gay hate speech, rhetoric, political movements, and new anti-LGBTQ laws (Kehoe, 2016). Furthermore, even though the Supreme Court ruled that anti-sodomy laws were unconstitutional in Lawrence v. Texas in 2003, there are still several states where anti-sodomy laws remain included in their state judicial codes (Sulzberger, 2012). Some states have even passed new laws supporting prejudice against gay and lesbian couples who might want to marry, even after the Supreme Court ruling on Obergefell v. Hodges determined same sex marriage bans unconstitutional (Cenziper & Obergefell, 2016). For example, the State of Mississippi legislature passed House Bill 1523 in 2016 which permitted legalized discrimination against LGBTQ individuals based on religious beliefs (Religious Liberty Accommodations Act, 2016).

Legislation similar to the Mississippi bill can be directly correlated to hate crime incidence against members of the LGBTQ community (Levy & Levy, 2016). According

to Levy and Levy (2016), these types of public policy changes provide discursive opportunities for prejudice and discrimination and create an atmosphere of social tolerance for biased violence against the gay and lesbian community. Levy and Levy also suggested that legislation aimed at reducing legal equality for homosexual individuals results in increased anti-gay sentiment throughout society. Measham's (2016) work supported this hypothesis and suggested that minor events that validate hatred can have substantial social consequences. As an example, Measham used the June 2016, incident at the Pulse night club in Orlando, Florida, where 49 were killed and another 53 members of the LGBTQ community were wounded at the hands of an individual violently acting out a hateful religious ideology (Measham, 2016).

While numerous studies over the years have looked at violence against members of the LGBTQ community from the perspective of victims and people impacted by the crimes, there remains a gap in the academic literature in relation to the study of this phenomenon from the perpetrator's perspective. This study began the first steps at filling the gap, and gain a better understanding about why perpetrators are motivated to commit violence against this population.

Problem Statement

The underlying social problem that motivated this study was the continued violence against sexual minority members of the American public. The key problem that I intended this study to address was how public policy can reduce violence against sexual minority members of American society. Even though public policy changes over the last decade have increased awareness of and consequences for hate crimes perpetrated against

gays and lesbians, the violence has not diminished. This is the key problem facing public policy professionals. This study was necessary to advance public policy in a direction where it can better align with the underlying motivations or issues that lead to this type of crime.

LGBTQ members of American society are still frequently targets of prejudice, violence, and hostility based on their personal identity or orientation (Kehoe, 2016). LGBTQ individuals are 2.6 times more likely to be victims of hate crimes than African Americans, 2.4 times more likely than Jewish Americans, and 4.4 times more likely than Muslim Americans (Potok, 2010). According to findings by Berrill (1992), 9% of LGBTQ respondents reported being assaulted with a weapon or object, 13% reported being spat on, 17% were assaulted physically, 19% were victims of vandalism, 25% reported being pelted with objects, 33% had been chased or followed, 44% had been threatened with violence, and 80% reported being verbally harassed. In another study, one in five gay women, and one in four gay men reported being victims of anti-gay biased crime (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999). When compared to other minority groups, LGBTQ individuals face a much greater risk of being victims of minority biased hate crime (Potok, 2010).

The problem facing public policy developers is a lack of understanding why perpetrators of hate crimes act out in the way they do. Kehoe (2016) analyzed demographic variables of anti-LGBTQ biased crime offenders to understand what demographic groups are responsible for gender identity and sexual orientation-based violence. This analysis is unique because it used data from four distinct data sets,

including the Uniform Crime Report data, National Incident-Based Reporting System data, National Crime Victim Survey data, and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Program Report on LGBTQ and HIV-Affected Hate Violence. This analysis is the first of its kind to use the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Program data. Kehoe found that perpetrators of anti-LGBTQ violence generally adhered to a profile offered in the academic literature: white, heterosexual men under the age of 30 years (Kehoe, 2016). However, as Kehoe (2016) acknowledged, offender characteristics are often unknown by their victims and can be unclear or unobtainable to an authority that records data in crime reports. Furthermore, Kehoe found that demographically speaking, offenders of anti-LGBTQ hate crime do not differ significantly from the demographic found in other general crime statistics. This study helped address the problem by providing new insight into why perpetrators are motivated to commit violence against members of the LGBTQ community.

Analysis of situational variables suggested that anti-gay hate crime is a qualitatively unique criminal incident (Kehoe, 2016). Kehoe found significantly higher levels of substance use by offenders, increased levels of crimes against persons, more crimes committed in open spaces, and higher rates of crimes perpetrated by acquaintances. The high proportion of anti-LGBTQ crimes committed by friends, family members, intimates, and non-heterosexuals suggests there are complex dynamics that influence this type of crime (Kehoe, 2016). This study can aid public policy developers to develop policy with a true understanding of the problem they are trying to address. By better understanding what motivates perpetrators of LGBTQ hate crimes, policy

developers can better address the problem of why previous public policy and previous changes in law have not reduced hate crime incidence. Thus, the problem from which this study originated was continued violence against members of the LGBTQ community.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to provide a qualitative investigation into what motivates anti-LGBTQ perpetrators of violence. This knowledge will help public administrators in the creation of policies that reduce hate crime. The phenomenon of anti-gay violence is only superficially understood due to a lack of inquiry into the individuals who actually commit the crimes. This research will aid in the development of preventative public policy aimed at attenuating anti-gay aggression at the individual level. The goal of anti-gay aggression research, ultimately, is to reduce social violence against LGBTQ individuals (Parrott, 2008). Cognitive and physiological reactions of LGBTQ offenders remain under-researched, and significant investigation is needed (Parrott, 2008). As explained by Parrot (2008), future research must focus on identifying what variables increase or decrease violent reactions in individuals that harbor strong anti-gay sexual prejudice (Parrott, 2008).

Further, contemporary literature has shown that anti-gay violence is correlated to sexual prejudice. Sexual prejudice, according to the literature, stems from a desire to reinforce a coalition in a masculine society. Violence is one (of many) ways to accomplish recognized membership into masculine coalitions (Winegard, Reynolds, Baumeister, & Plant, 2016). A profile of the typical anti-gay perpetrator can be developed based on the available research. This profile suggests that most perpetrators will be white

males in their early 20s with a high degree of right-wing authoritarianism, sexually prejudiced, and heterosexual (Sloan, Berke, & Zeichner, 2015).

The aim of this research was to take a qualitative look at the final piece of this hypothetical profile, heterosexuality. This was conducted by examining perpetrators who had been convicted of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes and analyzing their sexual nature, histories, and desires prior to their attacks. Two major themes were explored, whether they had exposure to a positive gay role model and whether they had any bisexual or homosexual history. The purpose of this exploration was to help policy makers find ways to address what motivates anti-gay hate crime. Currently, public policy is based on an assumption that perpetrators are straight, white, Christian males. This exploration helped determine if those assumptions were correct, or if incorrect assumptions have led to ineffective public policy development.

Research Questions

The primary research question this study addressed was:

RQ: What types of lived experiences lead individuals to commit violence toward LGBTQ people?

Contemporary research has suggested that the lived experience of potential perpetrators, according to the models developed, would be the experience of a heterosexual male in his early 20s with strong coalitional ties (Sloan et al., 2015). However, a closer qualitative look at some important and high-profile cases, such as that of Mathew Sheppard, suggested this may be incorrect (Jimenez, 2013). Thus, it appears that current academic models may be leading public policy development in the wrong direction, which may

explain why even as policy improvements are made, FBI statistics (FBI, 2015) suggest violence against members of the LGBTQ community continue to remain statistically unchanged.

The foundational research question was in regard to the lived experience of known LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators. I answered the question by exploring three narrower inquires or sub-quesitons.

SQ1: What life events motivate anti-gay hate crime perpetrators to commit their crimes?

This question asked what life experiences influenced them and what they were experiencing in life at the time of their crime.

SQ2: Do known perpetrators identify as straight, homosexual, or bisexual?

This question asked what their lived experience had been in relation to their sexual past. Have they had sex with members of the same gender? When an individual who has experimented sexually with someone of the same gender perceives a threat to their public or perceived sexual orientation, do they experience an increased motivation to commit violence?

SQ3: How do masculine coalitions influence convicted anti-gay hate crime perpetrators?

This question asked how masculine coalitions influenced their gender role identity or sexual self-identity formation, at the time of their crime. Did perpetrators experience coalitional pressure prior to committing their crimes? Were established coalitions, such as

religion, strong family structures, or other social hierarchies, part of their lived experience at the time they committed their crimes?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

One of the underlying themes that drove this study was the motivations behind anti-LGBTQ hate crime. By utilizing the theoretical frameworks of Parrott's (2008) anti-gay aggression theory along with the coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias (Winegard et al., 2016), this study was aimed to gain a better understanding about what social and individual factors come together to motivate violence against members of the LGBTQ community. The major theoretical propositions posed by these theories suggest that social and organizational coalitions influence peoples' identity and beliefs to the point that anti-gay aggression is expressed in order to maintain social standing and self-worth.

While these theoretical frameworks are more fully explored in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, they are introduced here because of their foundational importance to the subject. Parrott's (2008) theory of anti-gay aggression and Winegard et al.'s (2016) coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias relate well to this study and the research questions being investigated. These frameworks help explore and understand underlying influences as well as fundamental motivations.

The coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias posits that bias against sexual minorities stems from the influence of social organizations in which young people are influenced (Winegard et al., 2016). While there are many examples of such coalitions, a useful example is the Boy Scouts of America. Young men who grow up and come of age

heavily influenced by such a historically homophobic organization experience extreme coalitional pressure to be straight, Christian, and philanthropic.

This coalitional pressure can result in two theoretical manifestations, depending on the personal sexual identity of a particular member. In heterosexual youth, anti-gay bias is likely to develop, along with heteronormative views, and feelings that sexual minorities are inferior. In queer youth, self-loathing and internalized homophobia are likely the outcome as the young person matures sexually and homosexual feelings and affections develop.

While Winegard et al.'s (2016) coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias helps understand how young people are influenced to develop anti-gay bias or self-loathing, it doesn't fully help us conceptualize how that leads to violent action against LGBTQ minorities. This study therefore further leaned on the theory of anti-gay aggression (Parrott, 2008). The theory of anti-gay aggression posits that violent action develops where established anti-gay bias intersects with an opportunity to establish a person's own sexual superiority through violence or intimidation.

Using the Boy Scouts of America as an example again, imagine a young man is walking down the street with a group of other Boy Scouts and the group comes across a flamboyant gay man that the young men went to school with. The Boy Scout feels a need to reinforce his allegiance with his peers, so he spits on the gay man and looks for affirmation of his actions from the others in his group. If his friends laugh and cheer him on, then his sense of value, and self-worth, are reaffirmed based on the formal coalitional values of the group.

Or, as this study explored in depth, imagine if this same young scout, while walking down the street with the group of his Boy Scout peers comes across a young man that the boys went to school with, but for this example imagine that the two had previously experimented sexually with each other. In this scenario one of the other boys in the group spits on the gay boy and calls him names in an attempt to gain reaffirmation of his coalitional worth. Does the young man in question defend his previous sexual partner, or does he become conflicted and moved to violent action against his previous sexual partner in an attempt to distance himself from the threat of being labeled and to attempt to preserve the coalitional power he has worked to secure as a Boy Scout? Parrott's (2008) theory of gay aggression framework helped this study conceptualize real-life stories where social biases collided with social opportunities; where individuals used violence to establish superiority over a sexual minority, particularly in the context of internalized self-prejudice. It is the hypothesis of this study that when heteronormative coalitional forces collide with internalized homophobia, violence erupts, and is directed at an individual close to a perpetrator that openly exhibits the aspects of the perpetrators identity they are most ashamed of.

Nature of the Study

This study used a general qualitative approach with a social constructivism perspective to explore how personal sexual identity and internalized sexual self-prejudice influence the motivation to commit anti-LGBTQ hate crimes. The cases chosen for this study were convicted anti-gay hate crime perpetrators. In the study I sought to explore the

topic from the essence of the perpetrators' lived perspectives in order to gain new understanding about this understudied population.

I chose a general qualitative method of inquiry for this study in order to take an in-depth look at how internalized homophobia has impacted the lived experiences of convicted gay-hate crime perpetrators. In this study I explored how traditional coalitions may influence the phenomenon of interpersonal anti-LGBTQ violence from the perspective of the perpetrator. This approach provided a methodology with which I used a nonrandom, purposeful sampling of subjects that are of specific interest to the topic and context being explored (Johnson, 2017).

The phenomenon this study explored was the murders of gay men, women, or transgendered victims by perpetrators who may have had a possible history of experimenting sexually with partners of the same gender. The primary data for this exploration was case studies compiled by Sprinkle and published in the book *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims* (Sprinkle, 2011). Additional case studies as presented in the documentary *Licensed to Kill* by Arthur Dong (1997) were also used to enlighten this study. The data source for this study was these published compilations of case studies. There was no need to reanalyze any of the raw data as this study used content analysis to explore and gain understanding from this archival data.

Data were coded using an inductive coding method. Inductive coding was more appropriate for this study compared to deductive coding as this study was exploratory in nature. Data were analyzed using a Krippendorf (2004) type method of content analysis.

Qualitative research looks at the world through the lens of an observer, using a series of representations such as observation notes, photographic images, transcribed interviews, recordings, and documents (Johnson, 2017). Qualitative researchers take an interpretive, naturalistic look at the world by studying phenomena and subjects in their natural settings. Qualitative research is an attempt to understand how people create meaning out of their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research is conducted in the field, where participants experience the issues or problems that are being examined, with the goal of achieving an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

In this study, I was not looking to judge what should have been done, or how others might have acted differently in the same situation. Instead, I looked to gain an understanding of why the research participants choose the actions they did. Thus, in this study I used a general qualitative inquiry to explore and obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon of murder, when a LGBTQ victim is attacked by a perpetrator who does not necessarily fit the conventional profile currently accepted in the literature. I used this type of inquiry in order to focus on the descriptions of the participants' lived experiences that influenced the choices they made surrounding the murder of an LGBTQ individual.

Definitions

For the purpose of this dissertation, the terms lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered, queer, LGBT or LGBTQ, are often used interchangeably even though the strict definition of each differs. The origins and history of these terms, as far as their definitions and semantics are concerned, could be an entire dissertation in its own right.

All of these terms are used to represent sexual minority members of the American culture. I consider all individuals who self-identify as any of these terms as a part of the LGBTQ community. I have great respect, and appreciation for the importance that various groups or individuals may attach to these words and their distinct differences. However, this dissertation focuses on hate crimes directed at the greater LGBTQ community and developing a better understanding of why hate crimes directed at members of this community continue in the context of American culture.

Homophobia is central to this discussion of LGBTQ hate crimes. The concept of homophobia owes it roots to the work of Weinberg (as cited in Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2015) and refers to a dread of being in close proximity to a homosexual, or in the case of an individual who has sex with members of their own gender, as self-loathing (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2015). Herek et al. (2015) used the term internalized stigma in their work to define this self-loathing in sexual minorities. According to Herek (2015), stigma is a better term for the concept of homophobia because unjustified hatred for someone that is different than you is not a phobia but rather just a prejudice. This study will primarily use the terms sexual prejudice and self-stigma when referring to the concept of homophobia.

