

Introduction

Recent years have seen increased support for the equality of same-sex couples, in a range of Western countries. There has been a push to include bisexuals together with lesbians and gay men, by activists and by state and civil society actors. However, patterns of stigmatisation and erasure concerning bisexuality also exist. These patterns contrast with the processes of normalisation that have taken place concerning lesbians and gay men in equalities-positive countries such as the UK (see Richardson and Monro, 2012).

The pro-equalities shift that has taken place in some Western nations also contrasts with the huge challenges internationally concerning basic rights for people who wish to express themselves sexually with others of the same sex. Homosexuality is illegal in 78 countries and is punishable by death in Mauritania, Sudan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and parts of Nigeria and Somalia (Itaborahy and Zhu, 2014). In countries where state-sponsored persecution of people who engage in same-sex sexual acts takes place, it is the same-sex expression that is the key issue, not whether someone identifies as bisexual, gay, or lesbian. Same-sex sexualities may be termed 'homosexual' in these countries, but they can be engaged in by people who are only attracted to those of the same sex, or by those who are attracted to people of different sexes. However, it is same-sex sexualities that court punitive sanctions, not an individual having some same-sex and some opposite-sex desires or behaviours, so that focusing only on 'bisexuals' or 'bisexuality' in an international context is a flawed approach. At the same time, internationally, bisexuals are affected by punitive laws against homosexuality, and so the term 'bisexual' has some purchase.

Within an international context, there is another analytical trajectory that requires exploration. Overall, the categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) can be

seen as limited in scope and imagination, erasing as they do the many and varied forms of sexual and gender identities that have – and do – exist internationally. As Evelyn Blackwood argues:

From a Western viewpoint, sexuality constitutes an essential or core attribute of identity; individuals are said to have fixed sexual identities or orientations. Sexuality as it is understood in the United States and Europe, however, often bears little resemblance to sexual relationships and practices across cultures (2000, p.223).

Building on Blackwood's ideas, it can be argued that a Western attachment to 'fixing and naming' sexual orientations and identities can marginalise or erase other ways of doing things. Marking and claiming behaviours as constituting particular sexual identities can be problematic; it may render indigenous sexualities visible and open to interrogation, sanctions, and persecution. At the same time, the Western-originated categories of 'LGBT' form a common parlance, the importance of which cannot be denied when it comes to effecting political and social change and tackling human rights abuses against people whose desires are not just towards people of the opposite sex. The book therefore begins with the premise that the term 'bisexuality', like 'gay', 'lesbian', 'transgender', and 'heterosexual', may be useful at this particular time, in Anglophone countries and perhaps in others as well, depending on the politics of those particular countries. Some actors in Southern countries both engage with, and develop, notions of bisexuality and discourses (sets of ideas) of bisexual rights (see for example, the Columbian situation (Serrano, 2003, 2010)). This trend will be explored further in the chapters on Intersectionality and Activism, Democracy and the State.

This book takes bisexuality as its focus because of the academic marginalisation of bisexuality (see below), which has created a substantial gap in contemporary sexualities literature. The book is needed because bisexuality plays out differently to lesbian and gay identities in relation to a number of key processes. These concern, for instance, the relationship between hegemonic heterosexualities and non-heterosexualities, sexuality-related prejudices and their material impacts, and the interfaces between individuals and state institutions. Bisexuality raises important issues concerning identity construction and its social and political ramifications. This is partly because of the complex and fluid nature of bisexual identities, which are different from the more bounded and static identities assumed by lesbians, gay men and heterosexuals, and partly because of the fragmented and partially submerged nature of the bisexual population.

This book develops theory regarding bisexuality, grounded in analysis of key aspects of bisexual peoples' lives, such as identity construction, relationships and community, experience of workplace organisations, and political activism. In its engagement with key bodies of theory associated with sociology and political science, it will begin to map out territory which is largely uncharted. The text does not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of any areas; it summarises progress to date, develops theory using empirical research data, and indicates trajectories which may be of interest for future scholarly activities. In so doing, it attempts also to foreground the lived experiences of people who are bisexual, and those who identify as other than heterosexual, lesbian or gay. The book is largely situated within the trajectory of critical bisexuality studies, encouraging readers to 'interrogate the concept of bisexuality: to think critically about where it has come from and how its origins continue to shape contemporary debates' (Storr, 1999, p.1). I build on the work of authors such as Michael Du Plessis (1996), Clare Hemmings (2007), Merl Storr

(1999, 1999a), and Stephen Angelides (2001) and I contribute to debates raised by contemporary critical bisexuality scholars, such as Shiri Eisner (2014).

There are some areas of possible conceptual development of the field of bisexuality studies (and indeed sexuality and gender studies more broadly) that I wish to flag up in this Introduction, because they might prove important for future research. The first of these concerns temporality, as discussed by social scientists such as Pierre Bourdieu, (cited in Jenkins 1992):

Temporality, the inexorable passage of time, is an axiomatic feature of practice: time is both a constraint and a resource for social interaction...Time, and the sense of it, is, of course, socially constructed; it is, however, socially constructed out of natural cycles – days and nights...’ (Jenkins, 1992, p.69).

Temporality is important for understanding bisexuality, because if the entire lifecycle of an individual is considered, rather than a particular point in that lifecycle, then the likelihood of behavioural bisexuality (sexual desires or behaviours towards other people of more than one gender) is much greater. If a temporal approach to theorising sexuality approach is taken, it could be that heterosexual, lesbian, and gay identifications become understood as ‘phases’ for many people, in a larger pattern of behavioural bisexuality across the life course.

The notion of temporal sexualities can be taken further by using the notion of reincarnation that is drawn from some Southern-originated religions (Buddhism and Hinduism, see for example Peter Bishop, 1993). In an approach to bisexuality that seeks to avoid Western-centrism, it is arguably important to consider approaches that look at reincarnation

philosophies, and other ways of conceptualising subjectivity and consciousness. In Monro (2010a) I mention reincarnation in relation to Indian genders and sexualities, and indicate some of the parallels between early Indian philosophies and poststructural approaches, as discussed by, for example, Ruth Vanita, and Saleem Kidwai (2001). If reincarnation was to be 'real', then temporalized identities would extend not over the course of one lifetime, but many. The 'soul' that incarnates could have different gender identities, physical sexes, and sexual identities, shaped by the social context into which they were born as well as internal predilections.

If an ontological position that reflects ideas of temporality and reincarnation was taken, then varied gendered/sexual identities might become seen as the usual pattern across lifetimes, even if an individual experiences themselves as having a very fixed gender and sexual identity in a particular incarnation. There could therefore be another axis for understanding gender and sexual identities; fixed or essentialised identities on the one hand (for example people experiencing themselves as having essentialised gay identities, set within a particular socio-material context), and fluid, mutable and sometimes liminal (beyond categories) identities on the other. In such a context, conflicts between different identity-based groups (as discussed later in the book) could perhaps be interpreted as primarily about access to material resources, that are distributed according to particular socio-political structures (based around, for example, heterosexual couple hood), rather than the 'validity' of any particular identities over any others.

