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‘Invisible minorities’: Challenging community and neighbourhood models of policing

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Abstract
This article explores challenges that non-normative sexualities, in particular ‘lesbian’ and ‘gay’ generate for ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ models and practices of policing. It pursues this objective by way of a series of reflections arising out of a number of encounters with lesbians and gay men, the police, policy makers and activists all of whom have been involved in an ongoing project of generating debate, building policies and changing the day-to-day operation of policing in England and Wales. These encounters occurred over a five-year period in several different geographical and institutional locations. The article concludes with a critique of two themes that connect these incidents: the use of the ‘minority model’ lesbian and gay community and the use of ‘stranger danger’ as the model of homophobic violence to explain that community’s distinctive experience of violence.

Key Words
lesbian and gay • minority community • policing • post-identity • stranger danger

Introduction
This article explores the challenges that non-normative sexualities, in particular ‘lesbian’ and ‘gay’ generate for ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ models and practices of policing. It pursues this objective by way of a series of
reflections arising out of a number of encounters with lesbians and gay men, the police, policy makers and activists all of whom have been involved in an ongoing project of generating debate, building policies and changing the day-to-day operation of policing in England and Wales. These encounters occurred over a five-year period in several different geographical and institutional locations.² The first incident I want to reflect upon is the experience of conducting two citizens’ inquiries in 2000. These were undertaken in two locations, Lancaster and Manchester that are little more than 50 miles apart. The inquiries were part of a funded research project. Lesbians and gay men came together with other individuals (policy makers, senior administrators, the police, politicians, activists) that they had identified as local ‘key informants’ to discuss criminal justice and policing issues relating to homophobic violence and safety. The next three encounters all occurred between 2000 and 2006 in the context of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Group (LGBT AG) of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The first relates to the ongoing dialogue about the establishment and operation of LGBT liaison officers in the MPS. The second arises out of participation in meetings in 2005 with the MPS relating to the development of their ‘Safer Neighbourhood’ initiative. The third focuses upon the use of police data about homophobic violence in various police settings where police experiences and perceptions of homophobic violence and policing strategies were under discussion. My last example draws upon experiences of working in a voluntary capacity with GALOP, a London-based LGBT anti-violence and police monitoring charity in 2004. GALOP was commissioned by the crime and disorder partnerships of two south London boroughs, Bexley and Greenwich, to undertake research on LGBT experiences of homophobic violence that had the objective of bridging a perceived gap between police and community data relating to those experiences. My reflection is based upon a series of encounters with members of the crime and disorder partnership that arose out of undertaking a victim survey of LGBT people. Drawing on all of these experiences I offer an analysis of the challenges that the formation and institutionalization of the sexual subject/citizen may raise for community and neighbourhood models of policing. I consider the insights and lessons that can be drawn from these various incidents and experiences involving encounters between ‘invisible minorities’ and policing.

Lancaster and Manchester citizens’ inquiries 2000

The Lancaster and Manchester citizens’ inquiries³ were undertaken as part of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded research project: Violence, Sexuality and Space.⁴ The project was an interdisciplinary study of how sustainable ‘safe’ ‘public’ spaces are created in response to homophobic violence, exploring personal, community, commercial and institutional responses to threatened and actual violence.⁵ The research team began gathering data in May 1998 using four different methods: surveys; structured
interviews with key informants; focus group discussions with lesbians, gay men and straight women; and information from official sources and the media. The citizens’ inquiries were in many respects the climax of the data-gathering phase of the research and also a mechanism for generating policy proposals. Focus groups in the two research locations had generated data and discussed the other research data produced by the project. All the focus group discussions were reviewed and policy themes isolated. These were then subject to review and comment by focus group participants in their final meetings. The resulting policy statements provided the core agenda for the two citizens’ inquiries. The Lancaster and Manchester focus groups then came together in their respective locations with local key informants they had identified to discuss the substance and application of these policies. The dialogue and final reflections of the citizen participants were then incorporated into a report circulated to all parties (Corteen et al., 2000).

My reflection focuses not so much on the important policy proposals generated through this process but on the nature of the encounter between the lesbian and gay focus group participants and the local government, police and other key informants in the two research locations, Lancaster and Manchester. In Lancaster the inquiry generated considerable excitement and enthusiasm. Neither was a feature of the Manchester meeting where proceedings were more muted.

In Lancaster, in good part, the excitement was a reflection of the novelty of the event. Key informants identified the inquiry as a new departure. It was the first time that lesbian and gay perspectives on a range of policy issues had been heard, particularly in local government. Anne Seex, then Director of Community Services with the Lancaster City Council explained that the City Council was not, ‘at the forefront of equality and diversity issues’ and that there was a ‘degree of ignorance’ (Seex, in Corteen et al., 2000: 11). It was also the first encounter between some of the key informants and the institutions they represented and lesbians and gay men in that location. Anne Seex concluded, ‘one of the benefits of the research’ was to facilitate this encounter (Seex, in Corteen et al., 2000: 12). She expressed a hope that it would not be the only encounter; that members of the focus groups would, on a future occasion, be willing to talk directly to the Council and a selection of Council officers.

The Manchester inquiry offered a sharp contrast. All key informants began their response to the citizens’ policy statement by drawing attention to the established tradition of engagement with and support for lesbian and gay matters. They also highlighted the changes that had already taken place in relation to safety and policing (Corteen et al., 2000: 21). There was no suggestion here of novelty in this encounter.

There was also much less interest in the contributions made by the citizens. Key informant responses seemed to be inflected by way of a certain jaded familiarity with the policy issues. The ‘community needs’ appeared to have been already conceptualized. And the professionals evidenced a desire to have a stake in identifying and articulating those needs. They emphasized
the ongoing difficulties and challenges of attempts to sustain interest in the issues and the problems of achieving change. They also highlighted some of the problems and limits of policies, in particular the enduring preoccupation with issues and policies focusing on ‘the gay village’. In sharp contrast, in Lancaster the key informants all indicated that the policy initiatives put forward by the citizens made a new contribution to various key debates. How might these differences be explained?

Barely 50 miles apart much separates these two locations. Lancaster is a small city in the north-west of England. Education, health and local government dominate its economic infrastructure. Predominantly white working and lower middle class the higher education sector adds significantly to its racial and ethnic diversity. While the city has had numerous commercial venues (clubs and bars) that have attracted significant numbers of lesbians and gay men, they tend to have been sequential rather than simultaneous operations, and of short duration (sometimes running for little more than a couple of hours on a particular night once a month, sometimes surviving several months). Voluntary organizations, such as the local gay switchboard, tend to be part time, small in scale, grassroots and individual in focus. A map of the various locations of the commercial venues and community organizations suggests that they have occupied marginal spaces in the city, on the edge of the city centre, off the major thoroughfares, down a cobbled alley, across an empty block of land (a shopper’s car park), below ground in the cellar of a building, behind unmarked doors, known only to those who can read the signs and apparently unknown to the general population.