The concept of social norms and how those pressures influence individual behavior was an important concept guiding this study. This study used the term heteronormative to describe the social norm of a man and woman pairing off into a monogamous relationship for child raising and life satisfaction. Heteronormative culture leads to heterosexism, prejudice, and minority stress (Rostosky & Riggle, 2017). Whether

or not heteronormative expectations *should* be the social norm is a discussion outside the reach of this study. Instead, this study simply accepts that heteronormative attitudes do, in fact, prevail within the context of American culture. Therefore, these attitudes influence individual actions, beliefs, and behaviors. Furthermore, heteronormative culture and the heterosexism that it creates impact the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ young adults (Mohr, 2016).

In this study I did not use the term *sex* to mean anything other than the act of sexual gratification with another person, persons, or oneself, in the case of masturbation. When referring to the state of being a male or female or any identity in between, I used the word *gender* for this study. The concept of how a person's sexuality is perceived by others or interpreted externally, for the sake of this dissertation, I referred to as sexual *orientation*. In contrast, I referred to the concept of how a person feels internally about their own gender, sexuality, personal desires, and sexual fantasies as personal sexual *identity*.

Assumptions

An assumption of this study was that anti-LGBTQ hate crimes take place in a heteronormative culture where there is implicit marginalization of sexual minorities. This implicit prejudice against out-group individuals is often ingrained unconsciously by our social environment (Uhlmann & Nosek, 2012). While this phenomenon is generally and socially believed to be true, it is difficult to prove or quantify. However, there is contemporary research that has begun to explore and quantify implicit social cognition (Nosek & Riskind, 2012; Uhlmann & Nosek, 2012).

This basic assumption, that LGBTQ individuals are marginalized in American culture, was important in the context of this study because the research explored what specific situations or events in a perpetrator's personal experience triggered violent action. Without this assumption, it could be argued that heteronormative culture and anti-gay bias are what lead a person to commit violence against sexual minorities. However, even individuals who clearly admit or demonstrate such bias do not normally commit horrendous violence. In this study I hoped to gain a deeper understanding about what specifically spurs violence against members of the LGBTQ community.

Furthermore, an assumption of this research was that homosexuality is normal and healthy. I understood that there may be some members of society, particularly in staunch conservative political or Christian fundamentalist circles, who are still debating this question. However, a review of the academic literature published over the past 20 years led me to conclude that sexuality, across its spectrum, is natural within the human population. According to Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin (1998), as many as 37% of men indicate they have had some type of sexual experience with another man in their lifetime.

Scope and Delimitations

It is believed, based on previous research in this discipline, that the primary perpetrators of hate crimes against LGBTQ individuals are heterosexual individuals. However, this previous research was based on inquiry using methodology that examined the perpetrator demographically using a gay or straight dichotomy, often based on a box within a police report (Potok, 2010). In this study I explored the main research problem of violence against LGBTQ individuals using a qualitative approach to truly address what

it is within a perpetrators self-identity (or perhaps identity conflict) that enables violent action.

When examining the complex specifics of many LGBTQ hate crime murders, it is often discovered that the perpetrator self-identifies as heterosexual but their sexual history has not been exclusively heterosexual (Kehoe, 2016). This study looked specifically at these identified perpetrators. By choosing to analyze this particular population and exclude populations of perpetrators where there is no evidence of sexual deviation from the heternormative, it is hoped that profound new insights can be gained. Knowledge gained through this academic exploration may be transferable to other areas of LGBTQ identity research, as well as policy decisions in the future.

Limitations

The fact that this study used case studies is a major limitation. Hopefully, future research might be able to include actual interviews with convicted LGBTQ-hate crime perpetrators. However, in this research study I sought to gain information that convicted murders might be unwilling or unable to openly provide in an institutionalized setting such as prison. Furthermore, if individuals are dealing with issues related to the development of a healthy homosexual identity, a prison is likely a difficult place to nurture a healthy sexual identity of any kind, gay or straight. The heteronormative, homophobic culture of a prison might also make data collection problematic.

Another design limitation related to the fact that the data being utilized for this study was collected with a different purpose in mind. The case studies researched by Dr. Sprinkle were compiled and researched with the hope of providing the context in which

the crimes occurred from the victims' perspective. Dr. Sprinkle wanted the work to be a tribute to the victims of these terrible acts. However, the case studies still provided in-depth, rich data on the social context in which all of the parties were living at the times of these crimes. This made them valuable to this study, as for this research I was interested in the social context, socialization, and coalitional pressures experienced by the perpetrators.

Researcher bias is always a limitation that must be addressed and discussed if research is to have true dependability. As Creswell (2012) discussed, in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument of exploration, and bias must be avoided (or at least managed). In this study, I am an openly gay man who has experienced social stigmatization due to my sexuality. While this bias might be viewed as an issue, this bias is also what drove the honest and open exploration outlined in this research study.

Significance

The significance of this study was that it helped fill a gap in the research by providing gay-rights policy experts a better understanding about how internalized homophobia influences anti-gay hate crimes. It is essential to further explore this connection to reduce future anti-gay hate crimes. This research is also significant because it was an exploration of an under-researched group: convicted anti-gay perpetrators. This research also provided insight into the social context of anti-gay hate crimes from the perspective of convicted perpetrators.

Implications for social change resulting from this study include the potential for reduced violence against and improved psychological health of the gay community. The

knowledge gained may provide gay-rights policy activists with improved data about how social coalitions might influence the motivation behind anti-gay violence. This may enable future policy development that better addresses the issue of anti-gay motivated crime. Reducing such crimes against the LGBTQ community would increase mental health within the community as a whole (Burks et al., 2015). The results from this study may help reduce the frequency, nature, and violence of anti-gay biased crime. Insights are aimed at improving the overall well-being and quality of life in the gay community by development of public policy that may effectively reduce the incidence of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes.

Summary

Violence against sexual minorities motivated by sexuality prejudice is not a new phenomenon (Kehoe, 2016), and it continues to be an issue in the United States. The gay rights movement has brought many important victories, protections, and tolerance for members of the LGBTQ community. However, even with increased protections, anti-LGBTQ hate crimes continue. This chapter outlined the problem statement, purpose, research questions, and general framework used in this research. I also discussed definitions, the scope of the study, limitations, and the significance of the study in this chapter.

This study used a qualitative approach to examine the research question of by whom, and under what circumstances, is violence toward LGBTQ individuals most likely? This research question was explored from a sexual identity perspective, utilizing an underexplored research population, convicted hate crime perpetrators. In the next

chapter, a review of the current literature is presented. This literature review helps explain how the research questions developed and why the framework of the study was chosen.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This research addressed the problem of anti-LGBTQ hate crime violence from the perspective of perpetrators. Violence against sexual minorities continues to be an issue in the modern culture of the United States. The purpose of this study was to better understand what motivates these crimes so that policy developers and institutions can better address the problem. Current literature has shown that heterosexism in society creates gender role expectations and creates prejudice against sexual minorities (Herek et al., 2015). In this chapter I explore some of this research, as well as changes in public policy over the past generation. I also discuss important cases of anti-LGBTQ violence that have shaped public consciousness, and research on the typology and nature of the perpetrators.

Violence is one of many ways to accomplish recognized membership into heteronormative masculine coalitions (Winegard et al., 2016). For such action to take place, it requires socially constructed belief systems that to be gay is synonymous with *not*-being masculine. While this is a false premise, it is a premise that is widely accepted and used in the literature (Costello, Rukus, & Hawdon, 2019).

Most anti-gay violence is perpetrated by young men in their late teens or early 20s, during a time in their sexual development when they are highly sexually charged (McDevitt, Levin, & Bennett, 2002). This is a time in a young man's development when sexual activity becomes an extremely important part of his personal identity. At this point in their lives, self-identity, particularly gender identity, must reconcile with the sexual

choices they make; for example, the partners chosen for sexual exploration. It stands to reason that if young men believe that sex with another man equals not-masculine but view themselves as being masculine, then experimenting sexually with other boys causes an internal conflict. Stress with understanding their masculine gender role would be experienced, and the potential for violence develops (McDevitt et al., 2002).

One hypothesis related to this field of work is that if young men are exposed to a positive gay role model, they would be less likely to make the false connection of gay equals not-masculine. Support for this hypothesis comes from the observation that gay rights have improved over the last 20 years, but gay hate crime rates have remained steady. This observation suggests that gay rights have become socially acceptable, but the gay rights movement has reinforced the social construct that being gay puts an individual in a minority group and thus the idea that gay equals not-masculine, or at least not part of the traditional, majority, masculine coalition. Said another way, this hypothesis suggests it is not civil rights and legal protections that help marginalized groups gain social status, but rather social visibility.

In theory, young men who commit anti-gay violence probably have not had a positive gay male role model (Uhlmann & Nosek, 2012). Likewise, young men who have had a positive gay role model would be less likely to see homosexuality as not-masculine. Furthermore, young adults who have had a positive LGBTQ role model are less likely to view sexual partner choice as being synonymous with gender identity. The belief that sexual partner choice is a byproduct of gender identity is another false construct often utilized in the literature (Sloan et al., 2015).

Contemporary literature on anti-LGBTQ violence assumes that most perpetrators are heterosexual (Burks et al., 2015). This stems from years of research that has developed models and theories suggesting sexual prejudice is the root cause of anti-gay violence (Herek et al., 1999). However, sexual prejudice can easily be experienced by masculine men who value their status as part of the in-group but become conflicted and threatened by their own sexual interest in another man.

The body of literature related to anti-gay violence examining the prevalence, impact, victim effects, and perpetrator demographics over the past 30 years has largely concentrated on victim survey data, crime reports, and victim participation questionnaires. The passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 greatly improved the collection of such data (Jacobs & Eisler, 1993). This data, published in the Uniform Crime Reports by the FBI, is now widely cited and used in academic studies related to LGBTQ violence (Kehoe, 2016). Proponents of the Hate Crime Statistics Act believed it would raise awareness of hate crime issues, promote improvements in legislation, reduce crime, encourage victim reporting to authorities, and stimulate additional research (Nolan & Akiyama, 1999).

However, this data has a major limiting factor; it relies only on the perspective of victims and fails to collect valuable information related to the perpetrator. As Kehoe (2016) discussed, empirical studies focusing on the perpetrators or situational dynamics of anti-LGBTQ crime are limited. Instead, studies focus on emotional consequences for the victim, descriptive analyses of the crime and correlations, or the attitudes of people toward the incidence or the victim (Kehoe, 2016). If the intent of studying anti-LGBTQ

biased crime is to reduce future violence, then a true understanding of the perpetrator's perspective is imperative.

In this study I explored what motivating factors come together and precipitate violence in the form of hate crimes against members of the gay community. Great strides have been accomplished by the gay civil rights movement at the federal and state levels (Faderman, 2015). Some of these successes have included monumental social changes such as the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and the striking-down of the Defense of Marriage Act (Kaplan, 2015). But these successes have not effectively reduced LGBTQ biased hate crime (Kehoe, 2016).

This study helps provide a better understanding of why, even with improved legal equality, social stigma and social inequality remain. This study also addressed the problem of gay hate crime and provides gay rights activists, public administrators, and policy developers, better information about what motivates perpetrators of anti-gay violence. This study supplements the limited body of literature that has examined the situational characteristics of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes and perpetrators using empirical analysis. In this chapter I explore the current academic literature related to the phenomenon of LGBTQ violence, as well as current academic literature in the field of public administration and policy development.

Literature Search Strategy

I found the literature reviewed for this study using multiple research databases accessed through the Walden University Library search functions. Specific databases included Proquest, EBSCO, and Nexis-Lexis. I also used Google Scholar extensively and

found it to be the most useful search engine. Often articles were identified using Google Scholar, and then I retrieved the full-length article using Proquest. Searches focused in on relevant material using key words such as *sexual identity formation, gay hate crime, heterosexism, gay shame,* and *homophobia*. Preliminary research led to the discovery of the foundational frameworks used in this dissertation, Parrott's (2008) anti-gay aggression theory and the coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias (Winegard et al., 2016). I uncovered further research using the reference lists of these authors' work, as well as the reference lists of other dissertations.

For research related to specific cases of LGBTQ violence, I utilized multi-media sources such as news articles and documentary publications. However, the foundational literature used in this review was from peer-reviewed academic publications or, in the case of crime statistics, official FBI statistical reports. I also used the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global databases to search for recent dissertations in the fields of public policy and public administration, criminal justice, and hate crime. The reference lists in these dissertations proved invaluable for finding current and relevant literature pertaining to this research project.

One area of great frustration during the literature search was a lack of information related to perpetrators. Much work has been done to examine the effects of LGBTQ hate crime (Herek et al., 1999) and the correlates of LGBTQ hate crime (Burks et al., 2015), as well as the lives of LGBTQ hate crime victims (Sprinkle, 2011). But every search for information related to the personal histories or circumstances from the perpetrators' perspective continued to come back empty. The only information that could be found on

perpetrators was the work of Jimenez (2013). Jimenez provided a case study into the relationships and circumstances related to the murder of Matthew Shepard by interviewing his perpetrators Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. This research continued this work by collecting data from additional convicted LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators in order to gain a better understanding of their sexual histories, how masculine coalitions influenced their social development, and how heteronormative culture influenced their sexual identity formation.

Theoretical Foundation: Anti-Gay Aggression Theory

To elucidate the phenomenon of anti-gay aggression, it is necessary to explore the sociocultural and individual mechanisms that facilitate violence against LGBTQ people (Parrott, 2008). According to Parrott (2008), heterosexism is used to describe the sexual stigma against LGBTQ people at the sociocultural level. At the individual level, the internalization of heterosexism is referred to as sexual prejudice (Parrott, 2008). Parrott's theory of anti-gay aggression posits that sexual prejudice is a key determinate of aggression against sexual minorities. Furthermore, gay men are targets of such aggression because the assailant seeks to affirm their own masculine (or nonfeminine) identity (Parrott, 2008).

According to Parrott (2008), thrill-seeking perpetrators see sexual minorities as easy targets who have already been marginalized by society because of their sexual deviancy. Defense-oriented perpetrators react from anxiety about their own homosexual urges or an unconscious fear of being gay (Parrott, 2008). In group dynamics, the

perpetrator is motivated by a desire to prove toughness and heterosexual normality to peers (Parrott, 2008).

Parrott's (2008) anti-gay aggression theory was developed using the general aggression model as a conceptual framework. Hostile, aggressive, anti-LGBTQ action is not caused by an independent effect, it requires interaction between an individual's preconceived sexual prejudice and an external event or situation (Parrott, 2008).

Parrott (2008) posited that anti-gay violence is facilitated through masculine gender role reinforcement, thrill seeking, defense against societal judgment of themselves, and heterosexist group dynamics. This is a multiphase process that requires individual motivation and an external stimulus. This means that a sexually prejudiced man exposed to violations of traditional gender roles (such as male to male erotic affection) will become aggressive. However, if a sexually prejudiced male is exposed to heteronormative gender role behavior (i.e., men competing at darts or golf), aggression does not result (Parrott, 2008). While the link between sexual prejudice is clearly documented in the literature, the exposure variables that increase or decrease the likelihood of violent action against an LGBTQ target needs further examination (Parrott, 2008).