A materialist critique of the systems of categorisation that have emerged concerning gender and sexuality is certainly pertinent to understanding bisexuality, and unlike the two themes noted above (temporality and reincarnation), this will be pursued later in the book. Victorian society played a major role in the construction of contemporary internationally-used systems

of gender and sexual categorisation. Colonialism and imperialism lent weight, internationally, to the European systems of gender and sexual categorisation which underpin the modern heterosexual/homosexual/bisexual forms of categorisation (see MacDowell, 2009). This had a material basis in colonial efforts to secure and maintain hierarchical systems and access to material privileges – the material privileges of white, European, heterosexual people. Thus, there has been a materialist demarcation and essentialisation of sexual identities, which has arguably cramped potentials for fluidity and liminality.

The structure of the chapter

The chapter begins by outlining the methods used for the research that is presented in this book. It then provides a brief historical and cross-cultural contextualisation of non-heterosexual sexualities, charts the development of the notion of ‘bisexuality’, and situates the text within bisexuality studies and gender/sexuality scholarship more broadly. Definitions of bisexuality, and key related terms, are discussed. The chapter then looks at prejudice against bisexuality. An outline of the subsequent chapters is then provided. The chapter uses, perhaps unusually, some empirical material in its sections on definitions of bisexuality and biphobia. This is because the evolution of these terms is ongoing, and I wish to highlight their complex and contingent nature at the beginning of the book.

Methods

This book uses research materials that stem from four countries (India, USA, Columbia and the UK). The choice of countries was made in order to represent both the global South and the global North/West. The majority of the empirical material comes from the UK, and it

would be useful for further research to address bisexualities and non-heterosexualities in other countries, especially Southern and Eastern countries, in more depth, given the historical dominance of Anglophone scholarship in this area.

The book draws on 40 semi structured interviews with individuals in the UK and Columbia. The core interviews were conducted with a range of people who identify as bisexual, queer or non-heterosexual in the UK (24 interviewees) and Columbia (six interviewees); a further ten interviews were conducted with people involved in the UK fetish and bondage, domination, sadomasochism and domination (BDSM) communities in 2006. The project also used analysis of web material and research literature, specifically from India, the USA and the UK. The UK and Columbian empirical research was conducted in 2012, as was the web analysis of Indian sexualities. It should be noted that the UK-based qualitative interviews were supplemented by my participant observation, as a bisexual person, in the UK bisexual communities in the 1998-2014 period; this is drawn on mostly in the Activism, Democracy and the State chapter and I have made it clear where it is used.

For the UK research, qualitative interviews were conducted with 22 individuals, and a further two individuals filled in the extensive semi structured interview schedule (due to their personal preferences to contribute in written form). Opportunity or purposive sampling (Flick, 2007) was conducted using the following criteria: age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic heritage, ability/disability, class background and current identification, links with alternative communities (other than bisexuality-related), and location in the UK. Using snowball approaches and existing networks, the sampling strategy enabled recruitment of people who were somewhat representative across these different criteria. In addition, efforts were made to include people who were not part of the bisexual communities, as well as those

who were, and people who were parents, as well as non-parents. The sampling strategy was broadly successful, but there is over-representation of some groups, notably people from Northern England, 30-50 year olds, and those involved in the organised bisexual communities. The term ‘organised bisexual communities’ is used in the book to mean those networks and groupings of people who identify as bisexual and who have established groups, events and organisations. It is recognised that the term is problematic; not everyone who is linked to these communities is bisexual, and other groupings of people who are bisexual may exist outside of these ‘organised bisexual communities’.

It is not possible to identify each participant by their social characteristics in the analysis of findings provided in the book, as this could lead to the identification of individuals. However, a table is provided in order to demonstrate the key characteristics:

Table 1: Characteristics of the UK participants

Age	21-30 (2), 31-40 (13); 41-50 (6), 51-60 (2), not answered (1)
Gender identity	Female (11), Male (7), Male/genderqueer (1), transman (1), genderqueer (2), questioning/unsure (diagnosis of intersex condition at puberty) (1), not answered (1)
Ethnic heritage	British Asian (1), Mixed heritage (3), white English/British (10), white/caucasian (1), white European (2), Black British (1), Chinese (2), White other (3), Non-white European (1)
Sexual orientation	Bisexual (18); queer/bisexual (2), queer (2), undecided – probably bisexual (1), not answered (1)
Disabled	Yes (7), No (16), not answered (1)
Class background	Working class (6), mixed working class/middle class (2), lower middle class (1), middle class (4), upper middle class (2), mixed working class and upper class (1), Don’t know (2), not answered (5), don’t identify with class (1)
Current class identification	Working class (5), lower middle class (1), middle class (11), mixed working class/middle class (1), middle class with some working class experience (1), don’t know (2), don’t identify with class (1), not answered (1)
Active links with bisexual communities/networks	Yes (16) No (8)
Links with alternative	Yes (16: Queer, LGBT, Trans, black/BME/people of colour, kink,

communities (e.g. kink, swingers, goths)	BDSM, sexual freedom, anti-censorship, civil libertarians, secularists, humanist, vegetarians, vegans, fannish/fandom, folk, indie and goth/rock music scenes, boating community, deaf community, cross dressing, swinger, poly, asexuality, outsider art/music, mad pride, ex squatter, anarchist); No (4); Not answered (2)
Location	Southern England (3); Midlands (3), Northern England (17), Scotland (1)

Findings were anonymised, or if preferred the individual's first name only was used, with the following exceptions who wished to be fully named: Meg Barker, Lawrence Brewer, Grant Denkinson, and Christian Klesse.

The UK bisexuality research took an *a priori* approach (see Gibbs, 2007), in which research themes were identified in advance. The key themes around which the questions were developed were as follows: bisexual identities and their construction; bisexual and other communities; biphobia; intersectionality; sexuality, kinship and relationships; employment; the commodification of bisexuality; activism; and democracy and the state. The interview data and the data from the two semi structured interviews that were completed in written form were then analysed using a thematic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The Colombian research followed a similar approach to that of the UK research. A qualitative interview schedule was developed which addressed the themes above and purposive/opportunity sampling was undertaken by a Colombian colleague, Camilo Tamayo Gómez, who conducted the interviews in Spanish and then transcribed key quotes and translated them into English. First names were used, as the participants expressed no preferences about anonymisation/non-anonymisation. Some of the characteristics of the participants were recorded, as follows:

Table 2: Characteristics of the Colombian participants

Age	21-30 (2), 31-40 (2); 41-50 (2)
Gender identity	Female (2), male (2), transgender male (1), transgender female (1)
Sexual orientation	Bisexual (1), not given (5)
Current class position (inferred from occupation)	Working class (2), Middle class (3), unclear (1)
Active links with bisexual communities/networks	Yes (1), links with sexuality/gender activism but not specified if bisexual-specific (1), No (4)
Location	Bogotá (2), Cali (1), Medellin (1), Barranquilla (1), Pasto (1)

For the Indian research, a framework with the key themes for the research was developed drawing on the UK and Colombian research instruments, and an Indian colleague, Dr Ahonaa Roy, conducted web searches and blog and literature analysis in order to generate materials which could be used in providing an Indian perspective. Both Indian and USA case studies drew on existing autobiographical and activist contributions, such as Robyn Ochs and Sarah E. Rowley's (2009) *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*. There was extremely limited funding for the project and a decision was made to use what resources there were to fund two emerging scholars (Roy and Gómez) to conduct research in the global South, in order to begin to counter the Anglophone bias in the literature. For the US case study, existing literature formed the main source of material.