In short this is a ‘community’ that may be characterized as ‘invisible’. This perceived invisibility is read as absence. The excitement generated by the Lancaster inquiry, I want to suggest, was about the moment of ‘discovery’ of lesbians and gay men and the ‘lesbian and gay community’ both of which seem to have been largely missing from existing perceptions and expectations of the community that is Lancaster.

Manchester on the other hand is a city at the heart of a major conglomeration with a diverse population. It has a high-profile ‘gay village’. This area, on the southern border of the city centre, has a high concentration of sustainable gay (and to a lesser extent lesbian) commercial venues and voluntary organizations. It is clearly marked and highly visible, operating at street level and on the street; maps, guides, banners and a variety of bold signs mark its location. The venues have large windows not only enabling occupants to see but with an intention that the occupants be seen by all who pass by. Nor is the visibility of the ‘gay village’ just local. It has a national and international visibility as the location for a successful TV series, Queer as Folk (Skeggs et al., 2005). Its visibility is also an effect of local global campaigns to promote economic regeneration and tourism as the sign of Manchester’s cosmopolitanism and its respect for diversity (Moran et al., 2004a: ch. 7). Manchester City Council has a relatively long history of engagement with lesbians and gay men, of policies and officers focusing on lesbian and gay issues (Quilley, 1997). Manchester was also the first police
service in the UK to develop a hate crime initiative focusing on homophobic violence (Moran, 2007a).

Manchester’s ‘gay village’ is a social and cultural concentration that generates a location and gives symbolic form to the idea of the gay (and to a lesser extent the lesbian)8 community. In this particular location the invisibility, absence and silence associated with lesbian and gay life appear to have come to an end. Key informant concerns about the central role of ‘the gay village’ in debates about policy in general and policies relating to policing and homophobic violence in particular resonate with Castell’s insights that spatial concentration plays a key role in the generation of debates, policies and initiatives promoting sexual social justice (Castells and Murphy, 1982; Castells, 1983). But the experience of Manchester also seems to warn of a more negative consequence. Policies and initiatives dedicated to social justice generated in and through that spatial concentration might have their limits. In adjoining locations (be it in other parts of Manchester or 50 miles further north in Lancaster) social injustice, and the invisibility, absence and silence associated with it, may persist.9

The contrasting experience between these two locations is at least in part one of invisibility in contrast to visibility,10 of absence rather than presence, of silence as opposed to voice. Following Seidman I want to suggest that a central feature of this movement to visibility, presence and voice is the inauguration of ‘a homosexual subject’ (and I would add ‘citizen’) (Phelan, 2001), which Seidman explains, is ‘the dominant foundational concept of both homophobic and affirmative homosexual theory’ (1994: 173).

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Group

While the contrast between Lancaster and Manchester suggests that the (homo)sexual subject/citizen is not the same, not equally developed and institutionalized in different police, criminal justice and public safety settings, even within relatively proximate locations, it does not suggest that this persona is peculiar to Manchester. The (homo)sexual subject/citizen is also an established figure on the urban landscape of London. While a genealogy of its complex development and its various manifestations in that context are beyond the scope of this article I would suggest that there is more than sufficient evidence and scholarship to indicate that criminal justice, policing and public order settings have long been important contexts in which this subject/citizen has been forged, mobilized and institutionalized. And London has been a key (but not the only) site11 of its formation (Weeks, 1977, 1981; Gay Left Collective, 1980; Moran, 1996; Cook, 2003). Of particular importance here is London as one of the first places in the UK where this sexual subject emerged in and through challenges to police hostility to the emerging post-1967 (post-decriminalized) gay and lesbian public cultures and spaces. Community organizations such as GALOP and LESPOP12 and local government institutions such as the Greater London Council (the GLC) were some of its institutional settings. Earls Court,
Soho, Lambeth, Hackney and Hampstead Heath were some of its geographical locations.

The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Advisory Group (LGBT AG) is one of the most recent police institutional settings where the (homo)sexual subject is being forged and deployed. It is an initiative established in 2000 promoted and funded by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in the wake of (and in response to) the bombing of the Admiral Duncan, a gay pub in London’s Soho in 1999 in which several people died and many were injured. The LGBT AG is one of several MPS ‘independent advisory groups’. Hall suggests that one of the principal architects of the advisory group initiatives within the MPS, John Grieve, saw independent involvement as an important representation of ‘visible openness and accountability [helping] to challenge the mindsets and assumptions held by the police that have often proved barriers to the effective policing of minority groups’ (2005: 204–5).

A recent review of the operation of these advisory groups defined ‘independent advisory group’ as, ‘A group that is constituted to help develop a genuine partnership between the Metropolitan Police Service and London’s community’ (MPS, 2007: Appendix 1). The term ‘independent’ gives the advisory group its distinctive qualities. As an independent group the objective is that its members are independent of the police, of other advisors, of government, of other governmental organizations. The definition of the term continues, ‘An independent advisor may be a representative of a community but does not represent a community’ (MPS, 2007: Appendix 1). So while the LGBT AG has been largely funded, supported and housed by the MPS it is ‘independent’ of that police organization. As ‘independent advisors’ the LGBT AG members are not ‘representatives of’ the LGBT communities or organizations but more individuals (all of whom self identify in some way as L, G, B, or T and many of whom have links with LGBT organizations) from those communities with diverse experiences, knowledges and skills that might assist in the task of giving advice, guidance or constructive critical appraisal … to challenge and inform police decision making’ (MPS, 2007: Appendix 1) in relation to police service needs and issues relating to the delivery of police services to the LGBT peoples and communities.

The first MPS advisory group, called the Independent Advisory Group (IAG), was concerned with bridging gaps between the police and black and minority ethnic communities. The LGBT AG, the second advisory group created by the MPS, has the objective of bridging gaps between the police and LGBT communities, generating sustainable closer links. Both independent advisory groups presuppose ‘community’. The advisory group model institutionalizes it as a resource, making links (building bridges) with it. The move from lesbian and gay to LGBT (and sometimes in some places the addition of ‘Q’) does not so much undermine or challenge the ‘minority community’ assumption but in the multiplication of communities, it reinforces it.