While the literature has demonstrated a clear correlation between anti-gay aggression following exposure to masculine gender role violations, research has not fully evaluated how personal variables interact with such exposure to create hostile arousal and violent actions (Parrott, 2008).

Theoretical Foundation: Coalitional Value Theory of Anti-Gay Bias

The coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias posits that individuals, especially men, develop psychological systems to facilitate formation, and regulation, of coalition systems. These systems lead to anti-gay bias because homosexuality is perceived as having negative coalitional value in traditional coalitions (Winegard et al., 2016). Competition, and the desire to survive, are innate human instincts (Benenson, 2014). Successful formation of coalitions increases the likelihood of survival, and success when faced with competition (Winegard Reyet al., 2016). Many men do not perceive gay men as possessing positive coalitional traits such as strength, toughness, pain tolerance, or courage (Benenson, 2014). Parrott hypothesizes that targeted aggression towards LGBTQ individuals, especially gay men, may function to reaffirm masculinity in oneself, or demonstrate it to others. However, this hypothesis is in need of further exploration (Parrott, 2008). This study will explore if Parrott's hypothesis holds true in the case of convicted LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators.

Because gay men are perceived as physically, emotionally, psychologically, or intellectually weak, they are intentionally excluded from male coalitions, and punished with abuse and humiliation (Winegard et al., 2016). Excluding gay men from traditional male coalitions has little to do with their actual sexuality, but rather is based on a perception that they cannot fully contribute to physical and psychological competition (Winegard et al., 2016). Gender roles are a key component used during coalition formation and maintenance. Nonconforming coalition members, demonstrating

characteristics more consistent with outside coalitions, will be treated especially aggressively as a form of victimization and denigration (Sloan et al., 2015).

Heterosexism in American Society

According to Parrott (2008), men are perceived, at the sociocultural level, and learn to define themselves, at the individual level, by what they are, as well as by what they are not. Within this context men are expected to be successful, tough, and in charge. Men are expected to *not* be feminine, weak, or homosexual (Parrott, 2008). At societal, organizational, and individual levels, everyone is presumed to be heterosexual, and sexual minorities remain unacknowledged (Herek et al., 2015). Furthermore, when sexual minorities become visible, they are regarded as abnormal, treated with malice, and considered in need of explanation (Herek et al., 2015).

Public policy has improved legal equality for LGBTQ individuals over the last twenty-years (Levy & Levy, 2016). While these changes in public policy have given LGBTQ individuals improved legal protections, they have not changed the social culture of American society. In the context of anti-gay violence, heterosexism and social masculinization teach individuals that sexual minorities are to be considered a threat to normal social order (Parrott, 2008). Same sex couples form their relationships in a heteronormative society that stigmatizes their relationships, and privileges heterosexual identity (Rostosky & Riggle, 2017). Negative beliefs and stereotypes of LGBTQ lifestyles in American culture reinforce prejudice, discrimination, and rejection of same-sex relationships (Rostosky & Riggle, 2017). These cultural attitudes impact LGBTQ individuals and result in internal shame and self-disapproval (Downs, 2012). According

to sociocultural theories, this heterosexist masculinization of society, also promotes anti-gay violence (Parrott, 2008).

Minority stress, caused by lifelong exposure to hetero-privileged culture, includes experiencing prejudice and discrimination, expectations of rejection, internalized stigma, and negative self-worth (Rostosky & Riggle, 2017). Lesbian, gay, and bi-sexual individuals have been shown to have increased mental health issues, including increased substance abuse, suicide, and mood disorders, because of minority stress caused by hostile and stressful social environments (Meyer, 2013). Experiencing heterosexism negatively impacts the well-being of LGBTQ individuals, and has been shown to increase daily anger, fear, and avoidance behaviors in young adults (Mohr, 2016). Experiencing heterosexism and perceived discriminatory culture has been correlated to increased anger rumination, increased psychological distress, and reduced self-compassion (Liao, Kashubeck-West, Weng, & Deitz, 2015).

Experiencing sexual prejudice in a heterosexist society motivates LGBTQ individuals to conceal their sexual identity and attempt to present a heterosexual identity to those around them (Herek et al., 2015). Developing a positive self-identity requires additional developmental effort for individuals who identify as LGBTQ (Reynolds & Hanjorgiris, 2000). Institutional heterosexism and heterosexist discourse are correlated with anti-LGBTQ hate crimes (Levy & Levy, 2016). However, not everyone exposed to heterosexism resorts to violence. More research is necessary to fully understand what factors come together to motivate violence in the complex social context of heterosexist society.

Changes in Public Policy

Even though social attitudes in regard to sexual minorities have changed dramatically in the United States over the past twenty-years, and many institutional stances against LGBTQ individuals have been tempered or reversed, LGBTQ members of society continue to face considerable hostility and discrimination (Herek et al., 2015). Political campaigns against equal rights for LGBTQ citizens continue to cause stress, anxiety, suicide, and depression for these individuals (Levy & Levy, 2016).

Addressing hate-motivated crime is important because these acts don't affect just one individual (Trout, 2015). According to Trout, these acts instill fear, distress, and impart harm onto an entire community of individuals who share a particular trait. While some states continue to legalize discrimination against the LGBTQ community (Religious Liberty Accommodations Act, 2016), many state and federal policies have greatly expanded the legal equality of gay and lesbian citizens. At the federal level the military has repealed the prohibition on homosexuality, federal hate crime legislation has expanded with the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and bans against same-sex marriage have been condemned as unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court (Levy & Levy, 2016). At the state level, many states now prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in their employment laws, and have hate-crime laws that help protect members of the LGBTQ community (Human Rights Campaign, 2017).

Little things, such as gay jokes or institutional traditions, which validate hatred and prejudice, are not inconsequential (Measham, 2016). Likewise, discourse and

regulations that delegitimize social inequality would be expected to foster consequences leading to expanded equality. Indeed, LGBTQ individuals experience improved psychological well-being, and a feeling of improved social tolerance, in states with pro-equality public policy (Levy & Levy, 2016). Furthermore, Levy and Levy (2016) find that public policy which impacts the legal equality of LGBTQ individuals, is correlated with reduced LGBTQ hate crimes. While institutionalized heterosexism cultivates an environment where anti-LGBTQ hate crimes are tolerated, institutionalized pro-equality norms curb anti-gay behavior because homophobic individuals are mindful of how others will perceive their attitude or actions (Levy & Levy, 2016).

Public Policy Development

Hate crimes and sexual prejudice are complex problems not easily addressed through a single public policy directive. While governmental organizations are good at implementing policies that address simple problems, they are not well equipped to deal with these types of nonstandard challenges (Head & Alford, 2015). As Head and Alford discussed, these "wicked problems" are complex, open ended, unpredictable, incomprehensible, intractable, and resistant to solution. However, while conclusive solutions are elusive to wicked problems, like LGBTQ-biased hate crime, it is possible to frame provisional courses of action to address such complex social problems.

The complex social issue of LGBTQ violence cannot be addressed or understood in isolation. Head and Alford (2015) lean on a quote from Ackoff's 1974 work to highlight why. "Every problem interacts with other problems and is therefore part of a system of interrelated problems, a system of problems . . . I choose to call such a system a

mess . . . The solution to a mess can seldom be obtained by independently solving each of the problems of which it is composed . . . Efforts to deal separately with such aspects of urban life as transportation, health, crime, and education seem to aggravate the total situation" (Ackoff, 1974, p. 21).

Head and Alford (2015) conclude their discussion by explaining that dealing with wicked problems requires more than simple technical thinking. It requires new modes of leadership, collaborative efforts, and reforming of governmental infrastructures. Head and Alford's discussion focuses on the importance of understanding a problem fully, then addressing it using a multi-directional approach. In the case of LGBTQ-hate crime we have failed to fully understand the complexities of these crimes and have chosen instead to attempt oversimplified technical approaches. This study will help inform and draw attention to one of the greatest misunderstanding surrounding these crimes, the sexual mindset of convicted perpetrators.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer Hate Crimes Cases

As Trout (2015) discussed, the FBI hate crime statistics, from 1996 to 2012, show anti-gay hate crime continues to be a persistent problem in the United States. In fact, hate crimes directed at LGBTQ individuals remained constant from 1996 to 2012, even as violent crime in general decreased, causing an 8% increase in the proportion of violent crime directed at individuals based on sexual orientation (Trout, 2015). When considering aggressive action against an LGBTQ individual, an aggressor engages in deliberate and conscious thoughts (Parrott, 2008). Consideration about gender role

beliefs, their own masculine identity, and social schemas are used to guide their choice to act aggressively or not (Parrott, 2008).

Much of the historical literature on anti-LGBTQ violence suggests that the primary perpetrators of these hate crimes are young, conservative, heterosexual, males, who are strangers to their victims (Bosson, Weaver, Caswell, & Burnaford, 2012; Levy & Levy, 2016; Sloan et al., 2015). However, recent research suggests that many of our conclusions about the perpetrators of anti-LGBTQ violence may not be completely accurate. In fact, up to 20% of anti-LGBTQ crimes are committed by non-heterosexual perpetrators, and potentially 87% of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes are committed by perpetrators known to their victims (Kehoe, 2016). Furthermore, there is evidence suggesting that up to 27% of perpetrators had intimate relationships with their victims (Kehoe, 2016).

It is important to note, that much of the academic literature uses database information obtained from law enforcement, and victim surveys. Very few studies take a serious qualitative look at LGBTQ violence from the context and perspective of perpetrators. More research is needed on how internalized self-stigma, related to sexual orientation, particularly in bisexual men, affects their response in various situations (Herek et al., 2015). The murder of Matthew Shepard, and the brutal beating of Kevin Pennington, are two cases that highlight the complexities involved in LGBTQ violence.

Matthew Shepard was murdered in the fall of 1998 by two perpetrators, reported at the time to have been strangers to Matthew, who met Matthew one evening at the Fireside Lounge in Laramie, Wyoming. The two men tied Matthew Shepard to a fence,

brutally beat him, and then left him for dead (Ott & Aoki, 2002). This highly publicized, anti-gay motivated, hate crime spurred a litany of public policy changes, advocacy, and research (Cramer et. al, 2013). As a matter of sentencing agreements, reached between the Shepard family, the prosecutors, and the defendants; Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, the perpetrators were not allowed to talk about the murder with the media or film producers (Jimenez, 2013). While this effectively eliminated any possibility that the perpetrators could gain financially from their crimes, it left many questions unanswered, questions that only McKinney or Henderson could answer. For example, how well did either of the perpetrators know Matthew? Had either of the perpetrators ever had a sexual relationship with Matthew, or anyone of the same gender?

While it has taken many years, more information about the situation surrounding this case has begun to unfold. One very important piece of information about Matthew Shepard's murder, as outlined in great detail by Jimenez (2013), is that Aaron McKinney and Matthew Shepard were not strangers. They were both involved in an interconnected methamphetamine ring in Wyoming and Colorado. Another detail important in this case revolves around Aaron McKinney's portrayed identity. The media suggested that McKinney was a young, straight, white, bigoted, high school dropout from rural Wyoming (Ott & Aoki, 2002). However, while Aaron McKinney did have a girlfriend, he didn't limit his sexual experiences to women. Aaron McKinney had sex with men for money, and McKinney and Matthew Shepard had shared sexual experiences with each other (Jimenez, 2013).

To further complicate the social situation surrounding the murder of Matthew Shepard, the young, gay, college student had been diagnosed with HIV shortly before he was attacked by Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson (Shepard, 2009). It is unknown if Aaron McKinney had been informed by Matthew Shepard, about his positive HIV status, but it is highly probably that Aaron McKinney was aware (Jimenez, 2013). In 1998, becoming HIV positive was still considered a likely death sentence, and AIDS was highly stigmatized as a gay disease in American culture. Whether any of that played into Aaron McKinney's mental state on the night of October 6th, 1998 will likely remain unanswered. This study hopes to examine how these complex social issues motivate convicted perpetrators to violence.

The case of Kevin Pennington is another example of how real-life scenarios often fail to fit into the boxes contained on a police report. In the context of American public policy this is an important case because it was the first hate crime conviction under the sexual orientation provision of the Matthew Shepard James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Kevin Pennington was left for dead in a wooded area of Kingdom Come State Park, Kentucky, after being kidnapped, and brutally beaten by four individuals. The individuals included Ashley Jenkins, whose romantic advances had been rebuffed by Kevin Pennington, along with Ashley's brother Anthony Jenkins, their cousin David (Jason) Jenkins, and Anthony's wife Alexis. After threatening to rape Kevin Pennington, Anthony and David (Jason) Jenkins threw him to the ground and began stomping his head until he became unconscious. The two women reportedly cheered the men on by chanting incitements such as "kill that faggot" (Trout, 2015).

Anthony and Jason Jenkins were acquitted of the hate crime charges, but were found guilty of kidnapping and conspiracy. Similar to the Matthew Shepard case, the two women plead guilty to lesser charges of aiding in the attack. Also similar to the Matthew Shepard case, the concocted motive of attacking Pennington because he was gay was to cover up the fact that the four perpetrators, were connected to Pennington because of drugs (Estep, 2012a).

Ashley and Alexis Jenkins claimed to be bisexual. Jason Jenkins had made romantic advances towards Kevin Pennington in the past, and Kevin Pennington had offered Anthony Jenkins drugs in the past for sex without evoking any ill will. All this suggests that the group was actually very sexually liberal, not homophobic (Estep, 2012a).

On June 19th, 2013 David Jason Jenkins, knows as Jason, was sentenced to 30 years in prison for kidnapping and conspiracy charges (guilty by jury trial, October 2012); Anthony Ray Jenkins was sentenced to 17 years in prison for kidnapping and conspiracy charges (guilty by jury trial, October 2012); Mable Ashley Jenkins, known as Ashley, was sentenced to 100 months in prison for aiding and abetting kidnapping, and aiding, and abetting the hate crime assault (pled guilty prior to trial); and Alexis LeeAnn Jenkins was sentenced to 8 years in prison for aiding, and abetting kidnapping, and aiding, and abetting the hate crime assault (pled guilty prior to trial) for the April 4, 2011 assault on Kevin Pennington. The two women's convictions are the first under the sexual orientation provision of the Matthew Shepard James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (U.S. Department of Justice, 2013).

Kevin Pennington's boyfriend had also been assaulted by the Jenkins cousins in 2009. Pennington had arranged to sell Ashley Suboxone the night of the assault, a drug which she abused, and Kevin Pennington had sold her numerous times in the past. Jason Jenkins believed Kevin Pennington's source of the Suboxone was a police informant. Jason Jenkins was drunk himself and on drugs that evening. Kevin Pennington testified that the two men beat him unconscious while yelling "You're gonna die, you ... faggot! You deserve this!" as Kevin Pennington begged for mercy. When Kevin Pennington came-to his perpetrators were looking for a tire iron in the truck to continue beating him. He was able to jump over the side of the mountain and hide until the assailants gave up looking for him. He then made his way to a closed ranger station, broke out the window, and called for help. Kevin Pennington initially omitted the details of the drug deal because he thought it would detract from the real reason for the assault, his sexual orientation (Estep, 2012b).