The Sex, Relationships, Kinship and Community chapter draws on empirical material from a further qualitative project conducted by Monro, in order to enable analysis of the overlaps and divergences between the bisexual and BDSM communities. The original aim of the research was to address the identities of people taking part in the sexual/sexual 'scenes' (communities/spaces) associated with BDSM (also known as 'kink') and the norms and

institutional practices found on these scenes. The research was conducted in 2006 with five BDSM and fetish club organisers and five participants in BDSM clubs and activities. The sample included people with a mixture of sexual orientations and genders (all identifying as either male or female; nine were cisgendered (born as the sex they continue to identify with) and one trans male). Nine of the participants were white and one was British Asian. The sample was a snowball one, and was accessed via known gatekeepers. In depth interviews were conducted; questions included the sexual and gender roles that people took within the BDSM scene, power dynamics, the self-regulation of the ‘scenes’, and intersectional issues. The findings were anonymised, and were analysed in relation to the themes pertinent to the book on bisexuality.

Bisexuality: A brief historical and cross-cultural contextualisation

This section of the chapter provides an overview of key themes concerning the historical and cross cultural construction of non-heterosexualities, including bisexualities. It is difficult to discuss bisexualities without also discussing same-sex sexualities, as bisexuality encompasses both heterosexual (opposite-sex) and homosexual (defined here as same-sex) desires and sexual activities, as well as those between people of gender identifications that are other than male or female.

Authors such as Ron Fox (1998) provide evidence that sexual attractions and/or sexual behaviours towards people of different genders have existed throughout history, and across many cultures. For example, a growing body of literature disputes the notion of exclusive heterosexuality across Africa (see Epprecht, 2008). Mark Blasius and Shane Phelan argue

that 'Same-sex love is a phenomenon common to almost every culture, one occurring throughout recorded history' (1997, p.2).

It can be rather hard to trace the existence of bisexualities, historically and cross-culturally. As Fox (1998) notes, the notion of 'bisexuality' is often erased from anthropological and historical discussions about sexualities (see also Epprecht, 2006). However, the literatures about premodern and cross-cultural sexualities do provide a means of beginning to explore different forms of sexuality, gender identity, and intimate relationships. These can be mapped out in the following way (following Fox, 1998):

Gender role variance: This is where individuals take the role traditionally associated with the other sex, including sexual identity and expressions. Variations are present amongst some Native American Two-Spirit people and Indian Hijras, but also, for instance, in Madagascar, Samoa and several African and Latin American countries (see for example Murray and Roscoe, 1998). Gender role variance may be linked with a formulation of sexual difference as based around an active/passive dichotomy (amongst cisgender males); the active partner (penetrator) may have sex with both men and women but is considered to be heterosexual, whilst the passive partner (male recipient) is seen as homosexual. For example, the male-bodied *homosexuals* of Dakar in Senegal form two groups: the *oubis* who are effeminate and who are penetrated during sex and the *yauss* who penetrate the *oubis* during sex (Tuenis 2001).

Egalitarian same-sex relationships: These may involve sexual and/or emotional relationships and sexual activities which are not necessarily linked to particular identities, as well as those that are identity-oriented. They include people who engage in homosexual and heterosexual

behaviours in tandem, for example the *motsoalle* – a intimate female partner who often coexisted with a woman’s husband, as found amongst earlier generations in Lesotho, (Blackwood, 2000, see also Epprecht, 2008). As Fox (1998) indicates, contemporary lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) relationships also fall within the ‘egalitarian’ category. Of course, all of these types of relations may not actually be egalitarian, but they would usually have a more equal power distribution than some of the initiatory relationships discussed below.

Initiatory relationships: These take place when where individuals of different ages form temporary relationships or engage in sexual practices for a certain period of time. For instance, Joseph Boone (2010) discusses the ways in which same-sex male erotic practices in the Middle East (that would now be identified as child abuse if minors were involved) were institutionalised for hundreds of years. In another, more contemporary set of examples, Evelyn Blackwood (2000) discusses *intimate friendships*, such as culturally sanctioned ‘mummy-baby’ relationships in Lesotho where older and younger females have close, sometimes sexual relationships, sometimes in tandem with having boyfriends; *erotic ritual practices* for example the sexual initiation ceremonies found amongst Australian aboriginal women and girls, and *adolescent sex play* found for instance amongst the !Kung of Southern Africa.

These different types of identity and behaviour indicate the widespread nature of what could be termed ‘bisexuality’. However, it would be dangerously generalising to claim that bisexuality is universal, historically and cross-culturally. It may be that the expression of bisexuality is largely contingent on social and historical specificities. Following Gilbert Herdt (1984), societies vary in their social norms concerning sexuality, due to factors such as economic structure and sexual stratification. For example some Melanesian societies had sexual norms that steered young males towards same-sex sexualities for a few years; these

norms were congruent with 'harsh taboos associated with premarital heterosexuality, virginity in women, and adultery' (1984, p.163 in Storr, 1999). These young males might be interpreted as behavioural bisexuals but the reasons for their behaviours, and the identities that these behaviours are connected to, were very different to those associated with Western bisexualities. Such variations point away from any kind of 'universal' bisexuality, even if sexual behaviours and desires towards persons of different genders are fairly ubiquitous.

The origins of the term 'bisexuality' and the formation of homosexual, heterosexual and bisexual categories

The term 'bisexuality' stemmed initially from middle Eastern and Southern European cultures, and then from Western science. This section of the chapter outlines historical definitions of bisexuality, and the ways in which they evolved, set within the context of Western imperialism. It provides further evidence supporting Herdt's (1984) argument above, that sexual and gender categories are historically and socially contingent.

The early, mostly theological use of the terms 'bisexed' or 'bisexous' in Europe related to ideas of primordial androgyny, drawing on ancient Greek and Near Eastern mythology. These were superseded in 1859 in the West by the introduction of the term 'bisexuality' by anatomist Robert Bentley Todd, who was writing at the same time as Charles Darwin.

Therefore:

From the middle of the nineteenth century, the term *bisexuality* is used in the fields of anatomy and physiology to refer to forms of life that are sexually undifferentiated or thought to exhibit characteristics of both sexes. By the early years of the 20th century,

bisexuality is used to describe a combination of masculinity and femininity in an individual – psychological rather than physical traits – and had also come to signify a sexual attraction to individuals of both sexes...although the three meanings of bisexuality – a combination of male/female, masculine/feminine, or heterosexual/homosexual – have different histories, they are far from distinct (MacDowell, 2009, p.4).

These three uses of the term ‘bisexuality’ were forged via, and in relation to, socio-political developments. The Western social construction of contemporary bisexualities revolved around three main, interlinked, axes. The first axis concerned structural dynamics associated with industrialisation and the development of capitalism. As Donald Hall suggests, ‘Capitalism demands specialization and categorisation for most efficient operation and is inextricably intertwined with patterns of social organisation beyond the realm of the strictly economic’ (1996a, p.101). Following Michel Foucault (for example 1977), Hall argued that the development of binary notions of heterosexuality and homosexuality in Victorian times reordered the mechanisms with which people constructed their identities; only two, rigidly and mutually exclusive sexual identities (heterosexuality and homosexuality) were seen as possible and ‘Activities once encompassed within an overall notion of an ecstatic, perverse, libertine sexuality were dichotomised into notions of oppositional sexualities (1996a, p.102). In other words, society became increasingly rigidly structured, for example individuals took more specific, more heavily gendered, domestic and employment roles when communities moved from agrarian and craft-based work to factory and white-collar work. This was combined with a shift away from female-centric emotional (and sometimes sexual) relations amongst women (see Rust, 2000, 2000a), and more fluid erotic possibilities generally, so that ‘the same nineteenth century beliefs in the mutual exclusivity of womanhood and manhood

and in the inescapable importance of gender that produced concepts of gendered eroticism also produced the belief that sexual attraction must be directed towards *either* men or women' (Rust, 2000a, p.206). For some theorists (for example Angelides, 2001), the dominant modern categories of sexuality (heterosexual, homosexual) are dependent for their existence on the absence of bisexuality.