I want to focus on three experiences I have had as a member of the LGBT AG. The first relates to a recurring and ongoing demand of the group as a whole and its ‘Consistency of Service’ subcommittee in particular for the
establishment of a lesbian gay bisexual transgender liaison officer (LGBT LO) in each London borough. My experience of LGBT AG’s commitment to this objective and the work that AG members have undertaken to realize it has been one of a slow march and a long battle against (at best) institutional inertia and at times institutional resistance.

Discussions, debates and initiatives relating to LGBT LOs have been wide ranging. All have taken place in the context of a constantly changing organizational setting. The point of departure was LGBT LOs established on an ad hoc basis, located in boroughs that had a ‘public’ commercial gay scene. In response, a key objective was to establish the fundamental principle that each Borough should have an LGBT LO. An ongoing challenge, that might in the first instance appear to be a more simple objective, was the establishment and maintenance of an accurate ‘living’ list of post holders including names and contact details, which has in reality proved to be an almost impossible task. In between what might be characterized as these two ‘extremes’ (of basic principle and fine detail) the agenda and interventions have covered a wide range of topics; about the nature of the post (a voluntary unfunded ‘extra’, part-time or full-time funded), the details of the job specification, the qualities and characteristics of the post holders (to be or not to be filled by L, G, B or T officers), the training requirements, the need for networks of communication between LGBT LOs to enable experiences and expertise to be shared between those in the post, raising the profile of the LOs within the organization (creating basic knowledge of their existence as well as an understanding of their role), to problems of retention of post holders and the consistency of the service delivered by the post holders. And this agenda while exhausting is far from exhaustive. While there have been changes leading to the establishment of LGBT LOs across the MPS there are ongoing problems even at the most basic level of service. For example, some six years into the process journalists were still reporting that operators of the Metropolitan Police switchboard appeared to have no knowledge of LGBT LOs (Shoffman, 2006).

At times the LGBT AG has played a role supporting and championing those with community expertise within the MPS as they negotiated institutional inertia and resistance. More generally, it has taken the form of battling against recurring invisibility, absence and silence. Which brings me to my second example, a series of meetings between the LGBT’s ‘Consistency of Service’ sub-committee and officers from the MPS team involved in developing the Safer Neighbourhoods initiative and protocols.

These meetings occurred some five years into the life of the LGBT AG and after multiple interventions by the AG with respect to many if not all aspects of policing. The first meeting addressing the Safer Neighbourhoods initiative had a depressing déjà vu feel to it. It was as if the impact of the LGBT AG’s five years of work with the police had largely evaporated, as if it had almost never happened. The Safer Neighbourhoods initiative appeared to have been formed with the usual assumptions of the spatial and substantive cohesion and the homogeneity of community and more specifically with little regard to the existence of LGBT people or recognition of their
experiences or needs within ‘the’ community/neighbourhood. In short the (homo)sexual subject/citizen had gone missing; it was as if that subject had once again become invisible. The LGBT AG response was to work with the Safer Neighbourhoods team representatives to put that figure back into the police imagination, back into their idea of ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’. The encounter seemed to highlight the limits to cultural change, the ongoing reproduction of invisibility, and the hard labour needed by LGBT people to change the sexual agenda.

These experiences in part raise matters that echoed some of the concerns expressed by key informants in Manchester, that policies and initiatives dedicated to social justice generated in and through that spatial concentration (which tends to focus on leisure and entertainment spaces used mainly by gay men) might have their limits. In adjoining locations (other boroughs in the context of LGBT LOs) or in other proximate but different spatial and social configurations of a communal life such as neighbourhood, social injustice and the invisibility, absence and silence associated with it, may persist.

The third and final LGBT AG experience I want to refer to has a rather different focus. It concerns my use of police data on homophobic incidents. More specifically it relates to various responses in LGBT AG settings and more specifically in meetings with the police, to the use of an analysis of police data undertaken as part of an MPS/Home Office funded study, ‘Understanding and Responding to Hate Crime’ (URHC).

A unique feature of the URHC study is its focus upon routinely collected police data. Taking London-wide routinely collected police data of incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, race and homophobic hate crime the URHC research team, headed by Professor Betsy Stanko, undertook an analysis of that data and produced a series of fact sheets containing key findings with respect to each substantive area (Stanko et al., 2003).

The Homophobic Violence Fact Sheet (URHC, undated) was based on an analysis of 754 homophobic incidents reported to the police between January and June 2001. At the time of the study (and it remains the case) the MPS data set was the largest body of systematically recorded information about experiences of homophobic violence in any area of the UK. The fact sheet offers a snapshot of some key features of the experiences of homophobic violence captured in this routinely collected police data. For example, a minority of incidents recorded were categorized as incidents of ‘violence’. ‘Threats’ and ‘damage to property’ make almost a majority of recorded incidents. Most homophobic incidents (three in four) involved one victim and one perpetrator. The study reported a disparity between the ages of a majority of the victims, between 21 and 40, and the age of suspects, with a significant number (over 40%) being under 20.

Some findings mirror aspects of the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence. For example most reported incidents are against men. There were seven male victims of violence for every female victim. An initial analysis of the perpetrator/victim relationship formally recorded on the incident files suggested that in almost 65 per cent of the incidents reported no relationship
existed between perpetrator and victim, being described as either ‘unknown’ or ‘no relationship’.

Other findings challenge this model of violence. In particular, some question the validity of what appears to be the dominant belief that most reported incidents fit the ‘stranger danger’ model. For example, contrary to the expectation that most violence takes place in the late evening/early morning the URHC analysis found a large proportion of the reported violence occurred in the afternoon and early evening: between 15:00 and 21:00 (URHC, undated).

Other challenges arise from the findings of a more detailed analysis of 101 homophobic incidents reported in January 2001. The analysis revealed that the police data contained much more information about the patterns of victimization than had originally been thought to be the case. Beginning with the perpetrator/victim relationship, the dominant category formally recorded in the homophobic incident police data was ‘no relationship/unknown’. In total 65 per cent of the incidents reported were categorized in this way. In the first instance, this would appear to support the belief that ‘strangers’ are the most common perpetrator of homophobic violence.