Alex Jenkins, Anthony Jenkins' 18-year old, younger brother, testified in court that Jason Jenkins boasted about assaulting a gay man, and was proud of it. According to Alex Jenkins' courtroom testimony the real reason for the attack was because of Kevin Pennington's sexual orientation. There was also testimony during the trial that Jason Jenkins, although married, was gay. Alex Jenkins testified that in 2009 Jason Jenkins had propositioned Kevin Pennington for sex, and when turned down, Jason Jenkins stated he would rape Kevin Pennington if he would not do it consensually (Estep, 2012c).

Typologies of Perpetrators

The primary perpetrators of anti-LGBTQ violence, particularly violence against gay men, have been shown in the literature to be straight, white, men in their late teens and early 20's (Sloan et al., 2015). The four classifications of offenders, developed by McDevitt,et al. (2002) are widely referenced in contemporary literature. This study used hate crime data collected by the Boston Police Department from 1991 through 1992. McDevitt et al. looked at the typology of hate crime perpetrators generally and were not focused on what motivates LGBTQ biased crime specifically. The four typologies of hate crime offenders developed were thrill seekers, turf defenders, retaliatory offenders, and mission-oriented perpetrators (McDevitt et al., 2002).

The general typologies of hate crime perpetrators developed by McDevitt et al. (2002) may not always fit anti-gay biased offenders. Characterizing aggressive, discriminatory violence against LGBTQ individuals, as purely anti-gay, is too narrow of a characterization (Sloan et al., 2015). As Sloan et al. (2015) discovered, subtle gender role variations can elicit strong reactions even against a heterosexual counterpart. In fact, in their study of 102 heterosexual subjects, Sloan et al. measured a stronger violent reaction against feminine heterosexual men, then against feminine or masculine gay men. This study suggests that heterosexual men already except an identified gay man as being outside their "in-group," and thus have more tolerance for their social-gender role variation. But when other men are thought to be inside the "in-group," gender role variation is not tolerated (Sloan et al., 2015).

Significant numbers of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes are committed by perpetrators who know their victim(s), including intimate partners and non-heterosexual perpetrators, suggesting unique and dynamic issues that surround anti-LGBTQ biased attacks (Kehoe, 2016). Research fails to support the idea that hostile cognition, arousal, or aggression stem from an independent effect. Aggressive action against a LGBTQ individual stems from combined exposure to something that activates anti-gay arousal, and other individual variables, such as personal sexual prejudice or hyper masculinity (Parrott, 2008). This study hopes to discover what some of the triggers might be that activate anti-gay arousal, and thus violent action, by gaining the perspective of convicted LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators.

Homophobia

Homophobia is a broad conceptual idea used to describe the irrational fear of homosexuals by heterosexuals, as well as the self-loathing of homosexuals themselves (Herek et al., 2015). Herek et al. (2015) defined sexual stigma as the inferior status projected upon individuals belonging to a non-heterosexual category. Sexual orientation is a concealable minority status, which means individuals can present themselves to others as heterosexual, even if they experience same-sex attraction, and individuals can potentially be perceived as homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual regardless of their true personal attractions (Herek et al., 2015).

Individuals experience and manifest sexual stigma, regardless of their sexual identity, due to social development in a heterosexist society, in order to perpetuate social or cultural norms. This experience leads to homosexuals, bisexuals, and heterosexuals to

modify their self-presentation to avoid being labeled as homosexual or becoming a target of discrimination (Herek et al., 2015). Experiencing sexual stigma leads sexual minorities to conceal or deny their true personal identity, leading to isolation, and often has negative psychological consequences (Herek et al., 2015). When sexual minorities react to sexual stigma it can be projected either outward or inward (Herek et al., 2015).

When projected outward, the sexual stigma results in negative attitudes toward other sexual minorities. When projected inward, this acceptance of society's negative evaluation of homosexuality, results in negative attitudes about oneself, referred to as self-stigma (Herek et al., 2015). Internalized shame can cause issues with social relationships, self-esteem, and the inability to maintain positive intimate relationships (Downs, 2012). Internalized self-stigma is a major cause of stress in LGBTQ individuals (Herek et al., 2015). This stress is especially high for LGBTQ individuals that are affiliated with hyper-masculine institutions or coalitions, such as fundamental religious organizations or conservative political groups (Herek et al., 2015).

Feelings and acts of sexual prejudice are distinct from an individual's current belief about their sexuality, or their sexual attractions (Herek et al., 2015). LGBTQ individuals are more likely to harbor self-stigma if they perceive or experience that their sexual minority status has higher social costs then benefits (Herek et al., 2015). Beliefs related to the voluntary nature of sexuality also impacts self-stigma. Research suggests that individuals with a belief that sexuality is a choice, exhibit higher levels of sexual stigma, compared to those who believe it is immutable, however this area is in need of further scientific examination (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2015). Herek et al. (2015) found

that bisexual men, particularly closeted bisexual men, experience the greatest degree of internalized sexual stigma. This finding highlights the need for further research that distinguishes between homosexual and bisexual men, and women, in future research (Herek et al., 2015).

Sexuality, Sexual Identity, and Sexual Minority Stress

The concepts of sexuality, and sexual identity are key to the phenomenon of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes. For the sake of this dissertation it is important to distinguish the two as separate ideas. Sexuality, or sexual orientation, is a socially constructed concept that in the context of American culture, is thought to be fixed, and even measurable. Kinsey's attempts at measuring sexuality quantitatively are well known (Sell, 1997). Other examples in recent history include the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid, Storm's Erotic Response and Orientation Scales (Storm, 1980), The Kinsey Scale of sexual orientation (Sell, 1997), The Sexual Orientation Scale for Males (Jain & Silva, 2011), and the Sexual Excitation Scale (Janssen, Vorst, Finn, & Bancroft, 2002).

According to Sell (1997), researchers have been attempting to measure and define sexual orientation as far back as 1860 when sexual orientation was first defined by Karl Ludwig von Urlichs. Sexuality, or sexual orientation in this study refers to the way others see us, or the way we see others. It is externally defined by the way our peers perceive us in reference to our displayed gender role behaviors. It can also be defined by our displayed sexual behaviors. For example, gay men have sex with other men, bisexual women have sex with both men and women, and heterosexual people exclusively display erotic tendencies towards members of the opposite gender. This concept is different than

sexual *identity*, which is inherently internal, and personally conceptualized. In this study sexual identity will be used to refer to the way we see ourselves, or the socially constructed concepts with which we choose to identify with.

As Hammack (2018) discussed, in order to come to terms with a non-heterosexual identity gay men, lesbian women, and bisexual individuals are forced to navigate cultural ideologies that privilege heterosexuality and denigrate femininity or other gender non-conforming behaviors. In order to cope, LGBTQ individuals must construct redemptive narratives in order to remain psychologically resilient. Often times, during this journey to a healthy sexual identity, the way an individual understands their own personal sexual identity, and the way they present themselves to others might differ. Other times, due to their displayed behaviors, the sexual orientation label placed on an individual by their peers, may change before they have formulated a healthy sexual minority identity. When this happens, sexual minority stress is experienced (Hequembourg & Brallier, 2009).

Violating heteronormative social expectations can result in sanctions against individuals who fail to conform to their peers' norms. Sexual minority stress is used to describe the unique experiences of strain, anxiety, and stress experienced by individuals when they are sanctioned for not conforming to heteronormative expectations. Sexual minorities continue to experience restricted access to social benefits despite improved cultural visibility and normalization (Hequembourg & Brallier, 2009). This study hopes to explore how these unique sociocultural issues impact the phenomenon of LGBTQ hate crimes.

Methodology

The methodology chosen for this study is a general qualitative approach using an inductive coding strategy and content analysis. Qualitative research is conducted in the field, where participants experience real world issues or problems that are being examined, with the goal of achieving an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). In essence, qualitative research takes an interpretive, naturalistic look at the world by studying phenomenon, and subjects, in their natural setting, and attempts to understand how people create meaning out of their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

A general qualitative approach has been chosen for this project because of its simplicity and flexibility compared to more technical, and highly structured, approaches such as phenomenology, narrative, or ethnographic methods (Thomas, 2006). Qualitative research seeks to understand the socially constructed meanings that guide the way individuals interact with the world around them at a particular point in time and in a specific context (Merriam, 2009).

Data analysis for this study will be conducted using a nine step Krippendorff (2004) type method of content analysis utilizing an inductive approach as outlined by Neuendorf (2016). Qualitative analysis relies on the idea that meaning is a socially constructed concept derived from an individual's interactions with their world (Merriam, 2009). The data set to be utilized by this study includes case studies which are published as a collection in *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims* (Sprinkle, 2011) and in the documentary *Licensed to Kill* (Dong, 1997). The data

available in Dr. Sprinkle's (2011) work provides rich contextual data in which the social phenomenon of anti-LGBTQ murders have been carried out. The data available in Dong's (1997) work includes actual interviews with convicted anti-LGBTQ perpetrators as they reflect on their crimes and the social context they were in at the time of those crimes.

Summary and Conclusions

Parrott (2008) posits that anti-gay violence is facilitated through masculine gender role reinforcement, thrill seeking, defense against societal judgment of themselves, and heterosexist group dynamics. The coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias, posits that individuals, especially men, develop psychological systems to facilitate formation, and regulation, of coalition systems. These systems lead to anti-gay bias because homosexuality is perceived as having negative coalitional value in traditional coalitions (Winegard et al., 2016). Feelings and acts of sexual prejudice are distinct from an individual's current beliefs about their sexuality, or their sexual attractions (Herek et al., 2015).

This chapter explored the current literature related to LGBTQ hate crime. This literature review also explored homophobia and heterosexism in American society and then explained how the theoretical foundations align with the research questions and purpose. This chapter also explored recent changes in public policy related to LGBTQ rights and discrimination by looking into some of the LGBTQ hate crime cases that influenced changes in American culture.

This study is driven by the hypothesis that when heteronormative coalitional forces collide with internalized homophobia, violence erupts, and that violence is directed at an individual close to a perpetrator that openly exhibits the aspects of the perpetrators personal sexual identity they are most troubled by. This study will explore this hypothesis using a general qualitative methodology. The specifics of this methodology are explored in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore what motivates anti-LGBTQ perpetrators so that policy developers and institutions can better address the problem of violence against the LGBTQ community. In this chapter I explore the research methodology used in this study and explain the rationale behind why the chosen methodology best serves the research problem, purpose, and research questions. In this chapter I discuss the history and purpose of qualitative research as a research method. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the chosen research data source and how the data for this study was examined and utilized.

Research Design and Rationale

This qualitative study used a general qualitative methodology and content analysis to explore how personal sexual identity and internalized homophobia influence the motivation to commit anti-LGBTQ hate crimes. The individual cases chosen for this study were convicted anti-gay hate crime perpetrators. In the study I sought to explore the topic from the perpetrators' perspectives in order to gain new understanding about this understudied population.

The primary research question that this study examined was:

RQ: What types of lived experiences lead individuals to commit violence toward LGBTQ people?

In order to explore this question, the I examined case studies and explored this phenomenon in-depth by focusing in on three sub-questions:

SQ1: What life events motivate anti-gay hate crime perpetrators to commit their crimes?

SQ2: Do known perpetrators identify as straight, homosexual, or bisexual?

SQ3: How do masculine coalitions influence convicted anti-gay hate crime perpetrators?

These questions asked whether an individual who has experimented sexually with someone of the same sex perceived a threat to their own gender role identity that increased their motivation to commit anti-LGBTQ violence. Additionally, they asked how do masculine coalitions influence convicted anti-gay hate crime perpetrators or influence their gender role identity and did masculine coalitions influence their sexual self-identity or represent a perceived threat to their identity at the time of their crime?

Qualitative Research

I chose a qualitative method of inquiry for this study to take an in-depth look at how internalized homophobia may influence the phenomenon of interpersonal violence from the perspective of identified perpetrators of anti-gay biased crimes. This approach provides a methodology in which a researcher can use a nonrandom, purposeful sampling of subjects that are of specific interest to the topic and context being explored (Johnson, 2017). Qualitative research is conducted in the field, where participants experience real world issues or problems that are being examined, with the goal of achieving an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

A qualitative researcher looks at the world through the lens of an observer, using a series of representations such as observation notes, photographic images, transcribed

interviews, recordings, and documents to provide data (Johnson, 2017). A qualitative researcher takes an interpretive, naturalistic look at the world by studying phenomena and subjects in their natural setting and attempts to understand how people create meaning out of their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Qualitative research is used when a problem or issue requires exploration or when previously silent voices need to be heard (Creswell, 2012). Convicted perpetrators of anti-gay hate crime represent unheard voices in the scientific exploration of what causes anti-LGBTQ hate crimes. This unexplored population has great potential to provide new insight to the conversation. In order to understand what leads individuals to commit violent crimes against a marginalized minority population, it makes sense to look at this phenomenon from the perspective of the individuals convicted of perpetrating the violence. There are various approaches used in qualitative research. This study used a general qualitative approach, involving inductive coding and content analysis.

General Inductive Approach

A general inductive approach is used in qualitative evaluation to summarize raw textural data, establish a clear link between research objectives and findings, or develop a descriptive framework of underlying experiences related to a phenomenon (Thomas, 2006). In the context of exploring how internalized homophobia, heteronormative coalitions, socialization, and identity formation impact anti-gay hate crime motivation, a general inductive approach was a logical choice. The way in which a person interprets the world around them determines their unconsciously motivated behavior (Johnson, 2017). Internalized self-prejudice is a highly emotional issue, and acting out through murder or

violent assault on another is an intense human experience for both the victim and the perpetrator.

A general inductive approach provides a systematic set of procedures to produce reliable and valid qualitative findings (Thomas, 2006). Exploring anti-gay hate crime from the perspective of convicted perpetrators was a central focus of this study. Using a general inductive approach allowed me to explore these crimes through the context of how the perpetrators experienced them and report those experiences in a way that included relevant conditions of the experience (see Smith, 2013). Using this methodology, the study looked at what factors influenced the motivation of perpetrators based on their cultural upbringing, coalitional relationships, their sexuality, and the societal pressures they may have been experiencing at the time of their crime. The findings of this exploration provided improved understanding about how sexual identity and internalized homophobia impact the motivation behind anti-gay hate crimes.

I used the principle of epoche to maintain an open mind. Epoche is the conscious act of setting aside personal judgements, everyday understandings, and personal knowledge by the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). I was not looking to judge what should have been done or how others might have acted differently in the same situation. I was looking to gain an understanding of why the perpetrators choose the actions and made the decisions they did in the moment. A general inductive approach worked well for this study because it allowed research findings to emerge as significant themes inherent to the phenomenon and discoverable within the data but without preconceptions imposed by highly structured methodologies used in deductive approaches (Thomas, 2006).

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative researchers approach the research process with certain assumptions and bias based on their individual understanding about the nature of reality, knowledge, cultural and personal values, language, and the research process (Creswell, 2012). The philosophical assumptions made by researchers in qualitative studies were categorized by Creswell (2012) as ontological, epistemological, axiological, methodological, and rhetorical.