The second set of dynamics within which contemporary LGB and heterosexual categories have been forged concern those of imperialism, colonialism, and racial inequality. Following Merl Storr (1999), the development of the modern categories of 'male', 'female', 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' was intertwined with the development of other categories including that of 'race', as part of the colonial project of mapping and imperial conquest. In other words, people in colonising countries (such as England) sought to map out, and regulate, not only land, but also peoples' identities. Mark Epprecht, following Michel Foucault, contends that the rising class of bourgeoisie (middle classes) in industrialising Western countries 'promoted ideas that served their material interests' (2006, p.189). These included the idea that certain groups (sexual and racial 'others') were less suited to govern others, and to enjoy economic and social privileges. Non heterosexual and non-white 'others' formed groups against which the Western white middle classes could construct themselves as 'superior' (see Williams and Chrisman *et al.*, 1993). Overall, different forms of hierarchical categorisation (such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and socio-economic class) were consolidated and then used by those with the most social power to subordinate others.

Science provided the third main axis around which the homosexual/heterosexual and bisexual systems of categorisation developed in the nineteenth century and subsequently. The imperialist project was linked with the development of scientific knowledge, including the

hierarchical ordering of categories. The psychomedical discourses which developed between the mid-1800s and the 1960s were linked with a patriarchal and raced assertion of power: women and non-white people were framed as 'less evolved' than men and white people (patriarchal is defined here as the domination of females by males). Discourses of sexual science developed to establish supposed scientific evidence for innate differences between different sexes, races and classes, so that the dominance of white men could be justified and bolstered (Angelides, 2001). It is in this context that the hugely influential sexologists developed their systems of homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual classification.

Before looking at the work of the sexologists, there is a need for some clarification and contextualisation of the above discussion. The nineteenth century evolution of sex/gender categories appears to stem from a basis in material power struggles. The influence of these systems of identity categorisation, as tied to the colonial project, has been enormous. The homophobic, and by default biphobic, legacy left by Western legal and normative systems is highly influential today; homophobia, which is present in many Southern countries, can be traced to the laws and religious norms imposed by Western colonisers, for example in India (Thomas *et al.*, 2011). However, the modern colonial and industrial era is not the only one in which systems of sex/gender categorisation have been imposed on individual subjects as part of materially-grounded social structuring processes. For example, ancient Roman societies were heavily structured in ways that we can now interpret as highly problematic. In Rome, relations between males took place mostly between adult men and their male slaves (or in some cases male prostitutes). These subordinate males took a passive role and the free men using aggressive, violent sexual acts to bolster their social position (Cantarella, 1992). Eve Cantarella (1992) notes that from the Augustan period onwards, there are accounts of what appear to be romantic, consensual sexual relationships between free men (although the

pederastic model continued). It is at around that time that laws emerged with penalties against both active and passive same-sex male sexualities. This could indicate that romantic, consensual sex between male adults was disrupting the hierarchical structures of Roman society, provoking a need for governors to contain and prevent love-based same-sex expressions. Therefore, when analysing the evolution of modern sexualities, it is important to be mindful that dynamics concerning the interplay of power, social control, and the hierarchical distribution of material resources based on the classification of people into categories is not just a modern Western phenomenon.

Sexologists and the evolution of 'bisexuality'

During the nineteenth century, medicine became increasingly dominant as a framework within which sex and gender identities were constituted in the West (see Weeks, 1977). Sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Henry Havelock Ellis were highly influential in the formation of sexual categories, including bisexuality (see Storr, 1999). They initially termed sexual attraction to both men and women as 'psychosexual hermaphroditism' (see above, and Ellis, 1897). However, by 1915 Havelock Ellis had begun to use the term 'bisexual' for people who are attracted to both sexes, and he categorised people into three types: heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual. This appears to have been a key point in the development of contemporary notions of bisexuality.

Another important strand of early theorising about bisexuality came from Sigmund Freud and his contemporaries, such as Wilhelm Fleiss (Storr, 1999). Freud's ideas about bisexuality were ambiguous and contradictory (Strachey, 1953, see also Angelides, 2001). Overall, he rejected the essentialism of the early sexologists (who saw sexual identities as having an

innate, organic cause) and instead argued in some parts of his work that bisexuality was the original form of sexuality, found amongst children and the so-called 'primitive races'. As Storr (1999) indicates, this very problematic racialised and hierarchical framing of bisexuality mirrors broader patterns of imperialism and inequality, in which some ethnic groups and some people with sexual identities were framed as less 'advanced' than others. Angelides (2001) describes the ways in which, post 1900s, heterosexual and homosexual oppositional categories were consolidated in an ongoing way via psychomedical discourses, excluding bisexuality.

However, other developments were also taking place, which run counter to the hegemonic project of 'fixing and freezing' bisexuality as an inferior category, or excluding it from consideration altogether. Of the sexological and psychological approaches, there were some early attempts to depathologise and indeed celebrate bisexuality, notably in the work of Wilhelm Stekel (1950 [1922]) who 'boldly asserts that everyone is innately bisexual and that monosexuality – exclusive heterosexuality or homosexuality – is unnatural' (Storr, 1999, p.28). Later that century, the research conducted by USA-based Alfred Kinsey and colleagues (1948, 1953) became hugely influential. It differed from much previous scholarship because of its basis in large scale empirical research, although as Storr (1999) says, there are questions about the reliability and validity of the data. Kinsey and his colleagues developed a scale of sexual identities (or orientations), from exclusively heterosexual (a Kinsey '1') to exclusively homosexual (a Kinsey '6'). Kinsey and his colleagues suggested that a considerable proportion of the population had sexual activities, experiences or sexual responses with (or towards) people of both sexes at some time.

Fritz Klein (1978) followed Kinsey's work by developing a more nuanced approach to categorising sexuality, known as the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG). This addresses individual sexual identities in the past, present, and possible future, using a seven point scale (ranging from same-sex only to opposite-sex only). It includes factors such as sexual attraction, behaviour, and fantasies; emotional, social and lifestyle preferences; and self-identification. This seminal work spawned, in turn, a range of other approaches. For example, James Weinrich and Fritz Klein (2002), using results from a large online survey, modelled three subgroups within the bisexual population: 'Bi-Gay', 'Bi-Straight' and 'Bi-Bi'. As well as the work of Klein and colleagues, a number of other important books about bisexuality were published in the 1970s, including Margaret Mead's *Bisexuality, What's it All About?* (1975), and Charlotte Wolff's (1979) *Bisexuality: A Study* (see Storr, 1999).

