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MARRIAGE MAINTENANCE, MISCATEGORIZATION, AND NEW MANIFESTATIONS: HOW PEOPLE ARE REINFORCING AND DISRUPTING GENDER AND SEXUAL INEQUALITIES IN MARRIED LIFE

by

Daniel J. Bartholomay

A Dissertation Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Sociology

at

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August 2019

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ABSTRACT

MARRIAGE MAINTENANCE, MISCATEGORIZATION, AND NEW MANIFESTATIONS: HOW PEOPLE ARE REINFORCING AND DISRUPTING GENDER AND SEXUAL INEQUALITIES IN MARRIED LIFE

by

Daniel J. Bartholomay

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019
Under the Supervision of Professor Noelle Chesley

This research positions marriage as an institution that has historically served to privilege men, masculinity and heterosexuality. Overall, this project is intended to advance our understanding of gender and sexual inequalities in the realms of marriage and family by examining the lived experiences of married people. It draws on data from 41 in-depth interviews conducted with married people living in Wisconsin, many of whom identify as part of the LGBT+ community. Using qualitative social science methods, this research speaks to unanswered questions regarding the capacity of a more gender-fluid society to reshape key social institutions (like marriage) in ways that make them more accessible to a wider population by reshaping cultural ideas about what marriage and family can look like. Theoretically, it broadens our understanding of how gender and sexuality are connected, the mechanisms that reinforce and disrupt gender and sexuality norms, and the larger implications of undoing for greater gender and sexual equality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BQP	Bisexual, queer, and/or pansexual
CNM	Consensual non-monogamy
LGBT+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or any and all other gender and sexual minority communities/identities
MGM	Mixed-gender marriage
Q-MGM	Bisexual, queer, and/or pansexual person in mixed-gender marriage
Q-SGM	Bisexual, queer, and/or pansexual person in same-gender marriage
SGM	Same-gender marriage
SNAF	Standard North American family

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First and foremost, I'd like to thank my advisor, Noelle Chesley, for her continuous support and guidance. As many graduate students do, I came into my doctoral program with a severe case of imposter syndrome, all but convincing myself that the admissions committee had made a clerical error by mistakenly setting my application in the "admit" pile rather than the "reject" pile. This insecurity about my academic and scholarly abilities only intensified as I began my dissertation work, but from the beginning to the end, Noelle was constantly there to remind me that I was not the first graduate student to feel that way, that the struggle was indeed real, and that I was not only capable but qualified to complete a successful dissertation. In addition to reinforcing my confidence, Noelle also kept me on task and always made herself available when I had questions or concerns about where my research was heading. I could not have completed this project without her brilliant feedback and scholarly insight. In short, I really feel like I hit the advisor jackpot. Noelle, I was exceedingly fortunate to have you as a mentor, and I'm equally grateful to leave this program calling you my friend.

I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Celeste Campos-Castillo, Cary Costello, and Timothy O'Brien, all of whom have served as mentors and academic role models beyond their involvement with my dissertation.

I was able to complete this project on a deadline thanks to the help of my awesome team of research assistants. JP, Sasha, Austin, and Phoenix: you are all rock stars! Stay true to who you are and never underestimate what you are all capable of.

On my first day at UWM, I found out I was sharing office 722 with my cohort member, Stephanie. With vibrant purple hair and personality to match, I was leery about how our relationship would unfold. Fast forward five years, one tattoo, an ocean of tears, and countless

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~~glasses~~ bottles of wine later, I couldn't imagine going through this program with anyone else. Thank you for being my 722 partner in crime. I think it's safe to say that we've officially reached maximum saturation, and the world better look out!

Outside of the university, my partner, Derrick, our roommate, Kaylee, and my hound, Lola, kept me sane and happy. When I needed to vent about anything school related, they were there to listen. When I was feeling defeated and in need of emotional support, they were there to give me a hug. When I needed a distraction to clear my head, they were willing to drop everything to go on an adventure. They made it possible for me to maintain a (somewhat) healthy work/life balance, and I wouldn't have been able produce the scholarship I did without the support system they provided for me at home.

Lastly, I want to thank my parents. From a young age, they taught me the values and attributes I needed to complete this doctoral program. In addition to teaching me the meaning of hard work and perseverance, my parents instilled within me an unshakable Christian faith built on the founding principle that there is good in this world if only we work to find it. That faith has led me to pursue a lifelong career studying and solving social inequalities. When it came to sociology, my parents didn't always understand what I did and why I did it, but it didn't matter. They were always there to encourage me and to remind me of my faith. When my dad unexpectedly passed away and my world came crashing down just months before my dissertation defense, I didn't know if I was going to be able to finish my degree and accept the job offer I had on the table. But it was the faith he imparted upon me that enabled me to climb back onto my feet and finish what I had started. I dedicate this dissertation to he and my mom. I love you both so much, and I am so blessed to call you my parents.