Ontological assumptions are based on the nature of reality in a given social context (Johnson, 2017). Epistemological assumptions refer to how a researcher acquires knowledge (Johnson, 2017). Axiology refers to the researcher's values and biases, and what the researcher values in the results of the research (Johnson, 2017). Methodological assumptions involve the method used to gather and analyze data (Johnson, 2017). Rhetorical bias influences how the narrative of the study is formed and how language is used when presenting the information (Johnson, 2017).

In addition to assumptions, the worldview or paradigm utilized in a research study further shapes the research (Creswell, 2012). There is no definitive way to establish the ultimate truthfulness of a paradigm; the truths are basic and ultimately accepted based on a belief that the nature of the world is what it is (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This research study was informed and developed using an interpretivist paradigm. In general, an interpretivist assumes that reality is constructed intersubjectively, based on the meanings and understandings constructed through social interactions and experimentation. The interpretivist paradigm also assumes that neither the researcher nor

the research subject is able to separate themselves from what they know. Both understand each other through the lens of how they see themselves and the world around them (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Sampling Approach and Participant Selection Logic

In this study I sought to utilize and analyze case studies that had been researched and compiled by Sprinkle (2011). I contacted Dr. Sprinkle, and Dr. Sprinkle agreed that the work could be used and analyzed for this dissertation. The case studies compiled by Dr. Sprinkle (2011) contained in-depth exploration into the social complexities, relationships, and social context of eleven different murder cases involving twelve murder victims. In-depth cases with up to 10 people provide sufficient data for a qualitative study (Creswell, 2012). In this study I also analyzed the content of perpetrator interviews published by Dong (1997) in the documentary *Licensed to Kill*.

While it would be most ideal to conduct interviews in person with the convicted perpetrators, that was not feasible for this study project. Interviews in qualitative research are used to gain information about what people think or how they feel, data that cannot be obtained using observation techniques (Patton, 2015). Interviews are an important part of phenomenological research because they allow rich descriptions about the individuals' lived experiences and the experienced phenomena (Patton, 2015). All the perpetrators in these 11 cases presented by Sprinkle (2011) were currently serving life sentences in state or federal prisons. I hope to conduct follow-up research where convicted perpetrators are able to provide qualitative data directly to me in the form of in-person interviews.

However, the complexities of contacting incarcerated individuals was outside the scope and resources available for this project.

The case studies presented by Sprinkle (2011) are perfect for this study because of the depth to which Dr. Sprinkle explores each case. All eleven cases fit the profile which this research is looking for. All are cases where the victim was murdered, and the victim was known, or perceived to be lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered or queer by the perpetrator. All eleven cases were considered at the time of their occurrence to be hate crimes based on the circumstances in which they were carried out, and the evidence discovered by investigating authorities. The cases presented by Dong (1997) are also perfect for this study as they will give the researcher insight into the perpetrators' perspective. The individuals interviewed by Dong (1997) were interviewed in prison, and all were convicted of murdering LGBTQ victims. Unfortunately, they are not the same perpetrators as the cases presented by Sprinkle (2011). However, the data in Dong's (1997) work is the only data available for this analysis without collecting new raw data from institutionalized individuals.

There are many other cases in the United States over the last 15-years that would fit the parameters for this qualitative study. However, to research additional cases in-depth, and conduct the leg work of collecting data about the circumstances and social complexities surrounding other cases would take resources and time outside the ability of this study. Focusing on the cases presented by Dr. Sprinkle (2011) is also advantageous because the integrity of the stories and the data contained within them is validated by Dr. Sprinkle's experience and reputation in the field of LGBTQ hate crime research.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

This study is important because it will examine what influences, in the context of personal sexual identity formation, social coalitions, and sexuality prejudice, increased motivation for acting out LGBTQ violence. Data for this study will be perpetrator interviews presented in *Licensed to Kill* (Dong, 1997) as well as data compiled by Dr. Stephen Sprinkle and published in the book *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims* (Sprinkle, 2011). The data contained in these case studies was gathered by Dr. Sprinkle (2011) through, interviews, court documents, public records, media information, and information provided by individuals who knew the victims or perpetrators. These case studies provide very in-depth information that will be extensively explored. Case study data will be coded for themes that emerge.

Utilizing case studies in this study will provide sufficient saturation to ensure the study provides valid and reliable data. Everyone has different lived experiences based on the culture, geographic region, or economic condition they were raised. However, looking at a limited number of cases still allows for general themes to emerge that can guide future research efforts. Information in the case studies will be used to explore if previous theories about LGBTQ hate crimes align with the lived experiences of convicted perpetrators. This analysis will focus on what factors lead to these crimes, and how future anti-LGBTQ crimes can be reduced. The general steps of the overall process included:

1. The researcher gained permission from the committee chair to pursue the research topic using the proposed methodology.

2. The researcher then submitted a research proposal to obtain Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. This proposal included considerations and mitigations to ensure safe and ethical research. The Walden IRB process will also help ensure proper protections are in place to protect the researcher and Walden University.
3. Researcher will gain permission to utilize case study data from Dr. Sprinkle.
4. Researcher will code and sort data contained within the case studies.
5. Coded and sorted data will be examined for recurring themes.
6. Data analysis will be completed, and final results will be written up, then submitted for review and approval.

Data Coding

There are two approaches to coding data for qualitative analysis, deductive and inductive (Saldaña, 2015). As Saldaña (2015) discussed, inductive coding allows the data to speak for itself, where a deductive approach is structured and ordered using principles derived from a theoretical concept. While the theoretical frameworks and the research question provide a general road map for coding the data used for this study, the study will utilize primarily an inductive coding approach. The first step was the initial coding and involved simply reading each of the case studies and becoming generally familiar with the data. The second step will be a paragraph by paragraph coding. During this step the data will be combed for more detail. The third step will be categorization. Analyzing and sorting the codes into categories will help detect consistent and overarching themes in the

data. The final step in data coding will be determining themes and sub-themes. The themes will tell the story of the data.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis in phenomenological research involves a lengthy process of reviewing in-depth data collections filled with information (Johnson, 2017). Data analysis and interpretation for this study will follow a Krippendorff (2004) method of content analysis. According to Krippendorff (2004) content analysis must always address six questions. Which data is to be analyzed? How is the data defined? What population is the data drawn from? What is the relevant context? What are the analysis boundaries? And what is to be measured from the data? Qualitative content analysis is a research method that uses documents, narrative texts, audio, or video recordings to examine social phenomena via a non-invasive platform.

More specifically this study will utilize what Neuendorf (2016) defines as narrative content analysis. Narrative analysis is informed by narrative theory and has the goal of understanding the relationship between social reality and a narrative text which attempts to tell the tale of that social reality. The attention, in narrative analysis, focuses on the challenges, choices, conflicts, and decisions of characters (Neuendorf, 2016). For this study the narrative analysis will be focused on the coalitional pressures, social pressures, sexual choices, and decision-making processes, experienced by perpetrators of LGBTQ hate crime murders.

Neuendorf (2016) outlines a nine-step process to ensure that content analysis is conducted in line with the scientific method of research. The following steps summarize a Krippendorff (2004) method of content analysis as outlined by Neuendorf (2016):

1. Theory and rationale: the researcher determined what is to be examined and why. This is also the time when research questions and hypotheses are developed (Neuendorf, 2016).
2. Conceptualizations: the researcher determines what variables will used to guide the study (Neuendorf, 2016). For this study Parrott's (2008) anti-gay aggression theory, along with the coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias (Winegard et al., 2016) are used to set the variables which will guide the boundaries of this inquiry.
3. Operationalization: this is the step where the researcher determines what unit of measure will be used and validity is established. The researcher must determine if the units of measure operationally measure the variables (Neuendorf, 2016). This is essentially the data collection stage.
4. Coding schemes: the researcher must determine at this step whether to use human coding, or computer aided text analysis (computer coding) (Neuendorf, 2016). Human coding will be utilized for this study. While electronic data analysis can help store, organize, manage, and reconfigure data, human analytic reflection is necessary for valuable interpretation (Saldaña, 2015).

5. Sampling: at this step the researcher determines if a census of the data is possible (Neuendorf, 2016). For this study a census can be taken by treating each case study as a data subset.
6. Pilot Reliability: in this step coding is tested and the reliability is noted for each variable. The coding plan is revised as needed (Neuendorf, 2016).
7. Coding: after determining a reliable coding plan, this is the phase where the full data set is coded using the established coding plan (Neuendorf, 2016).
8. Final Reliability: after completing coding a final reliability figure should be calculated for each variable (Neuendorf, 2016).
9. Tabulation and reporting: there are various ways which content analysis can be reported. Figures may be presented one variable at a time, or cross tabulated in different ways. During this phase relationships are established between variables and other measures to help construct validity (Neuendorf, 2016).

Reliability and Validity

Validity in qualitative data is created by the researcher's ability to establish credibility in the study, and when the findings of the study are transferable and repeatable (Creswell, 2012). This concept of reliability and validity is nontraditional as it is not intended to measure the dependability, but rather bridge a gap between the data and the qualitative process (Johnson, 2017). The concept of validity in this type of research focuses on the accuracy of the findings according to the researcher and the study participants who lived the experience being analyzed (Creswell, 2012). One way to

strengthen validity, according to Creswell (2012), is to develop a close, and prolonged relationship with research participants in order to gain detailed, thick, descriptions.

Unfortunately, due to limitations in resources, and ethical concerns related to exposing institutionalized individuals, developing a prolonged relationship with convicted inmates is not possible for the researcher at this time. This research study will build validity however, by utilizing data that was collected by a respected and accomplished researcher over the course of years thru numerous correspondences via mail, e-mail, telephone, and face to face interviews. As Dr. Sprinkle (2011) outlines in his work, he spent time in each of the cities, towns, and communities where the eleven cases he presents took place. This gave Dr. Sprinkle the ability to learn and understand about the context of these cases and meet surviving family members, friends, and relatives of both the victims and the perpetrators. Dr. Sprinkle was able to develop a relationship with the research participants founded on honesty and openness to promote trust and sharing. This will help ensure validity of the data and ultimately the research findings.

To ensure reliability and validity, the qualitative researcher must be aware of their own bias and acknowledge how that might affect research outcomes (Johnson, 2017). As a member of the LGBTQ community, the principle researcher is biased from the standpoint of being personally interested in reducing crime and violence that effects this community.

Positive Social Change

This research is intended to be conducted using the principle of applied research. Applied research tackles real-world problems while evaluating the impacts and analyzing the effects the research may have (Rog & Bickman, 2009). Rog and Bickman (2009) explained that applied research is utilized to help solve persistent, immediate, social issues. This approach to research aims to improve understanding, while contributing to a solution for the problem by uncovering new knowledge (Johnson, 2017).

Promoting positive social change is a guiding principle at Walden University. Walden aims to foster positive social change using research, development of sound practice, and by educating scholar-practitioners who are motivated to carry on this legacy (Walden University, 2017). This study will help advance positive social change by exploring what factors contribute to violence against LGBTQ individuals. This applied research project will help policy developers gain a better understanding of this issue, guide decision making regarding future research directions, policy, and program developments. This research project will be guided by the Walden University IRB and the ethical principles established for social research.

Summary

A qualitative method of inquiry has been chosen for this study in order to take an in-depth look at how internalized homophobia may influence the phenomenon of interpersonal violence from the perspective of identified perpetrators of anti-gay biased crimes. A general inductive approach, using a social constructivism perspective, will be used in this study because it provides a methodology to find common themes that

impacted the perpetrators of anti-gay hate crime based on data from case studies and perpetrator interviews, with less risk of misinterpretation of their lived experience.

This chapter has included an in-depth look at the methodology chosen for this research. The research design and rationale where presented, and this chapter outlined the steps on how data would be collected and utilized. This study will utilize data contained in case studies and interviews related to convicted LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators. All of these perpetrators where convicted of murder and are currently serving prison sentences in detention facilities. This study will employ safeguards to ensure ethical, valid, and credible data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analyzed for this study. The purpose of this general qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding about what motivates perpetrators of anti-LGBTQ violence. As evidenced in contemporary crime statistics, violence against members of LGBTQ communities continues to be a threat throughout the United States (FBI, 2015). The primary research question addressed in this research study was: What types of lived experiences leads individuals to commit violence toward LGBTQ people? This study explored this primary question by further exploring three narrower inquires:

SQ1: What life events motivate anti-gay hate crime perpetrators to commit their crime?

SQ2: Do known perpetrators identify as straight, homosexual, or bisexual?

SQ3: How do masculine coalitions influence convicted anti-LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators?

This study used a social constructivism perspective to explore how personal sexual identity and internalized sexual self-prejudice influence the motivation to commit anti-LGBTQ hate crimes. The study utilized secondary data from two sources. The first source of data was a collection of case studies compiled by Sprinkle (2011) and published in the book *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims*. The second source of data was a collection of interviews with convicted LGBTQ hate

crime perpetrators presented in the documentary *Licensed to Kill* by Dong (1997). This study used content analysis to analyze, explore, and gain understanding from this data.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the setting in which the original data was collected and any conditions that might have influenced the interpretation of the study data. I then explain the demographics of the individuals whose data was collected and how the original data was recorded and compiled. Ithen provide an explanation of the data analysis process. This includes discussing the codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data. Finally, this chapter concludes with an exploration into the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings.

Setting

The first source of data used for this study was the case studies compiled and published by Sprinkle (2011). It is worth noting that Dr. Sprinkle is an ordained Baptist minister and a professor at the Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas. Sprinkle's work with *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims* (Sprinkle, 2011) focused on how religion is involved in victims' and perpetrators' lives. His case studies also looked at organizational influence of religion, as well the responsibility of religious leaders in the context of hate, violence, and social acceptance of LGBTQ individuals.

The setting in which Dr. Sprinkle collected his data varied with each case. This is because Dr. Sprinkle collected his data in the field through interviews, archival media data, and other information sources in the various communities where the victims and perpetrators lived. The case studies presented in Sprinkle's book looked at victims from

nearly every facet of American society. Dr. Sprinkle is Director of Field Education and Supervised Ministry and Professor of Practical Theology at Brite Divinity School, a post he has held since 1994. Dr. Sprinkle is the first openly gay scholar in the history of the Divinity School, as well as the first open LGBTQ person to be tenured there. This situation reasonably has some influence over the tone and focus of the cases studies Dr. Sprinkle presented in *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims* (Sprinkle, 2011).

The second source of data used for this study was the interviews presented in Dong's (1997) documentary *Licensed to Kill.* Dong's work was influenced and informed by his experience as an LGBTQ hate crime victim. In 1977, Dong was attacked by a group of young men and he escaped his attackers by throwing himself into traffic and onto the hood of a passing car. After losing control over their victim, Dong's perpetrators went on to attack another LGBTQ individual a few blocks away (Dong, 1997).

The setting in which Dong collected data was inside prisons where the convicted perpetrators where being housed. The organizational conditions of a prison potentially have an impact on how questions are interpreted and answered by a respondent. However, the candid answers provided by the interviewees in Dong's work suggest they were comfortable talking about the subject matter even in their current environment. Furthermore, the institutional setting of prison has provided these convicted perpetrators a chance to consider why they made the choices they did. They were able to answer Dong's questions with clear and reflective contemplation.