However, a detailed re-reading and re-analysis of the January 2001 data produced a different picture of the interpersonal dimensions of the reported violence. ‘Partner/ex-partner’ rose from 2 per cent to 4 per cent. ‘Family’ increased from 0.3 per cent to 2.0 per cent. ‘Business associate’ changed from 2.7 per cent to 4 per cent. As a result of the re-reading of the police data two new categories of ‘perpetrator’ were introduced: ‘neighbours’ and ‘locals/local youths’. Almost 21 per cent of ‘no relationship/unknown’ perpetrators were now identified as ‘neighbours’. Nearly 28 per cent were ‘locals/local youths’. The ‘no relationship/unknown’ (stranger) now appeared to account for less than 15 per cent of perpetrators.

The re-analysis also challenged commonly held spatial assumptions and expectations about homophobic violence associated with the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence: the predominance of incidents in ‘public space’. Re-analysis suggested that a minority of reported incidents (under 40%) now appeared to relate to incidents in public places, being made up of 17.8 per cent in the street, just under 10 per cent in or near bars and clubs and 3 per cent near cruising grounds. Over 50 per cent of incidents are reported as taking place in or near the home (53.5%). The major challenge here is the importance of the home and its immediate environs as a location of homophobic violence. The violence in the relatively anonymous locales of the street and town and city centres now appears not to be the norm.

A common feature of responses to the URHC fact sheet analysis by both LGBT AG members and by the police officers was resistance and dismissal. In relation to the LGBT AG much of the resistance arose from suspicion about police data. Many lesbian and gay community-based victim surveys have drawn attention to the limits of data on homophobic violence found in routinely collected police data. A common finding is that homophobic incidents are under reported: less than one in three homophobic incidents
being reported to the police. An awareness of the limitations of police data was the backdrop for the Bexley and Greenwich (B&G) survey (discussed in more detail below). Routinely collected police data are thus a very partial picture. While it is not my intention to challenge this point, of importance here is the effect that this has on the use of police data and analysis of police data; the marginalization and dismissal of these data as a resource.

Like the LGBT AG responses the police also resisted resort to the data. This was rather more unexpected as it was police data. But the accuracy and relevance of their own data was constantly challenged. I came across various strategies to devalue, marginalize and exclude these data from discussions. One strategy echoed that experienced in the context of LGBT settings. Police emphasized the ‘gap’ between ‘community’ and ‘police’ data. ‘Community’ was the site of full data and data that captured the authentic experiences of violence in contrast to the limited, partial and mediated nature of the data captured through routine police operations. It is an argument that privileges ‘community’ over the ‘police’. The former is set up as an aspiration as the goal; police data should strive to be more like community data. Community here is something that needs to be better incorporated into policing. Until that time, ‘police data’ are flawed and need not be considered seriously as it is less than complete with the potential to mislead and to lead astray. The fact that I was using police data as a community resource seemed to be trumped by this idea of an ideal community database that was always elsewhere.21

Other police responses focused more on the police organization itself, developing and deploying a series of distinctions that privilege some (police) experiences and expertise over others (police, community, researcher). One such response was to emphasize not so much the institutional gap between police and community but to highlight a temporal gap; between ‘current police knowledge’ and knowledge in police data tainted by age being based on data generated months if not years before. Connected to this is a response that appears to privilege particular police experiences by way of location. Knowledge of those officers ‘on the street’ or ‘on the front line’ is here associated with truth in contrast to the knowledge of those more remote from that location, in New Scotland Yard (where the research was undertaken). A variation on this theme is the distinction between the privileged knowledge of the police and the tainted knowledge of the research team who produced the analysis of the police data and those who seek to use these data in contrast to the knowledge generated by way of the everyday operation of policing. All of these seemed to have the effect of closing down consideration of the data and the URHC analysis and thereby of marginalizing and silencing community experiences.

Another feature of the resistance and dismissal that appeared to be common to LGBT AG settings and the encounters with the police was the privileged position occupied by the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence. Particularly in the former context, the challenges to the ‘stranger danger’ model of homophobic incidents were explained away by the ‘gap’ between
routinely collected police data and community victim surveys so as to return to the preoccupation with incidents against gay men taking the form of random violence that occurs late at night outside or near bars and clubs where the perpetrators appear to be unknown to their victims. Police also resisted the challenges to the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence, marginalizing the importance of ‘low-level’ incidents and the messiness of violence that occurs in the context of physically and socially proximate and enduring relationships.

The URHC homophobic violence fact sheet challenged this assumption and provides some evidence in support of that challenge. It also has the potential to raise awareness of types of experiences victims will bring to the police and the needs of victims, all of which may help the police to refine the nature of the service they offer and target it to the needs of those who use the service to manage their safety. Its marginalization and denial seemed to undercut attempts use service data to review the service delivered with a view to developing service delivery to fit service needs.

The final experience I want to reflect upon is also concerned with data and findings generated by way of an analysis that challenges expectations and assumptions.

**GALOP and the Bexley and Greenwich (B&G) victim survey**

The institutional and geographical setting of my final example is different. It comes out of my experience of working as a volunteer with GALOP, a London-based LGBT anti-violence charity. GALOP was commissioned by the crime and disorder partnerships of two south London local government boroughs: Bexley Community Safety Partnership and Greenwich Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to undertake a survey of the experiences of homophobic and transphobic violence of LGBT peoples living and using the area covered by the two boroughs (Moran et al., 2004b). It was, in good part, a project inspired by the desire of the two partnerships not only to generate data on LGBT experiences but to bridge a perceived gap between official data and community data.

The B&G survey used a method common to many community-based victim surveys, using a self-complete questionnaire. It asked a series of questions about homophobic, transphobic and domestic violence experiences of LGBT people in Bexley and Greenwich. In common with many community surveys it asked questions relating to experiences of violence over the respondent’s lifetime. In a departure from common practice it also asked (more detailed) questions about experiences in last 12 months. The questionnaire distribution strategy was designed to achieve widespread dissemination. The database of 164 completed questionnaires, while small in number, is similar to data sets produced in other community surveys (Moran et al., 2004b).

In many respects, the lesbian and gay experiences of homophobic violence captured in the B&G data are similar to those captured in other
community victim surveys (cf. Wake et al., 1999 and Stormbreak, 2003). For example with regard to lifetime experiences of homophobic violence, 69 per cent of survey respondents reported they had experienced homophobic violence in that period. Three in four male respondents and two in three female respondents had experiences of homophobic violence. The types of incident reported were also consistent with other community survey findings; experiences were dominated by threats and harassment. Comparing the B&G data relating to experiences of violence in the last 12 months with other community surveys was rather more difficult as there are fewer community surveys using this time-frame. In good part this particular time-frame had been chosen to facilitate comparisons with routinely collected ‘official’ (police) data. The B&G finding that 38 per cent of all respondents reported experiences of homophobic violence in the last 12-month period is not inconsistent with other community victim surveys.