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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

I always assumed I would get married, some day. In the religious, Midwestern community in which I was raised marriage was just an unspoken expectation. Growing up in my small hometown in rural North Dakota, after high school you either started farming on your family's ranch or left the country life to go to college. After settling into your farming vocation or securing your post-college career you were expected to get married. My socialization instilled in me the deep-seated belief that marriage was the prerequisite for every other meaningful milestone I would pursue in my life. Marriage was a precondition for buying a home, for having sex, for having children, and for living happily ever after. By and large, I was taught that getting married – not turning 18 – was the true marker of entering adulthood.

My parents' marriage served as the prototype for which I came to develop my understanding of what married life looked like. I grew up in a household that resembled the Cleaver's from *Leave It to Beaver*. My dad worked full time on the railroad, and my mother – while employed, part time – was primarily a homemaker. As such, she did the vast majority of cooking and cleaning around the house. My mother was mostly responsible for getting my sister and me to and from school and to our many doctor appointments, sports practices, 4-H meetings, and piano lessons. If either of us needed a Halloween costume or a gift for a friend's birthday party, we instinctively would go to mom. If I got sick at school, mom would pick me up. If I started throwing a temper tantrum because I couldn't find my favorite toy, mom came to the rescue. If it was my turn to bring a snack for a classroom party and I forgot until the day before, mom would stay up until one in the morning making cupcakes. When I was a kid, I never questioned why dad worked and why mom stayed home. I had no reason to. The vast majority

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of my friends had similar family structures, and many of my favorite childhood TV shows displayed male breadwinner/female homemaker households.

This was my initial socialization into what marriage was and what married life looked like. For the first two decades of my life, I never questioned the idea of marriage as the gatekeeper of adulthood, nor did I question the gendered division of labor displayed by my parents' marriage. My own identity transformation in early adulthood was what pushed me to realize that the marital archetype I grew up witnessing and internalized to be the only way to successfully navigate the world we live in *was not* going to apply to my own life.

I came out as gay when I was nineteen and started dating my first serious boyfriend when I was twenty. Like many people experiencing love for the first time, we fell for each other hard and fast. After five months of dating, I proposed on the beach at sunset while we were vacationing in Florida. My cloyingly romantic, cliché proposal was well-received, and just like that, my boyfriend became my fiancé. But what did it mean to be engaged? Same-gender marriage was only legal in a handful of states in the year 2010, and conservative North Dakota was definitely not one of them. Sure, we could have a ceremony and invite people to bear witness to our commitment to one another, but at the end of the day, we could not access the legal or the social benefits of marriage. We could refer to each other as husbands or spouses, but without the legal recognition of our union, would anyone take us or our relationship seriously? Months into our "engagement," these questions of legitimacy started to seep into my subconscious and raise further questions of doubt and confusion. If I couldn't get married, how was I supposed to begin the rest of my life? When do I buy a house? Do I have to stay a virgin forever? How will I have children? If I figure out how to have kids, would I be the breadwinner or the homemaker? In short, coming to the realization that I might not be able to get married

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derailed what I understood my life was supposed to be. I became resentful, feeling that my socialization had failed me, and I slowly began reconfiguring what my life without marriage would look like. Disillusioned and distraught, I broke up with my fiancé, the following year.

While all of this was unfolding, I was completing my undergraduate degree. I had taken a liking to sociology, specifically because it had helped me gain a broader perspective on the challenges I was currently facing in my own life. I was drawn to sociology courses on family, sexuality, and LGBT+ studies, and I developed a critical perspective on the purpose and utility of marriage in society. The more I learned about the history of marriage, its foundations in patriarchy and heterosexism, and the inequalities it continued to reproduce in contemporary society, the more circumspect I became. Rather than view marriage as a necessary stepping stone to enter into normative adulthood and family life, I began to see marriage as an exclusionary institution that served to privilege men and heterosexuality. I had officially adopted a feminist, anti-marriage ideology.

Another year went by. I finished my bachelor's degree and started graduate school. I was casually dating during this time, but my jaded outlook on marriage prevented me from taking any relationship too seriously. Then, in 2012, I met Casey. A fellow North Dakotan, Casey had a similar upbringing to my own, and subsequently, viewed marriage with the same level of importance that I did prior to my cynical awakening resulting from my past relationship. Despite my marriage reservations, the freshness and excitement of our budding relationship temporarily stifled the cynicism I had developed. I proceeded to develop my relationship with Casey, fully disclosing to him that--if and when same-gender marriage became legal--I was not interested in entering the institution I had grown to view as a farce. He wasn't thrilled with my anti-marriage stance, but chose to continue in our relationship.

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Things progressed, and we would eventually move in together. When the time came for me to move several hundred miles away to complete my graduate schooling, there was no doubt that Casey would come with me. We purchased a home together, opened joint bank accounts, and practiced monogamy. We even became quasi-parents as we expanded our chosen family to include a dog, Lola. When it came to division of labor, where gendered stereotypes seemed inapplicable, we divided household tasks by skillset and preference. I cooked, he cleaned. I walked the dog, he mowed the lawn. Casey and I had a happy, healthy relationship that largely resembled a marriage. But a marriage, it was not.