Demographics

The sample used by Sprinkle, Dong, and subsequently for this study included 19 perpetrators. Of these 19 perpetrators, two perpetrators' sexual identity was unknown, one perpetrator identified as a gay male, the other sixteen identified as straight males. One individual's gender identity was unknown, the other eighteen all identified as cis-male. Cisgender refers to the condition of being assigned a gender at birth, typically by a doctor, based on sex organs, and never questioning that assignment. Nine of the perpetrators either propositioned their victims for sex or met their victim in a known homosexual "cruising area" where their victim believed they were there for sex. Only two of the perpetrators who propositioned their victims for sex were of the opposite gender-identity as their victim. Eleven of the perpetrators enlisted the help of an accomplice.

Nine of the perpetrators knew their victims as friends, classmates, or neighborhood acquaintances. Another five of the perpetrators spent enough time with their victim to become acquainted before attacking and killing them. In only two of the cases were the victim and perpetrator strangers. In six of the cases, the perpetrator and victim were from different cultural identities. Table 1 presents a summary of the demographic information.

Table 1

Perpetrator and Victim Demographics

Case	Perpetrator sexual self-identity	Perpetrator gender self-identity	Perpetrator sexual history	Perpetrator cultural heritage identity	Perpetrator/victim relationship	Victim sexual identity	Victim gender identity	Victim cultural heritage identity
1	Straight	Cis-male	Not exclusively heterosexual	White American	Met at a gay bar and exchanged phone numbers. Met up later for sex.	Gay	Cis-male	White American
2	Straight	Cis-male	Fetishized sex with lesbians	White American	Met at a lesbian bar	Lesbian	Cis-female	White American
3	Straight	Cis-male	Perpetrator had propositioned victim weeks earlier to join him in a gay threesome	White American	Friends	Gay	Cis-male	White American
4	Straight	Cis-male	Unknown	White American	Childhood acquaintances	Gay	Two Spirit (trans-female)	Navajo
5	Straight	Cis-male	Autopsy found that victim had been raped and sexually mutilated by perpetrator	White American	Roommates, childhood acquaintances	Gay	Queer-male	White American
6	Straight	Cis-male	Perpetrator Propositioned victim for sex	Black American	Strangers	Lesbian	Queer-female	Black American
7	Straight	Cis-male	Hung out in gay "hook-up" areas to entice victims	White American	Acquaintances	Gay	Queer-male	White American
8	Straight	Cis-male	Unknown	Russian Immigrant	Met in a park while having a picnic with their families	Gay	Cis-male	Eastern Indian immigrant
9	Straight	Cis-male	Unknown	White American	Navy Shipmates	Gay	Cis-male	White American
10	Unknown	Cis-male	Unknown	Black American	Neighborhood Acquaintances	Gay	Trans-female	Black American
11	Straight	Cis-male	Unknown	White American	Classmates	Gay	Trans-female	Bi-Racial
12	Unidentified	Unidentified	Unidentified	Unidentified	Neighborhood Acquaintances	Gay	Trans-female	Black American
13	Straight	Cis-male	Unknown	White American	Strangers	Straight	Cis-male/Cis-female	Unknown (4 victims)
14	Straight	Cis-male	Not Exclusively Heterosexual, went back to victim's residence for gay orgy	White American	Picked up victims in a park where gay men hung out. Went back to the victim's home for drinks, drugs, and sex.	Gay	Queer-male	White American

(table continues)

Case	Perpetrator sexual self-identity	Perpetrator gender self-identity	Perpetrator sexual history	Perpetrator cultural heritage identity	Perpetrator/victim relationship	Victim sexual identity	Victim gender identity	Victim cultural heritage identity
15	Straight	Cis-male	Met victim in an area where hustlers hang out, went to a hotel with victim the next day	Black American	Met in a gay cruising area, spent an entire day together at victim's summer home, then went to hotel with victim for sex	Gay	Cis-male	White American
16	Straight	Cis-male	Molested by a male family member as a child	White American	Friends and neighbors, lived in the same building. Perpetrator and victim where having drinks together on the roof before the murder	Gay	Cis-male	Unknown
17	Straight	Cis-male	Not exclusively heterosexual. Forced victims to remove their pants during the attack	Black American	Found victims in a gay cruising area the perpetrator frequented	Gay	Cis-male	Asian American
18	Gay	Cis-male	Homosexual	Bi-Racial	Found victims in a gay cruising area the perpetrator frequented	Gay	Cis-male	White American
19	Straight	Cis-male	Molested by a male cousin as a child, had sex with his male friends, but didn't consider it to be "gay"	White American	Picked up victim in a known homosexual hangout area. Victim was forced to remove all his clothes before being murdered	Gay	Cis-male	Hispanic American

The demographic data, as illustrated in Table 1, shows that each case of anti-LGBTQ violence varied greatly. The perpetrator-victim relationship, the sexual history of the perpetrator, the setting of the crime, and all other aspects seem unique in each of these cases. However, there were a few consistent themes that emerged from this simple demographic data that contradicted previously accepted assumptions used throughout academic literature. Firstly, the demographic data suggested that it is unusual for perpetrators to choose a stranger as a target. Secondly, it is unusual for perpetrators'

sexual interest to be exclusively heterosexual. Thirdly, it is common for perpetrators to be sexually interested in their victims.

Data Collection

The data utilized in this study came from the work of Sprinkle (2011) and documentary producer Dong (1997). The data they provided in the form of in-depth case studies and perpetrator interviews proved to be a considerable amount of rich and colorful insight into the context and circumstances that surrounded 19 LGBTQ hate crime murders. It took 2 years to fully explore, digest, and dissect the data presented in their works for this study.

Before applying for study approval from Walden University's IRB, I contacted both Dr. Sprinkle and Mr. Dong by e-mail to inform of them of my research interest and ensure that they were comfortable with their data being analyzed for this study. Dr. Sprinkle replied and indicated that he was excited that his prior work was being used. Mr. Dong did not respond to the e-mails I sent to him through his production company, Deep Focus Productions, Inc.

Data for this study came from perpetrator interviews presented in *Licensed to Kill* (Dong, 1997) as well as data compiled by Dr. Sprinkle and published in the book *Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memories of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims* (Sprinkle, 2011). The data presented in *Licensed to Kill* (Dong, 1997) was gathered through in-person interviews with the convicted perpetrators. Dong video recorded these interviews and presented them in the documentary. All seven perpetrators interviewed by Mr. Dong were interviewed in a prison setting where the perpetrators where serving their sentences.

At least one of these perpetrators was on death row at the time and has since been put to death.

The data contained in the case studies gathered by Dr. Sprinkle (2011) was obtained through interviews, court documents, public records, media information, and information provided by individuals who knew the victims or perpetrators. These case studies provide in-depth information that has been extensively explored. Dr. Sprinkle's work included twelve cases of LGBTQ murder, and each of these cases was unique in relation to Mr. Dong's work. Their work did not include any cases on the same perpetrator or victims. Utilizing two data sources for this study proved to be beneficial. The two data sets where collected by different, and unrelated investigators, utilizing two different investigative techniques. This provided an opportunity to compare the themes that emerged from the two data sets and also served to improve the validity and reliability of the study.

The first step in this research project after receiving IRB approval (approval number 06-04-19-0605543) was to transcribe both data sets into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. For Dr. Sprinkle's work, each paragraph was transcribed into a single row of the Excel spreadsheet. For Mr. Dong's work, each response to a question from a perpetrator was transcribed into a single row of the Excel spreadsheet. This final Excel document contained a total of 652 rows of data, in a single column. The data in the Excel spreadsheet was then coded, sorted, and examined for recurring themes.

Data Analysis

After transcribing the data into an Excel spreadsheet, the coding processes ensued. The primary coding approached used for this study was an inductive coding approach. As Saldaña (2015) discussed, inductive coding allows the data to speak for itself, compared to a deductive approach using structured and ordered principles derived from a theoretical concept. While the theoretical framework and the research questions provided a general road map for coding the data used for this study, the study utilized primarily an inductive coding approach.

The first step in the data analysis was an initial coding of the data after reading the transcription of each cases study three times. Reading each transcription three times gave the researcher a chance to become familiar with the data and understand the context of each case study. During this initial coding step, four primary codes inductively emerged. Each row of the Excel spreadsheet was labeled with one of these four codes during the third reading of the case studies: perpetrator, victim, crime, or society. ‘Perpetrator’ was the code assigned to rows of the Excel spreadsheet where the data provided insight into the perpetrator. Likewise, ‘Victim’ was the code assigned to rows of data that provided insight into the victim. ‘Crime’ was the code assigned to rows of data that provided insight into the actual crime, the criminal investigation, or the trial. ‘Society’ was the code assigned to data that provided insight into the social context, community, and interpersonal relationships that the provided insight into the time, place, and influences surrounding the hate crime occurred.

The second step of the data analysis was a second coding processes or a paragraph-by-paragraph coding. During this step, each row of the data was scrutinized for detail. During this coding step, each row of the Excel spreadsheet was given a code based on the subject matter and information presented in the data. The list of codes was inductively developed and based on the data itself. Not every case study contained the same types of data, or used all of the codes, because each of the hate crimes analyzed in these case studies was unique. This data, when fully compiled, formed a matrix and inter-variable relationship between the step one and step two codification. Using an inductive approach allowed the data to speak for itself. The final list of codes is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

List of Inductively Developed Codes

Step 1 Codes	Victim	Perpetrator	Crime	Society
Step 2 Codes	Religion	Religion	Relationship to victim	LGBTQ community
	Coalitions	Coalitions	Murder weapon	Coalitional bias
	Childhood	Childhood	Crime scene	Gender roles
	Personality	Personality	Investigation	LGBTQ oppression
	Dating	Dating	Sentence	
	Sexuality	Sexuality		
	Education	Education		
	Employment	Employment		
	Family	Family		
	Friends	Friends		
	Life stability	Life stability		
	Motive			

The third step in the data analysis for this study was categorization. Analyzing and sorting codes into categories can help detect consistent and overarching themes in the

data (Saldaña, 2015). Because the data had been transcribed into an Excel spreadsheet, it was possible to sort the data based on the step one and step two coding using the "Sort & Filter" tool. After grouping together the rows of data that pertained to 'Victim' or 'Perpetrator' and coded in step two as "religion" it was possible to categorize this "religion" data further.

During the categorization step, the data was sorted in Excel and the essence of what the data was presenting provided more depth. For example, after sorting and filtering the data using the Excel "Sort & Filter" tool, focusing on the step two code of "religion," three categories inductively emerged related to what religious teachings perpetrators and victims had been exposed to. One category related to being taught through religion that "homosexuality is a sin". A second category related to being taught to "except others without judgement". A third category related to a religious belief that "homosexuals should be killed". After adding this category column to the Excel spreadsheet, the data could further be organized using the "Sort & Filter" tool. Themes began to emerge based on the step one coding, step two coding, and the categories assigned.

For example, data assigned a code of "religion" during the step two coding, and categorized as "homosexuals should be killed", when sorted in Excel using the "Sort and Filter" tool, grouped together rows of data in the Excel spreadsheet that was all coded during step one coding as data providing insight into the 'Perpetrator'. Thus, the theme begins to emerge from the categories that perpetrators were taught homosexuals should be killed by the religious coalitions to which they were exposed at a young age.

During this same “Sort & Filter” step all of the data assigned a code of “religion” during step two, and categorized as “except others without judgement” grouped together rows of data in the Excel spreadsheet that was all coded during step one as providing insight into the ‘Victim’. Furthermore, data assigned a code of “religion” during step two, and categorized as “homosexuality is a sin” grouped together a mixture of data coded in step one as providing insight into the “Victim”, and the “Perpetrator”. Thus the theme, emerging from the categorization of the data begins to become even clearer: While both victims and perpetrators where exposed to institutional teaching that homosexuality was a sin, perpetrators were also taught that homosexuals should be killed, while victims were often exposed to teachings that they should except others without judgement.

This process summarizes the final step in data analysis: determining what themes emerged from the data based on the categorization. The themes tell the story of the data, and provide the insight to help answer the research questions of: What was the lived experience of known LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators? What life events motivate anti-gay hate crime perpetrators to commit their crimes? Do known perpetrators identify as straight, homosexual, or bisexual? And how did masculine coalitions influence convict anti-gay hate crime perpetrators? Table 3 presents the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Table 3

Emergent Themes

Theme #1	Perpetrators have been systematically taught that homosexuals are less than human.	SQ #3
Theme #2	Perpetrators identify as straight publicly, but their private behavior does not match the heteronormative customs that match that identity.	SQ #2
Theme #3	Perpetrators believed that the public and the police would believe their victim "had it coming" because they were gay, and their criminal responsibility would be reduced, or forgiven.	SQ #3
Theme #4	Victims are not just LGBTQ, but they are confident and comfortable in their sexuality and gender identities. They are out and proud.	SQ #1
Theme #5	Perpetrators become uncontrollably enraged when their sexual advances are rebuffed by a queer.	SQ #1
Theme #6	Perpetrators and victims are often closely aligned, or active, in institutions with strong anti-LGBTQ customs and institutional bias (military, religion, gangs, or heteronormative communities).	SQ #3
Theme #7	There seems to be a fine line between "heteronormative homoerotic sexual exploration" and homosexuality. If the perpetrator identifies as straight, and his homoerotic "sexual-exploration" partner comes out of the exploration with a queer identity, murderous rage seems to be the result.	SQ #1 & 2
Theme #8	Anti-LGBTQ hate crime isn't about eradicating homosexuals; it's not about promoting heterosexuality, it's about perpetuating, and protecting heteronormative, homoerotic customs, traditions, and sacred ceremonial histories.	SQ #1
Theme #9	Perpetrators wanted to "prove" their heteronormative masculinity both to themselves and their peers.	SQ #1
Theme #10	Perpetrators expected that law enforcement, society, and the criminal justice system would not hold them as guilty for their crimes because their victim was a queer.	SQ #3

(table continues)

Theme #12	Many of the victims were picked up by, or met their perpetrator in gay cruising spots and gay bars. Straight people just simply don't go to gay cruising areas, and if they do, they don't try to pick up men for sex. The only reason someone would claim they went to such a place just to kill a "faggot" would be because they were ashamed of their own sexuality. In their mind, being known as a cold calculated murderer is somehow better, or more righteous, than being labeled as a queer.	SQ #2
Theme #13	Perpetrators felt justified in killing queer people, they aren't just "killing random people", they are expressing their opinion.	SQ #3
Theme #14	Several of the perpetrators had sexual experience with members of the same gender, one even "came out" during their incarceration and now identifies as gay.	SQ #2

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in this qualitative research study, data collection, analysis, and interpretation followed the strategies outlined in chapter three. The data utilized for this study was collected by a respected and accomplished researcher using correspondences via mail, e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face interviews. As Dr. Sprinkle (2011) outlines in his work, he spent time in each of the cities, towns, and communities where the eleven cases he presents took place. This gave Dr. Sprinkle the ability to learn and understand the context of the cases and meet surviving family members, friends, and relatives of both the victims and the perpetrators. According to Creswell (2012), one way to strengthen validity is to develop a close, and prolonged relationship, with research participants in order to gain detailed descriptions. Dr. Sprinkle was able to develop a relationship with the research participants founded on honesty and openness to promote trust and sharing. This helped ensure validity of the data and ultimately trust in the research findings.