The second half of the twentieth century, therefore, saw the development of typographies and systems of categorisation that are supportive of a range of sexual identities, and that do not necessarily either erase or marginalise bisexuality. There was, to a degree, a movement away from medicalising approaches, towards nuanced models such as the KSOG which provide a means of challenging sedimented, hierarchical structures of heterosexism, and notions that only discrete heterosexual and homosexual identities exist. This trend was set within the context of the burgeoning movement for the rights of sexual minorities in the USA and the UK (see Richardson and Monro, 2012). Fox (1996) suggests that a more affirmative approach to bisexuality developed because changes in the conceptualisation of bisexuality itself, in particular more acknowledgement of bisexuality in itself as a valid identity category. He discusses the beginnings of a critical interrogation of the binary model of sexual orientation (sexual orientation is defined here as 'an individual's physical, emotional, and erotic attractions to others' by Patrick Mulick and Lester Wright 2002, p.47). Overall, therefore, the

pathologising models of bisexuality that developed during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century were to some extent supplanted by the work of later sexologists, as well as the social movements associated with gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans emancipation (see the chapter on Activism, Democracy and the State).

Key literatures

Whilst a small glut of Anglophone bisexuality-related scholarship was produced in the 1970s, little bisexual scholarship emerged in the USA and the UK between the late 1970s and the 1990s (George, 2002). During the 1990s and early 2000s there was a mushrooming of reparative bisexual studies in the USA and the UK (see Rose *et al.*, 1996, MacDowall, 2009). This was perhaps partially associated with the development of the American Institute of Bisexuality (2014). Overall, a body of literature developed which addresses the stigmatisation of bisexuality and/or its erasure of bisexuality from psychological, political, and sociological discussions. This literature includes interdisciplinary collections (for instance Firestein, 1996; Rust, 2000; and Atkins, 2002); collections drawing on – and contributing to – cultural theory (Garber, 1995; Bi Academic Intervention, 1997); psychology (Barker, 2004, 2007; Barker and Langdrige, 2008; Bowes-Catton *et al.*, 2011); education (Jones and Hillier, 2014; Robinson, 2014); anthropology (Herdt, 1984; Blackwood, 2000); sexology (Cerny and Janssen, 2011); cultural geography (Hemmings, 2002); cultural studies more broadly (for example Bryant, 1997; Braziel, 2004), feminism (Weise, 1992) and theology (Hutchins, 2002). Those contributions specifically relevant to sociologies include Paula Rust’s work on bisexual identities (1996, 2000) and Martin Weinberg *et al.*’s (1994) study of bisexuality in the San Francisco area (see also Highleyman, 1995; Steinman, 2011; Anderson *et al.*, 2014; and McCormack, 2014). Some interdisciplinary contributions are also available, notably

Fox's (2004) comprehensive annotated bibliography of literatures of relevance to bisexuality as well as the many contributions contained in the *Journal of Bisexuality*.

Whilst these studies about bisexuality have largely stemmed from people affiliated with the bisexual communities, another very substantial strand of studies has come from the medical communities as a reaction to the HIV/AIDs crisis (for example Doll and Beeker, 1996; Morrow and Allsworth, 2000; Sandfort and Dodge, 2008; and Sandfort *et al.*, 2012). Concern about HIV/AIDS transmission has been a major force behind research about bisexuality amongst males since the 1980s (Storr, 1999); this concern is reflected in the literature internationally, for example there are a large number of studies relating to Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) and HIV in China (see Yun *et al.*, 2012).

There is also some scholarship that takes a political science approach, for example Mark McLelland and Katsushiko Suganama's (2010) scholarship on sexual minorities and human rights in Japan, which documents the emergence of politicised discourses of lesbian and gay rights but notes an absence of a bisexual movement in that country to date. A substantial body of literature is emerging in Latin America relating to LGBT politics generally (see for example Corrales and Pecheney, 2010). Little Western scholarship about bisexuality speaks directly to political science. However, Surya Monro (2005), Diane Richardson and Monro (2012), Matthew Waites (2009, 2009a) and Waites and Kelly Kollman (2012) begin to integrate analysis of bisexuality with broader political science discussion of sexualities (see the chapter on Activism, Democracy and the State for a fuller literature review). There are substantial, largely anecdotal contributions concerning identity politics in the reparative bisexual literature discussed above, for example Kevin Lano (1996) (identity politics is

defined here as ‘political organizing based on membership of a group or class’ following Liz A. Highleyman 1995).

This text is situated within the social sciences branch of the bisexualities literature (specifically, sociology and political science), but also within sexuality studies more broadly. As such, it straddles (and begins to integrate) two largely disparate bodies of literature: the fairly small, largely bisexual-originated bisexualities literature discussed above, and the much larger literatures centred on sexualities and feminisms (Jackson and Scott, 1996; Richardson, 2008); queer theory (Sedgwick, 1991; Warner, 1993; Seidman, 1997); sociology (Altman, 1993; Plummer, 1996; Richardson, 2000, 2000a; Weeks, 1968, 1977, 1985, 2009), and political science (Riggle and Tadlock, 1999; Dugan, 2005 M.Smith 2008). There is some scholarship addressing other areas of sexualities that are also relevant to understanding some bisexualities, for example Robin Bauer’s (2014) study of BDSM. In addition, some of the broader sexualities literature does include bisexuality (for instance Beemyn and Eliason 1996) as does some scholarship concerning queer identities (for example Klesse’s 2007 UK-based study). However, much of the ‘LGBT’ literature either overlooks or marginalises bisexualities, or subsumes bisexualities into other identities.

Academic scholarship is, of course, specific to the social context from which it stems, and since the 1970s, the Anglophone bisexual communities have developed largely separately from the lesbian and gay communities. This may be due to a number of reasons, including exclusion and stigmatisation by lesbians and gay men, as well as a focus on different relationship and social norms (see the chapter on Sex, Relationships, Kinship and Community). Perhaps this is why, during the 1970s and subsequently, there was a silence concerning bisexuality (especially identity-based bisexuality as opposed to behavioural bisexuality) within sexuality studies, as demonstrated in the work of influential scholars, for

example Ken Plummer (1975), Lillian Faderman (1981) and others (for example Cooper 1994). For instance, Plummer discusses married men having sex with other men in public places, but does not mention bisexuality, and his typology of homosexuality (1975: 98) incorporates men who are having sex with men and women as 'homosexual', thereby rendering bisexuality invisible. It appears that erasure of bisexuality in the sexualities scholarship of this period may have been carried through into subsequent social and political science scholarship (for instance many of the contributions in Tremblay et al 2011). The sociological and political science silences regarding bisexuality seem to have been compounded by the influence of queer theory (see Warner 1993), so that the queer deconstruction of identity categories on the one hand, and the reassertion of the more dominant lesbian and gay identities on the other, has rendered bisexuality largely absent from the field of lesbian and gay (LG), LGBT and queer studies despite the inclusion of the word 'bisexual' in the 'LGBT' acronym (see the Theory chapter). Overall, therefore, this book addresses a large gap in the literature.

The definition of bisexuality and related terms

This section of the chapter provides contemporary definitions of bisexuality and examines these critically in relation to some other terms. It draws on the empirical material from the UK bisexuality project in order to demonstrate variations in definitions of bisexuality, as well as diversities concerning peoples' identification as bisexual (or not). The chapter does not provide general definitions regarding gender and sexuality, as these are well-rehearsed elsewhere (see for example Richardson and Robinson 2008).

The three historically-grounded interpretations of bisexuality outlined above (biological, gender identity or sexual identity) have continued to influence developments concerning sexuality. However, the 'bisexuality as relating to sexual identities and acts' interpretation is the most common in contemporary Anglophone society. It is worth pointing out that the term

'bi' is sometimes used as shorthand for bisexuality and bisexual people. Since the 1980s, two distinct (if overlapping) forms of bisexuality have been also been documented: bisexuality as a sexual identity, and bisexuality as sexual practices with people of different genders, which is often known as 'behavioural bisexuality' or 'situational bisexuality' (see Rust 2000, MacDowall 2009).