Overall the B&G survey like other community surveys suggested weaknesses and gaps in routinely collected official data. In general reported experiences of violence are higher than the ‘official’ data would suggest. The gap was even greater with respect to violence experienced by women, which is poorly represented, in ‘official’ data.

In part the B&G survey was designed to be something of a departure from other community victim surveys, with an objective of providing a more detailed picture of the experiences of homophobic violence. The URHC initiative was in general a source of inspiration informing this part of the survey. Of particular significance was the way the URHC project revealed the importance and potential of more detailed data about the relationships between perpetrators and victims and the locations of homophobic incidents, data that are frequently ‘missing’ from community surveys. The more detailed ‘12 months’ data generated by the B&G survey enabled this analysis to be undertaken.

The resulting analysis of the B&G data suggested that in almost two-thirds of all the violent incidents (64%) the victims reported that they knew the perpetrators. Family and ex-family members made up 28 per cent, neighbours 15 per cent, colleagues at work and school 14 per cent and persons ‘known by sight’ 9 per cent. The importance of ‘family members’, a category that includes partners and ex-partners, household members and other relatives was of some concern to the authors of the report. While this group of perpetrators was identified by respondents in the context of questions focusing specifically on homophobic incidents (rather than questions of domestic violence), the report’s authors suggested that there may have been some potential for respondents to conflate these different types of violence and thereby the perpetrators of these different modes of violence. When an analysis was conducted without these incidents, ‘strangers’ account for a rather larger percentage of the total incidents, being 48 per cent of the reported perpetrators (Moran et al., 2004b).

The higher incidence of stranger violence in the B&G data in contrast to that reported in the police data on the URHC fact sheet may offer some
evidence in support of the conclusion that incidents involving strangers are under-reported to the police.\textsuperscript{29} However, on this occasion I want to highlight the similarities between the B&G analysis and the URHC analysis of homophobic incidents captured in police data. ‘Neighbours’, colleagues at work and in school and college settings, and perpetrators ‘known by sight’ account for the overwhelming majority.

Turning to the B&G data on locations of violence, of particular interest is the dominance in that data of incidents located in or near the home. They accounted for almost 70 per cent of the incidents reported. Less than 10 per cent of reported incidents occurred in or near a LGBT venue.\textsuperscript{30} Further analysis of the spatial aspects of the reported violence in the borough data by reference to gender (an analysis not undertaken by the URHC initiative), suggested that gender may in some instances make a difference. In Greenwich a larger percentage of women than men reported the location of incidents as in or near the home (89 per cent female in contrast to 61 per cent male respondents). In Bexley, men and women reported similar spatial distributions; 69 per cent of men and 67 per cent of women experiencing violence in or near the home. In Bexley no male respondents reported incidents in or near LGBT venues whereas 13 per cent of women had experienced violence in this location. In contrast to this, 23 per cent of male respondents in Greenwich reported incidents in or near LGBT venues while no women reported this as a location of violence.

Presentations of early drafts of the findings and the report generated both positive and negative responses. While the findings were generally welcomed the findings relating to the relationship between perpetrators and victims and the location of violence met with much more hostility. The repeated suggestion was that these were erroneous conclusions based on problematic data. The findings were dismissed on various grounds; that the database was too small, too partial (having captured a very particular group of respondents) and poorly generated. While all might point to the limits of the database and have a place in any consideration of the tentative nature of the survey findings and have significance in the development of future surveys, they tended to be put to work to devalue, marginalize and disregard the data and analysis that challenges the dominant ‘stranger danger’ model of homophobic violence. Consideration of the implications of the B&G data for policies and delivery of services was at best mute.

The differences between the B&G survey and other community survey findings are that the former offers some challenges to the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence. The challenges that this might generate for crime and disorder partnership policies and initiatives, and for police practices struggled to get onto the agenda. The possibility that this survey might produce some evidence that might close the apparent gap between the experiences generated by community surveys and the experiences captured in routinely collected police data was largely overlooked.

What insights, what lessons can be drawn from these various incidents and experiences?
Invisibility–visibility (–invisibility)

A theme that connects all of these incidents, from the Lancaster citizens’ inquiry right through to the Bexley and Greenwich survey might be described as a movement from invisibility to visibility, from absence to presence, from silence to voice. The Lancaster inquiry offers an instance that appears to be at least one of the first appearances of what Seidman describes as a (homo)sexual subject in policing and criminal justice policy settings in that location. Seidman (1994: 173) suggests that this subject/citizen is the dominant foundational concept of both homophobic and affirmative homosexual politics and theory. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly the contrast between Bexley and Greenwich has some similarities to that between Lancaster and Manchester.

At the time of the B&G survey lesbians and gay men were largely ‘invisible’ in Bexley, a predominantly suburban borough on the south-eastern edge of London. There were no public or commercial lesbian or gay venues or events in the borough. There had been little or no formal institutional contact between lesbians and gay men in police and criminal justice policy settings. Greenwich, which borders the western edge of Bexley, is spatially more diverse, composed of fashionable historic locales as well as inner-city, suburban and dockland/industrial areas. From time to time Greenwich has hosted gay businesses, organizations, events and entertainment venues. It is also the location of the Metro Centre, an HIV resource centre that has a strong gay and lesbian community focus. Lesbians and gays had a certain social and institutional ‘presence’ in Greenwich. These differences offer further evidence of the impact and the limits of spatial concentration and social justice. In contrast to this the LGBT AG examples are not so much evidence of the inauguration of the sexual subject in London in relation to policing in general or the organizational setting of the MPS in particular but more about its re-deployment and further institutionalization as part of an ongoing struggle for the recognition of this subject/citizen in that location (Fraser, 1995).