The concept of reliability is nontraditional in qualitative research, as it is not intended to measure the dependability, but rather bridge a gap between the data and the qualitative process (Johnson, 2017). The concept of reliability in this type of research focuses on the accuracy of the findings according to the researcher and the study participants who lived the experience being analyzed (Creswell, 2012). Utilizing the data provided in Arthur Dong's (1997) work provided first-hand accounts from the perpetrators, in their own words. This provided the opportunity to analyze what perpetrators had to say directly by the researcher for this study.

Results

It is not uncommon, and arguably quite normal, for people who are straight, gay, and everything in between, to experiment sexually with others of the same gender. But what draws the line between what is 'normal' heteronormative sexual exploration and what tips the scale to where an individual is labeled as a homosexual? As discussed in Chapter 2, research suggests that it is perfectly normal for two boys to love each other, be best friends, and even experiment sexually with each other in their late teens and even early 20's, and feel completely justified in their heteronormative coalitions to call themselves 'straight'. However, the results of this data analysis suggest that if one of those individuals "comes out" of the closet, it throws the self-identity of the other partner into a tail-spin.

One of the case studies examined in this study helped shed light on this interesting phenomenon. In that case study a Naval Seaman was accepted by his Navy shipmates as a flamboyant, heterosexual peer. It was even acceptable for this flamboyant peer and his

Navy shipmates to participate in Navy initiation rituals that involved cross-dressing, spanking, simulated anal sex, and even anal penetration with fingers or objects, because these where a part of "heteronormative, traditional, Navy customs". But when this flamboyant seaman self-identified as a homosexual man, and came out of the closet, he was beat to death by two shipmates, and left for dead in a public bathroom while at port in Sasebo, Japan. Nothing had changed about this flamboyant Seaman, but publicly identifying as gay sent two of his shipmates into a tail-spin because they could not reconcile their own sexual history they had experience with this peer during Naval initiation rituals with their personal identity.

One of the research questions explored in this study is How do masculine coalitions influence convicted anti-gay hate crime perpetrators? Gender expectations and gender norms were discovered to be central to all of the cases examined for this study. When someone close to the perpetrator fails to follow gender norms taught through institutional coalitions and social modeling, it forces the perpetrator to question if they themselves are "doing gender" correctly. This makes them uncomfortable and they lash out at what they perceive to be the source of that discomfort, the non-gender conforming individual. This concept emerged as three themes during data analysis: Theme #1: Perpetrators have been systematically taught that homosexuals are less than human. Theme #3: Perpetrators believed that the public and the police would believe their victim "had it coming" because they were gay, and their criminal responsibility would be reduced, or forgiven. And Theme #6: Perpetrators and victims are often closely aligned,

or active, in institutions with strong anti-LGBTQ customs and institutional bias (military, religion, gangs, or heteronormative communities).

The gay rights movement has slowly brought homosexuality out of the closet and into the daylight. As a result, public perception has slowly changed because gay has slowly become less synonymous with feminine. Likewise, lesbian has become less synonymous with masculine, or butch. This is because masculine gay men and feminine lesbians are now more visible. However, being perceived as feminine if you have a penis, or masculine if you have a vagina, continues to elicit a strong reaction from individuals who have been taught that traditional gender-role expectations are more acceptable. As Sprinkle (2011) stated, when boys call each other "fag" it may not always literally mean homosexual, but the epithet always carries the insinuation of un-masculinity and a threat with it: masculine-up, or you will be kicked out of our heteronormative coalition. It doesn't seem to be actual hatred for the other individual, but rather an internal self-doubt, loathing, fear, and perception that they will lose the power they have created by following the prescribed gender norms themselves. The themes that emerged from this data analysis related to this included Theme 10: Perpetrators expected that law enforcement, society, and the criminal justice system would not hold them as guilty for their crimes because their victim was a queer. And Theme 13: Perpetrators felt justified in killing queer people, they aren't just "killing random people", they are expressing their opinion.

In the context of anti-LGBTQ violence, the phenomenon of explosive and murderous rage seems to be especially strong in someone that has a feminine side, or homosexual urges, but has kept them bottled-up and hidden from others. The animal side

of the perpetrator's brain, and the rational side of their brain collide when they see someone that is "like them" but let's their "true colors" show. The perpetrator begins to ask questions, such as: "how can someone walk around with such confidence and comfort while breaking the gender rules and face no consequence?" or "Why do I feel like a prisoner inside my own skin and they don't?" or lastly, "Why is this person accepted for whom they are, but I face losing my friends, family, and career if I admit I like sex with someone of my same gender?" Several of the case studies examined in this study shed light onto this personal self-loathing issue. A few of the themes that emerged from those case studies includes Theme #4: Victims are not just LGBTQ, they are also confident and comfortable in their sexuality and gender identities. They are "out and proud." Theme #5: Perpetrators become uncontrollably enraged when their sexual advances are rebuffed by a queer. Theme #9: Perpetrators wanted to "prove" their heteronormative masculinity both to themselves and their peers.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of the data analyzed for this study. The purpose of this general qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding about what motivates perpetrators of anti-LGBTQ violence. The chapter began by presenting the demographic data for the research subjects. The sample for this study included nineteen perpetrators. The demographic data suggested that it is unusual for perpetrators to choose a stranger as a target. It is also unusual for perpetrators' sexual interest to be exclusively heterosexual. And it seems quite common for perpetrators to be sexually interested in their victims.

This chapter discussed how that data was analyzed, and them presented the themes that emerged from the data analysis. Finally, this chapter concluded with a discussion of the study results. Gender expectations and gender norms were central to all of the cases examined for this study. Heteronormative coalitions also heavily influenced the perpetrators of this study, and the study suggests that perpetrators often had some homosexual activity in their past. Chapter five will discuss these themes in greater detail.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore what motivates anti-LGBTQ perpetrators so that policy developers and institutions can better address the problem of violence against the LGBTQ community. The previous chapter discussed the setting in which the original data was collected, the demographics of the individuals whose data were collected, and then discussed the data analysis process.

This chapter will explore the findings of the research and explore how the emergent themes inform the research questions. This chapter discusses the results in relation to desistance theory, deterrence theory, as well as explore how the themes relate to implicit bias, prejudice, and discrimination. The chapter will conclude with a discussion about the limitations of this research, future recommendations, and implications.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study began by asking the primary research question:

RQ: What types of lived experiences lead individuals to commit violence toward LGBTQ people?

In this section I discuss how the emergent themes uncovered during data analysis answers this research question and the subquestions introduced in Chapter 1. Those subquestions included:

SQ1: What life events motivate anti-gay hate crime perpetrators to commit their crimes?

SQ2: Do known perpetrators identify as straight, homosexual, or bisexual?

SQ3: How do masculine coalitions influence convicted anti-gay hate crime perpetrators?

Subquestion 1

This first subquestion was informed by several themes:

Theme #4: Victims are not just LGBTQ, they are also confident and comfortable in their sexuality and gender identities. They are "out and proud."

Theme #5: Perpetrators become uncontrollably enraged when their sexual advances are rebuffed by a queer.

Theme #7: There seems to be a fine line between "heteronormative homoerotic sexual exploration" and homosexuality. If the perpetrator identifies as straight, and his homoerotic "sexual-exploration" partner comes out of the exploration with a queer identity, murderous rage seems to be the result.

Theme #8: Anti-LGBTQ hate crime is not about eradicating homosexuals; it's not about promoting heterosexuality. It is about perpetuating and protecting heteronormative homoerotic customs, traditions, and sacred ceremonial histories.

Theme #9: Perpetrators wanted to "prove" their heteronormative masculinity both to themselves and their peers.

When these themes were combined, a picture emerged about what motivated violence against the victims in the case studies examined for this research. The overarching theme related to motivation appears to be a perceived threat from the perpetrator's perspective to their socially privileged standing as a heterosexual male. As

the coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias posits, individuals, especially men, develop psychological systems to facilitate formation and regulation of coalitional systems. These systems lead to anti-gay bias because homosexuality is perceived as having negative coalitional value in traditional coalitions (Winegard et al., 2016). This research supports that theory and suggests there is a correlation between heteronormative masculine privilege being threatened and perpetrators being motivated to violence. The cause and effect relationship between this threat and the willingness to commit murder in an attempt to maintain masculine privilege provides an exploration opportunity for future research.

Competition and the desire to survive are innate human instincts (Benenson, 2014). When perpetrators are forced to question their sexuality, particularly by an LGBTQ person who has found ways to maintain social acceptance even after coming out of the closet, their desire to "survive" socially becomes threatened by the cognitive side of their brain. This is because the social coalitions they are surrounded by have taught them they will be kicked out of the social coalition or socially sanctioned.

Subquestion 2

The second subquestion was informed by the following themes:

Theme #2: Perpetrators identify as straight publicly, but their private behavior does not match the heteronormative customs for that identity.

Theme #7: There seems to be a fine line between "heteronormative homoerotic sexual exploration" and homosexuality. If the perpetrator identifies as straight, and his homoerotic "sexual-exploration" partner comes out of the exploration with a queer identity, murderous rage seems to be the result.

Theme #11: In many of the cases of LGBTQ hate crimes, little to nothing is known about the sexual history or sexual interests of the perpetrator. In cases where some sexual history is known, there is often evidence that the perpetrator was not exclusively heterosexual. In several of the cases examined in this study the perpetrator had made sexual advances towards their victim.

Theme #12: Many of the victims were picked up by or met their perpetrator in gay cruising spots and gay bars. Straight people do not go to gay cruising areas, and if they do, they do not try to pick up men for sex. The only reason someone would claim they went to such a place just to kill a "faggot" would be because they were ashamed of their own sexuality. In their mind, being known as a coldly calculating murderer is somehow better, or more righteous, than being labeled as a queer.

Theme #14: Several of the perpetrators had sexual experience with members of the same gender. One even "came out" during their incarceration and now identifies as gay.

These themes suggest that the accepted profile of a LGBTQ hate-crime perpetrator is incorrect. As discussed in Chapter 2, the commonly agreed upon profile is that of a young, white, straight male who is generally a stranger to the victim. However, the case studies analyzed in this study suggest that perpetrators are not exclusively heterosexual and are rarely strangers to their victims. According to Parrott, heterosexism is used to describe the sexual stigma against LGBTQ people at the sociocultural level. At the individual level, the internalization of heterosexism is referred to as sexual prejudice (Parrott, 2008). Parrott's theory of anti-gay aggression posits that sexual prejudice is a

key determinate of aggression against sexual minorities. Furthermore, gay men are targets of such aggression because the assailant seeks to affirm their own masculine (or nonfeminine) identity (Parrott, 2008). This research supports Parrott's theory. Furthermore, the themes that emerged from this data suggest that sexual self-prejudice is a more consistent theme than previously uncovered in earlier studies.

According to Parrott (2008), thrill-seeking perpetrators see sexual minorities as easy targets that have already been marginalized by society because of their sexual deviancy. Defense-oriented perpetrators react from anxiety about their own homosexual urges or an unconscious fear of being gay (Parrott, 2008). In group dynamics, the perpetrator is motivated by a desire to prove toughness and heterosexual normality to peers (Parrott, 2008). This research suggests that thrill-seeking perpetrators are much less common than previous studies have suggested. In fact, during the analysis of these case studies, none of the perpetrators would fit the profile of a thrill-seeking perpetrator.

Subquestion 3

The following emergent themes helped inform my understanding of this phenomenon from the perspective of SQ3:

Theme #1: Perpetrators have been systematically taught that homosexuals are less than human.

Theme #3: Perpetrators believed that the public and the police would believe their victim "had it coming" because they were gay, and their criminal responsibility would be reduced or forgiven.

Theme #6: Perpetrators and victims are often closely aligned, or active, in institutions with strong anti-LGBTQ customs and institutional bias (military, religion, gangs, or heteronormative communities).

Theme #10: Perpetrators expected that law enforcement, society, and the criminal justice system would not hold them as guilty for their crimes because their victim was a queer.

Theme #13: Perpetrators felt justified in killing queer people; they did not consider it just "killing random people," they were expressing their opinion.

Parrott (2008) posits that anti-gay violence is facilitated through masculine gender role reinforcement, thrill seeking, defense against societal judgment of themselves, and heterosexist group dynamics. This is a multiphase process that requires individual motivation as well as an external stimulus. This means that a sexually prejudiced man exposed to violations of traditional gender roles (such as male-to-male erotic affection), will become aggressive. However, if a sexually prejudiced male is exposed to heteronormative gender role behavior (i.e., men competing at darts or golf), aggression does not result (Parrott, 2008). While the link between sexual prejudice is clearly documented in the literature, the exposure variables that increase or decrease the likelihood of violent action against an LGBTQ target needs further examination (Parrott, 2008). While the literature has demonstrated a clear correlation between anti-gay aggression following exposure to masculine gender role violations, research has not fully evaluated how personal variables interact with such exposure to create hostile arousal and violent actions (Parrott, 2008).

The results of this study further affirms this previous research in that the link between sexual prejudice, gender role expectations, and aggressive violence could be seen in all of the case studies analyzed. While this research does not fully answer what the final variables are that lead to violent action, it does give some insight that can guide future research. This study found that a personal variable that leads to hostile arousal seems to be sexual attraction or sexual arousal of the perpetrator towards the victim.

Desistance Theory

In the context of criminology, and public policy studies, desistance theory is an important part of a research findings discussion. The criminological phenomenon of desistance examines how criminal offenders quit their offending behavior (Harper & Harris, 2017). As Harper and Harris explained research related to criminal desistance is descriptive in nature. A desistance approach provides a discussion of variables that are associated with an interruption of a given behavior.

Thus, a desistance perspective is helpful in terms of assisting researchers in creating a research hypothesis, but the theoretical framework has limited power in explaining a final public policy approach to interrupting unwanted social phenomenon. That is why this framework was not a guiding instrument in this study. Because all of the offenders analyzed in this study where incarcerated, one primary factor that interrupted their actions was being caught by law enforcement and institutionalized in prison. However, a couple of the themes that emerged from the research data lend themselves to a discussion in the context of desistance theory.

One theme that emerged from this research was emergent Theme #1: Perpetrators have been systematically taught that homosexuals are less than human. Another theme that emerged from this research was Theme #10: Perpetrators expected that law enforcement, society, and the criminal justice system would not hold them as guilty for their crimes because their victim was a queer. In the framework of desistance theory, it would be intuitive to believe than that if released back into society these perpetrators have been told by the system that society does value LGBTQ individuals. Holding these perpetrators responsible for their actions likely changed their belief that society didn't care about their victims. That insight is not of minor consequence. This research suggests that the institutional and social stigma that continues to be perpetuated through marginalization of the LGBTQ community is a major underlying factor when LGBTQ hate crimes are analyzed. Teaching children that not everyone conforms to the traditional gender norms and sexuality norms and removing the pressure to conform to these gender and sexuality norms seems like the most important step in reducing the social phenomenon of LGBTQ hate crime. This idea leads directly into a discussion about deterrence theory.

Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory is a foundational concept in criminal justice. Its philosophical origins can be traced back several centuries (Jervis, 1979). As Lawrence (1994) discussed, biased-motivated crimes are especially harmful to society because of the way they impact less powerful populations of our culture, and thus should be punished harshly within our legal system in order to deter such crimes. Lawrence outlines the essence of

Deterrence Theory by explaining that more harmful crimes are punished by stronger penalties in order to provide a stronger deterrence to individuals from committing these crimes. Deterrence Theory focuses on what types of public policy, or criminal consequences can be put into place to prevent crime from happening in the first place. However, measuring the effect of criminal sanctions on the incidence of subsequent behaviors is difficult (Sherman, 1993).

In the context of LGBTQ hate crimes, based on FBI statistical reports, it appears that increased criminal penalties for such behaviors has not reduced crime. Most states now include increased penalties for crimes against LGBTQ people that are proven to be bias motivated. The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act 2009 now provides federal funding and assistance in convicting such crimes. However, violent crimes against members of the LGBTQ community continue (FBI, 2015).

This study set out to answer the primary research question, "What types of lived experiences leads individuals to commit violence toward LGBTQ people?" In the discussion of Deterrence Theory that question can be discussed from the perspective of what type of lived experience fails to deter an individual from treating LGBTQ individuals with respect and understanding. The themes uncovered from the case studies examined in this study provide some interesting insight. Three relevant themes uncovered in the analysis of the study data included:

- Theme #8: Anti-LGBTQ hate crime isn't about eradicating homosexuals; it's not about promoting heterosexuality, it's about perpetuating, and protecting

heteronormative, homoerotic customs, traditions, and sacred ceremonial histories.

- Theme #9: Perpetrators wanted to "prove" their heteronormative masculinity both to themselves and their peers.
- Theme #10: Perpetrators expected that law enforcement, society, and the criminal justice system would not hold them as guilty for their crimes because their victim was queer.

The analysis of the data in this study suggests that the motivation to commit violence against LGBTQ individuals was to establish standing in a social group, and to prove to peers that the perpetrator was not part of a socially stigmatized group. Deterrence theory suggests that penalties create a cost-benefit balance that will modify a perpetrators actions. If that is true, then the public policy development question becomes: How can public policy create a higher cost to the perpetrators of these crimes, or increase the benefit of being labeled LGBTQ? The themes uncovered in this study suggest that based on these perpetrators lived experience, they would rather be labeled a gay basher, than be labeled a queer. From a public policy perspective, it would be policy changes that work towards removing the stigma associated with being LGBTQ that will make the most improvement. Based on the case studies analyzed in this study much of the stigma experienced by the perpetrators came from organizational bias perpetuated by teachers, public leaders, and religion.

Implicit bias

Implicit bias is a phenomenon that has been shown to have powerful effects on human behaviors. According to Uhlmann and Nosek (2012), biased feelings and thoughts towards minorities are difficult to consciously control, particularly for ego threatened individuals. The research of Uhlmann and Nosek suggests that implicit bias develops from cultural socialization and behaviors stemming from these biases are difficult to explain and reconcile even by the perpetrator. When an individual's self-worth is threatened, they are especially vulnerable to act according to the implicit bias they have been socially conditioned with (Uhlmann & Nosek, 2012).

The findings of this study align with the results of studies that have looked at implicit bias, furthermore the case studies analyzed in this study suggest that implicit bias was such powerful force in these perpetrators that they murdered, in some cases, an object of their affection, in an attempt to protect their own ego. These perpetrators where not simply attacking another human, they were trying to prove their own gender, their own value, and their own worth to themselves and society at large. The implicit bias that had been socialized into these individuals led them to loath certain traits about themselves. When confronted with someone who openly exhibited those same traits and didn't experience self-loathing, the perpetrators lost control of themselves, their emotions, and their own behavior. The primary implicit bias related to the case studies analyzed in this study appears to be gender norms, and socially expected gender roles and gender behavior.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice and discrimination are the key issues that surround LGBTQ hate crime. According to Allport (1979) prejudice is defined as a strong hostility based upon faulty and inflexible generalizations. This hostility can be felt or expressed. It also may be directed toward an individual, or a group as a whole, because they are members of the LGBTQ community (Allport, 1979). As Fishbein (2014) discussed, prejudice is an unreasonable and negative attitude toward an individual because of their membership in the LGBTQ group. One of the qualities that makes prejudicial attitudes unreasonable is that they do not readily change even when exposed to new or conflicting information (Fishbein, 2014).

Prejudices are attitudes that lead an individual to prejudge people, usually negatively, and are usually based on the basis of a single personal characteristic such as sexuality, without any objective basis for making such a judgment (Farley, 2000). According to Parilli (2014), prejudice can exist on three levels: cognitive, emotional, and action oriented. Cognitive prejudice is simply a learned stereotype. A stereotype as defined by Parillo, is an overgeneralization that ignores unique individual characteristics. Emotional prejudice refers to feelings of hostility, or in some cases feelings of liking. Emotional prejudice exists as an attitude toward members of particular group. Action-oriented prejudice exists as a predisposition to engage in discriminatory behavior, such as violence against members of the LGBTQ community. As Parillo explained, action orientation prejudice is a predisposition to act, not necessarily action itself (Parillo, 2014).

When looking at the themes that emerge from the data analysis in this study it seems that perpetrators experience all three levels of prejudice described by Parillo. I will use the case study of perpetrator Jay Johnson is one example. Jay Johnson had grown up in a religious home and his father had taught him as young man that homosexual people where sinners and heathens. This was where Jay Johnson developed the cognitive prejudice towards LGBTQ people. When Jay Johnson found himself attracted to men, and meeting men for sex in secluded areas of public parks in Minneapolis, he had an emotional reaction of self-loathing due to the cognitive prejudice that had been trained into him. Jay Johnson moved on to develop an action orientation prejudice from a belief that he had to act against his sexual desires and eradicate the LGBTQ population in order to eliminate the temptations for gay sex.

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative research has various strengths and limitations. One strength discussed by Maxwell (2012) is that a researcher is able to use their passion and motivation to design a study that is of interest to them. Furthermore, qualitative research is able to explore and uncover in depth information that might not be discoverable through other inquiry methods (Creswell, 2012). The human factor can also be considered a strength of qualitative research, but is also an inherent limitation of the qualitative research method used in this study (Patton, 2015). As Patton discussed, the researchers bias, values, and beliefs naturally influence the study and data analysis.

I conducting this study is a gay man, and had fundamental bias, and values associated with that identity and life experience. I viewed the perpetrators descriptions of

their lived experience through the lens created from living life as a sexual minority myself. It is possible that someone conducting this research through the lens of a non-sexual minority might find other emergent themes.

The most notable limitation of this study is that it was conducted using secondary data. Utilizing case studies compiled by another researcher, denies the research of this study, the opportunity to ask direct questions that might elicit data more directly related to the research question. If this research could have been conducted using face-to-face interviews with convicted perpetrators it might have provided deeper inquiry and uncovered additional emergent themes.

Recommendations

Future research in this area is needed that utilizes a research protocol that includes face-to-face interviews with convicted LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators. From a public policy perspective, it is necessary to understand how the cycle of hate, and self-loathing can be interrupted. Before effective public policy can be developed that achieves this means, it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of how these perpetrators became so entrenched in anti-LGBTQ bias that their same-sex sexual desires sent them into a murderous state.

The emergent themes uncovered by this research suggest institutional bias was a major pressure experienced by the perpetrators. This institutional bias socially conditioned perpetrators' implicit bias, and internalized homophobia. Future research should ask questions that explore this phenomenon more deeply. The culture of many institutions continues to shift. Homosexuals are now allowed in the military, they are now

welcomed by many religious organizations, they are no longer banned from the Boy Scouts of America, and numerous corporate environments celebrate their contributions. Further research should explore how these cultural shifts are influencing the phenomenon of LGBTQ hate crimes.

Analysis of the data in this study uncovered a correlation between a desire by the perpetrator to maintain social masculine privilege and acts of anti-LGBTQ homicidal rage. More research is needed to better understand the cause and effect relationship, if one exists between these two correlates. Understanding this relationship could help positively influence policy development in the future.

Implications for Social Change

The majority of past research related to LGBTQ hate crime makes the assumption that the perpetrators of these crimes are young, straight, bigoted, males who are unfamiliar with the victim. Based on this assumption, research has established typologies of these perpetrators suggesting they are thrill seekers, turf defenders, retaliatory offenders, or mission-oriented perpetrators (McDevitt et al., 2002). The emergent themes uncovered in this research suggest that a large percentage of LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators are in fact not heterosexual. In contrast there is evidence to suggest that many of the perpetrators analyzed in this study had some same-sex interest or sexual experience. Evidence also suggests that the victim is rarely a stranger to the perpetrator. In several of the cases the victim was actually the object of the perpetrator's affection.

The findings from this research study impact potential positive social change by raising awareness about how socially learned bias impacts perpetrators. This research

brings to light complexities of LGBTQ hate crime that have been misunderstood in much of the previous research on this topic. This research supports positive social change by giving public administrators, and future researchers, new information about the motivations of LGBTQ hate crime perpetrators.

Positive social change happens in small, incremental steps. This research helps take a positive step towards better understanding on how cultural gender roles and sexuality formation impact LGBTQ hate crime. The implications for social change resulting from this study also includes removing the myth that the LGBTQ community should fear young, straight, males. Instead, the LGBTQ community, and LGBTQ activists can use this new information to inform future programs to reach out to the at-risk individuals who struggle with their sexuality and have been heavily influenced by cultural and institutional pressures to deny their sexuality.

Conclusions

As discussed by Voss (2016) we all have a cognitive, "rational" side to our brain. We also all have an emotional "animalistic" side to our brains. Most people like to think the rational side of our brain is used to make most of our decisions. However, it is actually the animalistic side of our brains that dictate most of our thoughts, behaviors, and actions (Voss, 2016). In addition, the cognitive side of our brain operates off implicit bias which misleads us to see a consistent view of the world, rather than a truthful view of the world.

For some people, being forced to address their cognitive biases, and reconcile those biases with the reality of who they are, can be an emotionally traumatic event. In

the context of LGBTQ hate crime that traumatic event can lead to aggression and murder. In the cases analyzed for this study, it appears the voices in the perpetrators head overwhelmed them and created a state of schizophrenia. Their sexual desires, their sexual behaviors, and their sexual feelings, all controlled by the animalistic side of their brains, did not match the cognitive biases that had been taught to the rational side of their brains by society and institutions. Society and institutions had generally taught them that homosexuality was wrong. But the animalistic side of their brains felt comfortable around an LGBTQ person, or felt erotically drawn to homosexually charged environments.

What triggers anti-LGBTQ aggression appears to be an inability to reconcile a difference between the animalistic "emotional" side of the brain and the cognitive "rational" side of the brain. For example, the animalistic side of the brain might be saying I like this person, or this person seems really cool and normal, or I'm sexually aroused by this person. But the cognitive side of the brain is telling the individual that that being homosexual, or transgender, or queer, or anything outside the heteronormative standard is wrong. This mental conflict trips an aggressive fight response and the perpetrator brutally murders their victim.

Using the theoretical framework of Parrott's (2008) anti-gay aggression theory, and the conceptual framework of the coalitional value theory of anti-gay bias (Winegard et al., 2016) can help further inform our understanding of what this study has uncovered. The cognitive "rational" brain is programed by social organizations, religious institutions, and cultural biases engrained through media, advertising, and educational text to buy into a heteronormative paradigm. However, as Kinsey et al. (1998) discovered, the animalistic

side of our brain just wants to find some other human we can sexually pair with, that we are emotionally compatible with, regardless of their gender or sexual identity. Kinsey et al. (1998) found that a large percentage of society at some point in their life was attracted to, aroused by, fantasized about, or had sex with someone of the same gender. Yet the heteronormative values and expectations are still paramount in many of our modern institutions in order to gain coalitional value and standing.

Summary

Violence against sexual minorities, motivated by sexuality prejudice, is not a new phenomenon (Kehoe, 2016), and it continues to be an issue in the United States. While numerous studies over the years have looked at LGBTQ violence from the perspective of victims and people impacted by crimes against members of the LGBTQ community, there remains a gap in the academic literature in relation to the study of this phenomenon from the perpetrator's perspective. This study takes an initial step as addressing that gap by looking at this social issue from the perpetrator's perspective.

What triggers anti-LGBTQ aggression appears to be an inability to reconcile a difference between the animalistic "emotional" side of the brain and the cognitive "rational" side of the brain. There is a commonly accepted theme in the academic literature that accepts the assumption that anti-LGBTQ violence is perpetrated by straight young men that are strangers to their victims. This research suggests that assumption is incorrect. Perpetrators instead often have an association with their victim, and have often experimented sexually, or shown sexual interest in a member of the same gender. If

future progress is to be made in public policy that addresses violence against the LGBTQ community it will be necessary for further research to avoid using such assumptions.

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Appendix A: Permission to Use Dr. Sprinkle's Work

From: Ross Templeton [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2019 12:52:33 PM
To: Sprinkle, Stephen
Subject: Unfinished Lives

Dr. Sprinkle-

My name is Ross Templeton. I am a PhD candidate at Walden University. I am working on PhD in criminal justice with a focus on LGBTQ-hate crime. I am very interested in your work. I would like to use the case studies you presented in you book "Unfinished Lives: Reviving the Memory of LGBTQ Hate Crimes Victims" as a source of data for my qualitative dissertation.

What I am focusing on in my work is the lived experiences of the perpetrators of LGBTQ-hate crimes. I feel like your work provides a great deal of in-depth data in the form of case studies that I can use to help explore the context in which crimes like these occur. While your book frames these cases in a way that celebrates the lives of the victims, I am looking at this phenomenon from the perspective of the perpetrator in hopes that new insight can be gained to help prevent violence in the future.

I am writing to ask for your blessing in using your case studies as the primary data source for my dissertation. I am also wondering if you might have any additional information or data about the lives or histories, particularly the social and sexual histories of the perpetrators related to the cases in your book. I would be happy to send you the current version of my proposal if you wish. And I would cherish any feedback you might have.

Sincerely,
Ross Templeton
[redacted]

Re: Unfinished Lives Inbox ×

Sprinkle, Stephe[redacted] Mar 28, 2019, 12:01 PM

to Ross

Interesting project, Ross.

Of course you may use the stories I tell. I made a conscious choice not to focus my work on the perpetrators of these crimes, since that was a status they did not deserve. I understand that your emphasis is different.

I suggest you take a look at "Licensed to Kill," a documentary done by Arthur Dong. He explores the very questions you are interested in, Ross.

Best wishes,

Steve Sprinkle

Stephen V. Sprinkle, Ph.D.
Director of Field Education and Supervised Ministry, and
Professor of Practical Theology
Director of Baptist Programming
pronouns: he/his/him
Brite Divinity School
[redacted]