Overall, in Anglophone contexts, the term 'bisexual' is widely used both as an adjective to refer to sex acts and attractions to both same-sex and other-sex persons (see for example Rust 2000), and as a noun to refer to bisexual people. This usage was reflected in some of the narratives provided by bisexual people in the UK research. For example when I asked Anne how she defined bisexuality she said 'wanting to have emotional and sexual relationships with both men and women'. It is also reflected in some of the UK equalities legislation, which refers to attraction to same and other-sex people (see Mitchell et al 2008).

The notion of 'bisexuality' is itself flawed for a number of reasons. As Rust contends, 'the term *bisexual* itself is problematic because it incorporates a dualistic understanding of sexuality, in which bisexuality is composed of parts of heterosexuality and homosexuality, which many bisexuals reject (Rust 2000: xvi). For Storr (1999a), there are also difficulties with the notion of behavioural bisexuality. Like notions of identity-based bisexuality, it is dualistic and it can also involve a reductive notion of human sexuality, excluding aspects such as fantasy. The Klein Sexual Orientation Grid is broader, but as Storr argues, even this excludes aspects of sexuality such as personal body image and understanding of erogenous zones. Critiques of the notion of bisexuality also come from other sources, as indicated earlier in the chapter. As Epprecht (2006) argues, it is questionable as to whether the same/other sex sexualities found in Africa, for example, should be termed 'bisexual'.

Internationally, there are a plethora of locality and community, or ethnicity based terms for what could be seen as behavioural bisexuality, for instance the 'Down Low' (DL) lifestyle in

the USA (see Pettaway et al 2014). Being ‘on the Down Low’ involves publically identifying as heterosexual but being behaviourally bisexual. The term is associated with African American men (Heath and Goggin 2009) although according to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission LGBT Advisory Committee (undated) it is not specific to African American men. ‘Down Low’ is also problematic term, as it has become freighted with racialised stigma (see Sandfort and Dodge 2008, Ward 2008).

It is important to point out that there are also difficulties with other terms relating to sexuality, such as ‘heterosexual’, ‘lesbian’, ‘gay’ and ‘sexual orientation’. For instance, in a UK review of research about sexual orientation, Mitchell et al (2008) state that the term ‘sexual orientation’ has been criticised for being deterministic because it forces people into a particular category which might not fit their overall experience, or reflect the potentially mutable nature of sexuality. All of these labels may sediment particular sexual identities in a way that invites subjects (individuals) to erase, hide or reject some of their desires. One common thread is that all of them, except ‘behavioural bisexual’, assume a connection between identities and sexual attractions and desires. One alternative term is ‘Men who have Sex with Men’ (MSM).

The label ‘MSM’ has been taken up in international development since 2000 as ‘the preferred descriptor for myriad expressions of same-sex desire by men’ (Gosine 2006: 1). According to Gosine, including the term ‘MSM’ has been used to challenge Western frameworks of sexuality (including the LGBT system), given the ways in which terms such as ‘bisexual’ and ‘queer’ ‘were produced in particular social and economic conditions that primarily referenced metropolitan white cultural expressions of sexuality’ (2006: 3). However, the term ‘MSM’ is also problematic, because it has:

‘collapsed cultural differences between non-western (and non-white) people and marked them as “Others”. *Kothis* in Bangladesh, *Ibbi* in Senegal, *Yan dauda* in Nigeria, *African-*

American men “on the down low” in the USA, and *hijra* in India are collectively tagged “MSM” despite speaking different languages, holding different religious beliefs, occupying different social positions in various environmental spaces, and being engaged in different kinds of sexual practices and emotional relationships’ (Gosine 2006: 3).

Discussions about sexuality internationally also appear to be biased towards male sexualities, perhaps because of the focus on HIV/AIDS transmission that funds and fuels much of the work, but the term Women who have Sex with Women (WSW) is also used. The notion of ‘MSM’ has now been followed by the development of the terms ‘Men who have Sex with Men and Women’ (MSMW), and ‘Women who have Sex with Men and Women’ (WSMW) which are used to cover what could also be interpreted as behavioural bisexuality (see San Francisco Human Rights Commission LGBT Advisory Committee undated). There are other, related, terms, for example ‘Married Men who have Sex with Men’ (MMSM) (Hudson 2013).

There are other alternatives to the terms ‘bisexual’ and ‘bisexuality’. In Anglophone societies, these include ‘metrosexual’, which is used to denote liberal tolerance (see Balding 2013). This term is problematic because it uses notions of urban living and culture as markers of sexual diversity. More useful terms include ‘pansexual’ and ‘omnisexual’ (both mean being attracted to people of all genders, see Barker et al 2012). Alternative terms were discussed by some of the research contributors, for example Lena said, ‘I like the idea of polymorphous perversity and all that, it’s all old fashioned sixties...life lived as the erotic in sensibly non-erotic settings, that could be a really political [thing]’.

Some of the contributors to the UK bisexuality research used other identities instead of, or as well as, bisexual, including ‘pansexual’ and ‘queer’. The organised UK bisexual community has been strongly influenced by the increase in visibility of transgender and gender-diverse people (see the chapter on Sex, Relationships, Kinship and Community), so that overall there

has been a shift within the community to modelling bisexuality as about attraction to people of all genders rather than just men and women. Being transgender or gender-diverse and also bisexual may lend a further layer of complexity to understanding sexuality. This is demonstrated in a quote from by Dave, who is transgender:

I also feel my own sexuality is nuanced; I have emotional attraction generally to women, and sexual attraction to men. And when I put people in those categories I'm talking about their identity rather than their physical body type. It is quite complex because I'm talking about a range of different types of people, gender identities, physical features, that sort of thing...there is something about the process of [gender] transitioning and what it actually means in terms of who you are attracted to...sometimes transition is a game-changer.

For Dave, and some other research contributors, then, there was a more expanded and fluid use of the term 'bisexual' taking place than the binary definition outlined at the start of this section. There is a further approach, where bisexuality is associated with the rejection of sexual identity categories (somewhat paradoxically), sometimes associated with queer identities (see the Theory chapter). The rejection of categories was fairly common amongst the UK research contributors. For example, Lena who is cisgendered, remarked that:

I think of it [bisexuality] as an openness to all experiences and a rejection of binaries... a rejection of binaries in all aspects of my life really. I really abhor all kinds of conventional conformist categories, I really reject categories, I always have done.

A number of other research contributors identified as 'queer' rather than 'bisexual', using the term 'queer' to denote 'non-heterosexual'. It seems that, in the UK, the definitions of the terms 'bisexual' and 'bisexuality' have evolved from a binaristic focus, in response to queer politics and the rise of the transgender and gender-diverse movements. This is evident in the UK in the report by Meg Barker et al (2012) (quote one) and in the interview material (quote two):

[bisexuals are] People who experience their sexual identities as fluid and changeable over time... People who see their attraction as “regardless of gender” (other aspects of people are more important in determining who they are attracted to)...People who dispute the idea that there are only two genders (2012: 11)

...I meet more and more people and I read the testimonies or more and more people who do use bisexuality much more in order to signify a particular ambiguous gender identity or shifting gender identity or a rejection of certain gender identities, a sort of transgender identity...sometimes also in combination with other terms [such as transgender] (Christian Klesse)

This book uses the following definition of bisexuality: ‘attraction to people of more than one gender’, and the following definitions of bisexuals: ‘people who are attracted to other people who are of more than one gender’. It is acknowledged that this is a strategic move that overlooks the binary composition of the word. A full(er) evolution of terminology would require development of terms for desire between people of different genders (for example an androgyne and a gender transient person) as well as further destabilisation of heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities as discrete, complete categories – or alternatively, the use of terms such as ‘non-heterosexual’ and ‘queer’. However, there are also difficulties with the latter (see the Theory chapter). In addition, given that heterosexuality is an aspect of bisexuality (opposite-sex desires/sexualities are usually an aspect of bisexual people’s behaviours and identities); the use of the term ‘non-heterosexuals’ does not work well when applied to bisexuals.