Seidman suggests that this sexual subject is also the personification of ‘community’ and more specifically a model of community that tends to adopt a ‘minority’ and ‘minority community’ model that is most commonly associated with racial and ethnic minority identities (1994: 171). The ‘minority community’ model assumes that the identity category gives a coherence, a homogeneity, a shared singularity in common to all those who resort to (and are subject to) an identity category. So the appearance of the (homo)sexual subject/citizen in Lancaster or Bexley is also the appearance of an idea of ‘the lesbian and gay community’ in those locations. As the Lancaster City Council Official’s response to the citizens inquiry shows, its coming into being is perceived to make engagement possible. The difference between these experiences and those of the London independent advisory group is that in the latter setting the lesbian and gay (or LGBT) community is not so much ‘discovered’ as presupposed. The lesbian and gay community (or LGBT communities) make up part of the diversity that ‘the’ community now represents. This logic of communities (multiple minority communities) making
up the larger community informs the wider characterization of contemporary democracy as a multi-cultural, cosmopolitan polity.\textsuperscript{31}

One problematic aspect of the ‘minority model’ of sexual communities is that it tends to produce gaps, silences and exclusions. Let me use Manchester’s ‘gay village’ as a point of departure. This spatial concentration helps to give visibility to (to locate and to fix) the ‘sexual minority community’. This may produce the effect of making proximate lesbian and gay places (such as other parts of Manchester or Lancaster) invisible. But there is a need for caution here. What may appear to be disconnections and gaps may, with further consideration, also be found to be unexpectedly close connections. For example in the first instance the geographically proximate cities of Lancaster and Manchester (or Bexley and London’s Soho) appear to be remote and unconnected. But, they also have an intimate relationship. For example, while Manchester’s ‘gay village’ might seem to be unconnected to lesbian and gay life in Lancaster, it is a part of (one of the resources of) Lancaster’s gay and lesbian community. Manchester’s ‘gay village’ may for some in Lancaster be a fundamental part of their experience of the lesbian and gay community.\textsuperscript{32} Mancunian users are only part of the constituency of the ‘gay village’. Soho may work in a similar way for people living in Bexley (and Lancaster and Manchester). As Berlant and Warner (1998) note, gay and lesbian spaces act as ‘host spaces’ as locations of ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ that break the spatial, organizational and relational assumptions commonly associated with those two terms.\textsuperscript{33}

One response I have identified in and through the examples is a process of further deployment, refinement and institutionalization of the homosexual subject/citizen and minority community model of sexual communities. One problematic aspect of this process is that it appears to take place against a heterosexuality (as both individual and group identity) that seems to escape at best similar change, and or at worst the negative values associated with instability. This has the potential to reinforce already commonplace associations and assumptions about ‘lesbian’ and ‘gay’ (that they are social fabrications, unstable, incoherent) while at the same time reproducing the positive attributes and assumptions already commonly associated with heterosexuality (of coherence, stability and homogeneity) leaving them unchallenged. This is particularly problematic as this distribution of differences and associated values, between on the one hand lesbian/gay and on the other, heterosexual, can readily be accommodated within an existing logic that positions heterosexuality as the positive (the superior, the norm, the natural, the civilized, the good and the healthy) against ‘lesbian’ and ‘gay’ which are associated with the negative. As Seidman (1994: 174) notes, this threatens to reproduce not only the hetero/homo binary, but the values that secure the status and privilege associated with heterosexuality. Seidman’s comments draw attention to the way that some of the remedies sought in the desire to affirm identities that were previously devalued and excluded may work to reinforce some aspects of the social relations that generated and sustained those negative values. This is, Fraser (1995) suggests one of the conundrums of recognition/identity politics.
Queer theory offers a post-identity response to this state of affairs. Queer is not another sexual (minority) identity. It is not a politics of recognition (Fraser, 1995) that seeks to revalue and thereby re-establish a sexual subject/citizen. It is an approach, a mode of critique that aspires to transform that homosexual subject into a general social theory from which to analyse sexualities across the whole of a society, thereby bringing heterosexuality into the frame of critical analysis (Seidman, 1994: 174).

An important tool in achieving this objective is the concept of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity focuses not on sexual identities, such as ‘heterosexuality’, but on the ‘sexual regime’ which Seidman describes as, ‘a field of sexual meanings, discourses and practices that are interlaced with social institutions and movements’ (1994: 169). In their seminal essay, ‘Sex in Public’, Berlant and Warner (1998) explain that, ‘heteronormativity’ is concerned with ‘heterosexual culture rather than heterosexuality’:

Heteronormativity is thus a concept distinct from heterosexuality. One of the most conspicuous differences is that it has no parallel, unlike heterosexuality, which organizes homosexuality, as its opposite. Because homosexuality can never have the invisible, tacit society-founding rightness that heterosexuality has, it would not be possible to speak of ‘homonormativity’ in the same sense.

(Berlant and Warner, 1998: 548, fn. 2)

Heteronormativity offers a way of understanding the fabrication and reproduction of the homo/hetero binary and the fabrication of the hetero as norm but Berlant and Warner suggest it does not itself work within that binary relation. It offers a general social theory of the sexual order of whole societies. Heteronormativity requires a shift in approach, from identity to culture. It requires that we turn our attention to the institutions, structures of understanding and practical orientations that not only bring sexuality into being but make that (hetero)sexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged.

How does heteronormativity shift the frame of inquiry into sexual diversity in relation to policing and criminal justice more generally? One key insight is that as a ‘regime’ and a pervasive culture, sexuality is never absent or rarely spoken of or predominantly missing from the data or the agenda but, as Berlant and Warner explain, it is always in play and always in public. Thus, the perceived absence of sexuality specifically from community and neighbourhood models of policing or from policing and criminal justice debates more generally needs to be treated with caution. Queer theory points out that a requirement to be silent about sexuality does not produce the absence of sexuality. Silence is a device by which heterosexuality appears in public and more specifically it is one of the devices through which that sexuality is made the norm, is (re)produced in society in general and queer theory would suggest in police and criminal justice settings in particular. Likewise the appearance of references to same-sex behaviour and same-sex relations of intimacy in police and criminal justice settings is not so much a new departure, bringing sexuality into being but perhaps more a
shift or a disruption of the existing public sexual culture of that institution or setting.

How does this impact upon attempts to make sense of the various experiences outlined earlier in this article? I would suggest that it offers a different way of reading those incidents. They are no longer moments that make up a particular trajectory, a movement towards a goal, of establishing and institutionalizing either a specific identity or a particular (minority) community. They are a series of fragile, unstable moments in multiple, diverse environments, generating different perceptions, and varying degrees of sexual subject/citizen. Homo and hetero are in perpetual formation and re-formation (Brower, 2006: 3). There is no final arrival, no moment of completion here. They are opportunities for critique.

Stranger Danger

A second theme that particularly connects the experiences relating to the use of MPS police data (in the URHC fact sheets) and generating community data of LGBT experiences is the prevalence of the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence. It appears to be a model that preoccupies both community and police perspectives working to marginalize and dismiss experiences of violence. As such it seems to resist ‘community’ experience and perspectives captured in different institutional settings. This common resort to the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence raises an important issue about the social and cultural significance of this model of violence. In the final section of this article I want to address the following question: What idea of community, of law and order communities and more specifically of places of safety and danger is being made in and through the ‘stranger danger’ model of violence in this context?

‘Stranger danger’ I want to suggest puts to work a ‘master opposition’; opposition between inside and outside, friend and enemy is put to work. It is a violent hierarchy that:

sets apart truth from falsity, good from evil, beauty from ugliness. It also differentiates between proper and improper, right and wrong, tasteful and unbecoming. It makes the world readable and thereby instructive. It dispels doubt … It assures that one goes where one should.

(Bauman, 1991: 54)

Bauman describes the relation friend and enemy as a ‘cosy antagonism’ and a ‘collusion’ (1991: 55), where the ‘enemy’ is always represented as distinct, separate and distant from the friend; geographically, socially and culturally. In spatial terms and more specifically in relation to those spaces as locations of good order, the master opposition sets up a ‘cosy antagonism’ in which communities/neighbourhoods of good order are clearly separated out from those of bad or dis-order. Policing by way of this ‘cosy antagonism’ is one of a heroic battle between good and evil where evil is always already assumed to be separate and apart and where good order is an achievable end point.
The ‘stranger’ is a figure that emerges within this setting as, Bauman suggests, to blur this ‘master opposition’, ‘... neither friend nor enemy; because he may be both’ (Bauman, 1991: 55, emphases added). The stranger conflates opposites. Thus the stranger is truth and falsity; good and evil; propriety and impropriety. While this ‘stranger’ may conflate and confuse the ‘master opposition’ appears to remain as the backdrop providing a hope or an expectation of certainty, clarity, of a clear division between good order and bad order. Locating this stranger in the anonymous and random social interactions that are associated with ‘public’ places creates the possibility that these places may be clearly divided into spaces of either good or bad order.

In some respects perpetrators who are family members, friends, neighbours, work, school and college colleagues share the characteristics of Bauman’s ‘stranger’. Unlike the enemy who is perceived to be always distant these are characters that are socially and spatially close. Their violence threatens to upset the ‘cosy antagonism’ between friend and enemy, between good order and bad order by bringing the two together, thereby blurring the distinction between truth and falsity, good and evil, right from wrong, safety and security from danger and insecurity. Their enduring proximity of perpetrator and victim and the ongoing complexity of the social relations between them make it more difficult to re-establish the distinction between friend and enemy. This is the stranger that threatens to stay.

The stranger that stays, Simmel (1964: 402) notes, embodies and personifies a troubling and persistent ambivalence, representing the world as an unreadable place, a place of doubt and uncertainty. When located in social settings and social relations, such as ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ this stranger stays blurring the distinction between inside and outside, between good and bad order. This enduring stranger is a figure that gives form to an experience of loss, of orientation, of direction and place. As a relation of ‘both’, ‘and’, this enduring stranger, Bauman suggests, personifies a special threat and an exceptional danger ‘more horrifying than that which one can fear from the enemy’ (1991: 55).

I want to suggest that the model of ‘stranger danger’ found in police and community responses is a way of generating and managing the uncontrollable ‘horror’ and ‘fear’, that the potential of the enduring presence of this ‘stranger’ may generate. This ‘stranger danger’ model of violence is put to work to manage that uncontrollable fear by displacing the figure of the stranger and thereby revaluing it, controlling it, marginalizing it, willing it away.

Through the association of ‘stranger danger with random acts in public places by persons unknown to the (potential) victim’, the stranger is made remote from ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’. Through this displacement of the stranger, ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’ are figured as sentimental fantasies of safety and security. They are the spaces of good order over against the fantasy of ‘public places’ that are now (through the stranger) the location of an enduring and troubling ambiguity and uncertainty.
There appears to be a shared investment (by police and minority community) in this model of 'stranger danger'. This investment in common begs a question about the prevalence of shared assumptions. More specifically it begs a question about the way both community and state institutions may work in common to marginalize and silence the views and experiences that recognition politics and ideas of 'community' and 'neighbourhood' seek to capture and to give a voice to.

Conclusions

All the case studies explored in this article offer different instances of the enduring challenge of policing in an age of diversity and provide an opportunity to reflect on police and community responses both past, present and future. One important organizing theme that shapes the encounters, settings and incidents relating to the policing needs of those who identify by reference to non-normative sexualities is the binary of visibility/invisibility. Communities and identities produced by way of this violent hierarchy may problematize the spatial assumptions associated with the minority community model, which informs phrases such as ‘the lesbian and gay community’, or ‘LGBT communities’ and ‘community’ and the use of ‘neighbourhood’ policing initiatives more specifically. Non-normative sexual communities are often represented and experienced as both territorial and non-territorial, both co-extensive with the ‘normative community’ but not a part of it, both spatially a ‘counter-community’ but not reducible to it. The binary of invisibility and visibility is the most common trope by which these characteristics and contradictions are experienced, described and explained. As a politics of recognition the move from invisibility to visibility is a project that is fraught with problems and contradictions.

While non-normative sexual communities are often represented as sometimes in opposition to and always relatively remote from the institutions of policing and security, the reflections on common assumptions and (mis)concepts of the nature of violence point to shared assumptions and expectations. The suggestion here is that these work to sustain an idea of community and neighbourhood or more specifically an idea of community where the division between good and evil, truth and falsity, good order and bad order, is simplified and sentimentalized. This is an imagined future community (Anderson, 1993) of perpetual harmony and free of disorder. One of its effects is to marginalize and devalue the contemporary experiences of community as conflict and struggle and thereby potentially undermine attempts to orientate policing to the immediate needs of that community or a particular neighbourhood.

One lesson to be learned from the analysis offered here is the value of critique over the dangers of identity politics. A second is that recognition politics may produce at best contradictory effects, at worst negative effects by way of reinforcing rather than challenging problematic assumptions and expectations.
Notes

1 It has become the convention to talk of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) and sometimes LGBTQ (to add ‘Queer’) when discussing sexual ‘minorities’ and communities in relation to policing. I do not adopt this convention here as the examples I draw upon focus primarily on issues relating to lesbian and gay in relation to the police. While some of these issues and themes I address in this article may be relevant to bisexual and transgender both raise different matters.

2 They occurred while I was undertaking a variety of different roles as a researcher, scholar and as a volunteer and community activist.

3 The format of the inquiry draws upon but remains different from the idea of citizen juries. See Stewart et al. (1994); Coote and Lengham (1999).