Biphobia and the erasure of bisexuality

The term ‘biphobia’ was introduced by Kathleen Bennett to mean ‘prejudice against bisexuality’ (1992: 205) and ‘the denigration of bisexuality as a life-choice’ (1992:207).

‘Biphobia’ has subsequently been defined as ‘any portrayal or discourse denigrating or

criticizing men or women on the sole ground of their belonging to this [bisexual] sociosexual identity, or refusing them the right to claim it' (Welzer-Lang 2008: 82, see also Barker and Langdrige 2008, Barker et al 2012). It can also be termed 'antibisexual attitudes' (McLean 2008). 'Biphobia' can be related to other terms, such as 'double discrimination' (Ochs 1996); the discrimination that bisexual people can face from both heterosexual and lesbian/gay people. Another term that has recently been introduced is 'bisexual burden', which denotes the additional stress that bisexuals may experience, as compared to lesbians and gay men (see Anderson et al 2014).

Biphobia can be modelled using a typology developed by Daniel Welzer-Lang (2008), who conducted a survey about biphobia with approximately 90 French individuals. 59% of respondents were neutral, or pro-bisexuality. Welzer-Lang categorised the biphobic responses (41%) in the following way:

[i] Strict (or direct) biphobia, which includes seeing bisexuals as indecisive, hypocritical, or promiscuous, or indeed as 'not existing' (10% of the sample);

[ii] Liberal biphobia, which manifests as a concern with boundaries and with positioning bisexuals outside of the community of lesbians and gay men, so that bisexuals have to prove their allegiance to the gay and lesbian communities before being included despite the existence of the LGBT acronym (5%);

[iii] The refusal to recognise bisexuality as a valid social category; this can manifest as outright denial that bisexual people exist (see above), or as the view that categorisation as a bisexual is unnecessary whilst continuing to support 'lesbian' and 'gay' as social categories (12%);

[iv] Pathologisation: Bisexuality is seen as a psychiatric diagnosis and linked to a supposed inability to choose between men and women (4.5%)

This typology provides a useful means of analysing different types of biphobia. Overall, biphobia can be seen as a manifestation of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence means the imposition of systems of meaning on groups of people (see Jenkins 1992: 104) which impact on their lives in negative ways, so that ‘the violence which is exercised upon individuals in a symbolic, rather than a physical, way. It may take the form of people being denied resources, treated as inferior, or being limited in terms or realistic aspirations’ (Webb et al 2002: xvi). There are concerns about whether ‘biphobia’ can actually be classed as a phobia, in the psychiatric sense, in the same way that there are questions about ‘homophobia’ (see Mulick and Wright, 2002, 2011). However, the notion of ‘homophobia’ provides a discursive resource for individuals and collectivises to name and respond to their oppression (Bryant and Vidal-Ortiz 2012:387); the term ‘biphobia’ is similarly deployed in this book.

Biphobia and other forms of discrimination

Bisexual people may experience homophobia, as well as biphobia. The term ‘homophobia’ which has been defined as a fear of homosexuality and homosexuals (Weinberg 1972). Biphobia is also linked with other forms of prejudice, including erotophobia (fear of eroticism), prejudice against people who have more than one sexual partner (see Klesse 2005), and AIDS-phobia (Wright et al 2011, see also Monro 2005). There are also a range of cross-cutting forms of structural discrimination that intersect with biphobia in diverse ways (see the Chapter on Intersectionality). According to Mulick and Wright (2011), bisexual men appear to experience higher levels of biphobia than do bisexual women and in different ways; the stereotype is that ‘bisexual men are dangerous whereas bisexual women are titillating and not to be taken seriously’ (Owen 2011: 495, see also Klesse 2005). Patterns of racial

discrimination also affect the types of biphobia experienced by individuals. For example the San Francisco Human Rights Commission LGBT Advisory Committee (undated) analysed medical texts to demonstrate that African American MSWM are more heavily stigmatised than MSWM of other ethnicities whilst Beverly Greene (2000) analyses the complex ways in which racism and sexism shape the lives of African American lesbians and bisexual women. In the UK research, it was clear that the term 'biphobia' is not in universal use; some contributors to the research did not know the term or rejected it in favour of broader terms such as 'prejudice'. A few individuals felt that they had not experienced any discrimination due to their sexual orientation. In several other cases, people reported facing biphobia from heterosexuals, and lesbians and gay men. For example:

I have experienced biphobia in quite a few different forms, some from people telling me I shouldn't identify as bi (because I'm in a stable relationship), some from people telling me they were fine with gay people but thought bi people should have to 'make up their minds', and a huge amount of biphobia from my parents, who said I was just 'polymorphously perverse' and clearly this bi thing was just a phase, and then later conveyed to me that they thought I was lying about my sexuality in order to rebel. They reasoned that bi people were diseased and perverted, and I hadn't died of sexually transmitted diseases yet, so clearly I must be lying (Elisabeth)

In an international context, prejudice against bisexuals manifests via a plethora of terms and practices. For example in Colombia, there has been an issue with some lesbians and gay men seeing bisexuals as 'confused' homosexuals or 'disorientated' lesbians that at some point are going to construct their identity based on some of the traditional gay or lesbian dichotomies and turn back to the lesbian, gay and transgender (LGT) mainstream. Terms such as "*Lesboflexible*" "*Homoflexible*" "*Bicurioso*" or "*Heteroflexibles*" are some examples of some

terms and words that the LGT community in Colombia have been using. This phenomenon is discussed by Colombian research contributor Carlos as follows:

I think the people that are more aggressive to bisexuals are the gay community, because they can't understand our sexuality and preferences, and they believe that we are just a couple of undecided people... and this is really really difficult because the gay community think that bisexual people don't know what they want and just want to have fun...

International aspects of biphobia will be discussed in more depth in some of the subsequent chapters, including the chapters on Intersectionality, and on Activism, Democracy, and the State.

Understanding biphobia

Overall, biphobia can be seen to stem from a combination of pathologising socio-medical discourses as discussed above, and the formation of the rigid, discrete identity categories of 'lesbian' and 'gay man', which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s in the West. The notion of 'homosexuality', like 'bisexuality', describes certain types of sexual *acts and desires* rather than sexual *identities*. The terms 'lesbian' and 'gay' were used in the 1970s and 1980s by people with unidirectional sexual desires to depathologise homosexuality. These labels were used to help foster resistance to the oppression of people engaging in same-sex desires and sexual acts. However, in so doing, the lesbian and gay identities that were forged became exclusive and excluding of people who included both heterosexual and homosexual desires/acts within their subjectivities; bisexuals were shut out by people seeking to consolidate discrete lesbian and gay identities (see for example Monro 2005). This meant that there was an ontological erasure of bisexuality, so that 'serving as the contested middle

ground between heterosexuality and homosexuality, bisexuality must ultimately disappear in order to prop up theories of hetero/homosexual difference' (James 1996: 218).

The erasure of bisexuality is widely apparent, for example in the UK policy-related literature. For instance the report *Profiles of Prejudice: The Nature of Prejudice in England: In-Depth Findings* is described as having 'sought to address the extent and nature of prejudice against minority groups' (Citizenship 21 undated, p.7), however, whilst it includes lesbians and gay men throughout, it completely ignores bisexuals. Other areas where bisexual erasure is very apparent include the media (Barker and Langdridge, 2008; Barker, 2012), service provision, and political representation (Richardson and Monroe, 2012). Biphobia is also present within academic spaces. The erasure or marginalisation of bisexuality by lesbian and gay theorists, as mentioned above, cuts across many areas of scholarship, including queer scholarship. As Clare Hemmings argues, the queer theoretical resistance to bisexuality is dual in nature: '...bisexuality has been understood as undermining lesbian or gay claims to legitimacy, bringing opposite-sex relationships very firmly into the frame' (Hemmings, 2007, p.14) and at the same time bisexuality is seen to 'reproduce the oppositional identity categories that queer theorists wanted to challenge' (Hemmings, 2007, p.14). There are some indications that biphobia may be lessening in the UK; notably, a small qualitative study of bisexual teenage girls in the UK shows a lack of experiences of biphobia, and that any biphobia that girls experienced on coming out dissipated due to bi-positive peer pressures (Anderson *et al.*, 2014), but more research would be needed to explore if this is a wider trend.

Biphobia has material impacts, affecting the lived experiences of bisexual people (see Barker *et al.*, 2012). It also affects wider notions of what is possible in terms of sexual orientation, affecting heterosexuals, lesbians, gay men, and others. The causes of discrimination against

bisexuals and bisexuality can be seen to stem from the structural erasure; both heterosexuals and homosexuals have an investment in the maintenance of a binary (heterosexual-homosexual) which, because heterosexuality and homosexuality are constructed against each other and do not allow for any middle ground or porosity, actively elides bisexuality and bisexual subjectivities (MacDowall, 2009; and see James, 1996 and Hemmings, 2007). For Collins (2013), the stigmatisation of bisexual identities acts to reinforce heterosexual and homosexual binaries. As noted above, there are other forces behind the erasure and stigmatisation of bisexuality, including those relating to monosexism and mononormativity (these concern the privileging of single-gender sexual orientations, see Bennett, 1992; and Barker *et al.*, 2012), homophobia, and sexism. In any sociological analysis of a phenomenon, it is crucial to consider the way in which individuals negotiate, resist and rework structural forces, and subsequent chapters will also pay heed to the ways in which bisexual people forge their social worlds as active agents (see Cashmore and Tuason, 2009).

Overview of the book chapters

Bisexuality and Social Theory

Social theory provides a number of tools with which to develop an understanding of bisexuality. Interactionist theory can be used to analyse the construction of bisexual identities, and how and why bisexuality is stigmatised. Poststructuralist theory provides a way of further interrogating identity construction, and the erasure and ‘othering’ of the multiple, fluid sexualities associated with bisexuality. Queer and post-structuralist approaches can be used to theorise bisexual resistances to normativity, as well as the overlaps between the bisexual and transgender communities. Sociological analysis of bisexuality would, however, be incomplete without grounding it in materialist analysis, which can be used to

explain why bisexuals occupy socially marginal positions in relation to the reproduction of labour, and why bisexuality is commodified and hypersexualised in certain contexts and not in others.

Intersectionality and Bisexuality

Intersectionality theory has produced some sophisticated mechanisms for understanding the construction of identities and the social relations in which individuals are embedded. It can be used to understand diversity within groups and the ways in which categories such as 'bisexual' can be used strategically. Intersectionality theory can be used to understand and model the ways in which bisexuality is cross-cut by other social characteristics such as nationality, ethnicity, ability, gender, and age. These intersections are extremely relevant to the bisexual community, where diversity concerning health, ability and age is noticeable, but ethnicity less so. The chapter provides an analysis of the ways in which Indian bisexualities can be analysed using intersectionality approaches. It also includes a UK-specific analysis of the intersections concerning race, faith and bisexuality.

Sex, Relationships, Kinship and Community

This chapter maps out the UK bisexual community and provides some insight into the communities with which it overlaps. These communities have different, sometimes highly divergent, sets of underpinning norms and values. Some, including the 'out' bisexual community and the kink community, have strongly developed forms of habitus, and kinship-type links, and in this context it is possible to examine not only sexuality-related practices of intimacy, but also those associated with care for the ill and disabled, children, and older people. These communities and their practices can be viewed as a form of social capital, and

they contribute to civil society. From a materialist perspective, many of their practices fall outside of the remit of organised capitalism, placing these communities in a marginal position as compared to the heterosexual, lesbian and gay communities.

Bisexuality, Organisations, and Capitalism

This chapter examines the lived experiences of bisexuals within workplace organisations, drawing on material from the UK and the US. It addresses the issues which bisexuals face concerning ‘outness’, given the high levels of stigma associated with the identity and the complex ways in which bisexuals can manage prejudice. The chapter also explores, by way of contrast, the sectors in which bisexuality and related forms of sexuality are commodified. These include the use of expressly bisexual imagery/action (female-female sex performed for a male consumer) in pornography and sex work, and the use of female-female eroticism within the music industry. The chapter explicates the ways in which the commodification of certain types of bisexuality is highly gendered. This commodification fuels notions of the hypersexualisation of bisexuality, and impacts negatively on some groups of bisexuals. It also addresses the ambivalences that some research contributors expressed towards the commodification of bisexuality.

Citizenship

This chapter adopts, in a critical fashion, concepts from mainstream, feminist and sexual citizenships and applies them to bisexuality. In so doing it aims to provide insight into some of the issues facing bisexuals, and also to inform the development of citizenship studies, particularly in relation to sexual and intimate citizenships. Citizenship rights are important for

bisexual people, given the ways in which bisexuals are marginalised and stigmatised. However, there are tensions between reformist or assimilationist trends within bisexual politics, in which bisexuals seek to become part of the ‘mainstream’, and the queer and highly diverse identities and strategies found in the bisexual communities, which cannot easily be assimilated into heteronormative citizenship frameworks. Another issue concerns the tensions between particularist, or bisexual-specific, activist aims and policy interventions, and more universalist approaches, which include bisexuals within citizenship discourse alongside other populations. The chapter addresses these issues, via an analysis of the citizenship agendas of bisexual people in the UK.

Bisexuality, Activism, Democracy, and the State

This chapter provides a contribution to an empirically-based political science of bisexuality. It addresses the ways in which bisexual activism has developed, and the ways in which rights claims are made - and in some cases rejected - by bisexual people. It looks at activism, participative democracy, and the state in two contrasting countries: Colombia and the UK. For each of these countries, the trajectory of bisexual activism will be traced, and bisexual activist relationships with the LGBT (in Colombia) and the lesbian and gay (in the UK) movements will be examined. The chapter will address activist strategies and actions in each of these countries, including the ways in which bisexuals have engaged with the state via participative democratic mechanisms. The chapter finishes by exploring some themes that emerge from comparative analysis of bisexual activism in both countries.