4 The project (award No. L133 25 1031) was one of 20 research projects being undertaken as part of an ESRC research initiative on Violence.

5 For more on the findings of the research see Moran et al. (2004a).

6 The Lancaster inquiry took place in the Lancaster Town Hall on 30 March 2000. The Manchester inquiry was held on 6 April in the Shena Simon College Conference Centre.

7 The ‘Village’ has also been caught up in the rush to inner-city regeneration (Florida, 2002) and gentrification. Unlike some North American cities that inner-city gentrification has not been driven by gay men, though gay men have been one group targeted by development companies. On gay gentrification see Adler and Brenner (1992); Knopp (1994); Forest (1995).

8 The lesbian community was more commonly associated with an inner-city suburb of Chorlton. In contrast with the ‘gay village’ it was characterized as more predominantly a domestic rather than a commercial/leisure space.

9 Our research also suggested that the ‘cosmopolitanism’ associated with the ‘gay village’ generated various exclusions based on gender, class, age, race and ethnicity (Moran et al., 2004a: ch. 7).

10 I am not suggesting that ‘invisibility’ is unique to sexuality and ‘sexual minorities’. It is also a characteristic of disability, religion and ethnicity.

11 This is not to suggest that it was the only location. For example see Cocks (2003).

12 GALOP and LESPOP, respectively gay and lesbian London-based police monitoring community organizations with their origins in the early 1980s, were two of the first organizations dedicated to challenging and changing the relationship between gay men, lesbians and the police. For a brief history of these organizations see http://www.galop.org.uk/history.html

13 The LGBT advisory group’s website providing brief details of its history and current operations is http://www.lgbtag.org.uk/index.htm

14 The first advisory group, called the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) established in 1998 focuses on black and minority ethnic communities. It was a response to concerns raised during the course of the Macpherson inquiry into the death of the black London teenager, Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson, 1999). It provided the model for subsequent advisory groups including the LGBT AG, which was the second MPS independent advisory group to be established.
Research undertaken in 2005 on experiences and perceptions of homophobic violence and policing in east London (Stormbreak, 2005) found much support (71%) among LGBT people for LGBT LOs. The most important qualities and characteristics associated with this office were that it provided clear evidence of the presence of LGBT expertise and of commitment to servicing the needs of LGBT people and the LGBT community within the institution of the police.

While there are overarching command units in the Metropolitan Police the Borough is the core policing unit. The Borough’s Community Safety Unit has been home for LGBT LOs.

In the whole of 2001, 1554 homophobic incidents were reported to the MPS. In subsequent years the annual number of homophobic incidents reported to the MPS has remained fairly consistent, ranging between 1300 and 1600 reported incidents per year. This represents just over one-third of all homophobic incidents reported in England and Wales each year.

This is in sharp contrast to incidents of racial violence for the same period where the ratio of male to female victims was approximately 3:2.

In part this change can be accounted for by the poor application of several already used police categories.

I survey these data in more detail in Moran (2007b).

This response also seemed to inform the ‘yes but’ response that came from the LGBT AG. This response gives some recognition of the community sources of police data but it retains the idea of the imperfection of those data and hence their marginal significance.

The trans aspect of the research generated few responses and the data generated were not incorporated in the final report. See Moran et al. (2004b).

There is no consistent time-frame in UK gay and lesbian victim surveys. ‘Lifetime’ and ‘within the last five years’ have been most common. The lack of consistency poses problems when comparisons are made. It has been suggested that the period of time used may disproportionately affect the levels of reporting. Green et al. suggest that,

"respondents are as likely to recall an event occurring during the past year as during the past 5 years, and younger respondents are significantly more likely than older respondents to report having been victimized at some point during their lives."

(2001: 493)

Twelve months was adopted in the B&G survey to facilitate comparison with police data.

See Moran et al. (2004b) for an analysis of the data on experiences of domestic violence.

The phrase ‘homophobic violence’ includes violence, threats and harassment.

A breakdown of the B&G data into experiences of those identified as living in the two boroughs exposes some differences between experiences in those locations. For example a smaller number of Bexley respondents (53%) than respondents from Greenwich (73%) had experienced homophobic violence in their lifetime. Variations between different boroughs of London are not unexpected. For example the 2003 survey of LGBT experiences in Newham
Barlow, 2003), a London borough to the north and east of Bexley and Greenwich, found that 42 per cent of respondents reported experiencing homophobic incidents during their lifetime.

27 One point of comparison is the Scottish report, *The Experience of Violence and Harassment of Gay Men in the City of Edinburgh* (Morrison and Mackay, 2000). That survey found 26 per cent of all respondents had experienced some form of violence in the last 12 months.

28 The B&G survey found that a larger percentage of respondents in Greenwich (45%) had experienced homophobic incidents in that period (Moran et al., 2004b).

29 However, in considering the relative importance of ‘stranger’ as a category of perpetrator in community data, a note of caution needs to be raised. The term ‘stranger’ is problematic. In community victim surveys, at best, it records the victim’s knowledge of the perpetrator. As Mason (2005) notes this may not coincide with the perpetrator’s ‘knowledge’ of the victim. Unbeknown to the victim, the perpetrator may, over time, have observed and made judgments about the victim without the victim’s knowledge. The perpetrator may ‘know’ the victim by way of gossip networks operating in a particular location or as a result of regular chance encounters. Furthermore, the perpetrator’s ‘knowledge’ need not be a correct judgement about the victim’s sexual orientation. Actual knowledge of the victim’s sexuality is not a necessary feature of this judgement. The perpetrator’s perception is both necessary and sufficient. Thus a victim’s use of the category ‘strangers’ may be a partial reading of the nature of the relationship that is played out in the act of violence or harassment (Moran et al., 2004b).

30 It should be noted that the types of violence found in this particular location appeared to be somewhat different from the violence experienced in and near the home. The reported violence in or near LGBT venues appeared to be more serious violence; 33 per cent of incidents in this location were acts of violence rather than threats of harassment.

31 For an analysis of some of the problems, challenges and uses of cosmopolitanism in relation to sexual identities in the context of homophobic violence and hate crime reform see Moran et al. (2004a).

32 Lancaster has played a similar role for people living in the Lake District and other adjoining rural communities.

33 Other lesbian and gay people may not identify with the preoccupations that dominate the commercial ‘scene’ or indeed any other public LGBT ‘scene’.

34 Though the addition of ‘Q’ to LGBT, I would suggest, is an example of the transformation of ‘queer’ into another sexual minority identity.


References


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