At both the structural and interpersonal level, we were constantly reminded that our committed relationship was not as important or highly-valued as heterosexual marriages. Despite owning a home together and having joint financial accounts, we could not file our taxes together and missed out on several thousand dollars of deductions as a result. When Casey was let go from his job and lost his health insurance, I was unable to add him onto mine since we were not legally married. Casey was an insulin dependent type-one diabetic. Had he not secured a job before his remaining health care supplies ran out, we would have had to max out our credit cards or declare bankruptcy in order to afford his monthly medical expenses. When we went to family functions we were constantly introduced to people as "friends" rather than partners, despite being together for six years. The frustration and burden of inconveniences like these accumulated over time. In 2015, when same-gender marriage was legalized throughout the United States, I began to reconsider marriage, not because it was something I felt I *needed*, but because it was something I felt would make our lives easier. Having experienced firsthand the challenges associated with being in a long-term unmarried relationship, I had to decide if I was

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willing to overlook my anti-marriage feminist ethos to tap into the legal and cultural privileges of married life.

In addition to grappling with the idea of marriage, I was also going through the process of reconsidering my sexuality. Around 2016, about four years into our relationship, I started to question some aspects of my sexual identity. My sexual inquisitiveness piqued when Casey and I went to a drag show. After the final performance, I made a comment that I found one of the queens sexually attractive while she was in drag. My confessed drag queen crush threw Casey into a tizzy. Given our shared gay identity, he became defensive and questioned how I, as a gay man, could be attracted to an individual that was impersonating a woman. "So, what, you're bi now?" he half-jokingly asked. His response really made me think. Was I bi? Prior to 2009, I had only dated and been romantically involved with women. Was I still attracted to women and femininity? How would getting married affect this? Could I be in a same-gender marriage and be recognized as anything other than gay?

Around this time, I also realized I had the desire to be romantically involved with more than one person, simultaneously. I presented this to Casey, and he agreed to open our relationship to allow me – and him – to explore what it is like to date multiple people at once. The more I reflected on my open sexuality and experimented with non-monogamy, the more I began to realize that the identity label "gay" did not feel right for me. I began to identify as queer.

With my newly claimed queer identity and our now open relationship, I ended up falling in love with another person, Derrick. It was confusing to be in love with two people at the same time. Nothing in my socialization had prepared me for this possibility. I had been taught that romantic relationships were always between two *and only two* individuals. With no norms or

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cultural scripts to inform our queer romantic trio, Derrick, Casey, and I struggled to navigate this new polyamorous lifestyle. The norm of coupledom became increasingly apparent as we continued to run into complications pertaining to the oddity of being a triad rather than a dyad. When one of us was invited to a wedding or an event, who would we bring as our "plus one?" When checking into hotels, would the three of us be allowed to share a room with one bed, or would we be required to get a room with two? And, of course, being in a polyamorous relationship further complicated my already complicated stance on marriage. Given that you can only be legally married to one person, how in the world could marriage possibly work in a romantic relationship of three? One person would inevitably be excluded from the myriad of legal protections and benefits marriage has to offer.

For nearly a year, the three of us bobbed and weaved through the obstacle course of a couple-centric, heteronormative society. Eventually, the stressors imposed on our queer relationship became insurmountable. Casey and I decided that our relationship had ran its course, and we agreed to separate. While being romantically involved with multiple people felt authentic to who I was sexually, going against the norm of coupledom *and* the norm of heterosexuality proved to be too challenging. Derrick and I, having never had the opportunity to attempt a relationship at the couple level, decided to stay together. We remain in a relationship today.

More than two years into our relationship, Derrick and I are now increasingly asked, "So, when are you two going to get married?" As you may imagine, no question incites a greater avalanche of emotional responses within me. Marriage makes me feel: *nostalgic* of the family I grew up in… *angry* that the engagement with my first love failed as a result of the legal exclusion of same-gender couples… *critical* of an institution built on the problematic system of patriarchy… *jealous* of the privileges afforded to married couples… *excited* about the

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legalization of same-gender marriage… *confused* about the idea of being in a same-gender marriage but not identifying as gay… *frustrated* by the exclusivity of marriage to couples.

While my lifelong journey critiquing marriage may be more elaborate than most people's contemplations of whether or not to marry, surely, I was not alone in questioning some of these aspects of married life. One thing is for sure. When it came to marriage, I had more questions than answers. A desire to find answers to these questions was the inspiration for this dissertation.

I conducted 41 in-depth interviews with married people of diverse genders and sexualities to qualitatively explore how the purpose of marriage, today, is changing. This exploration considers how previously established norms of married life are being maintained, how the lived experiences of many married people are misconceived, and how some married people, today, are manifesting marriage in new ways. Concentrating primarily on the unique – and largely unexamined – experiences of married people who disrupt the normative gender and sexual scripts of married life, this research addresses several gaps existing in the current sociological scholarship of marriage.

In Chapter Two, I review relevant scholarship on marriage and its intersections with gender and sexuality. I begin by discussing the historical evolution of marriage as a social institution, paying particular attention to its changing purpose and power informing the gender and sexual practices of its constituency. In this section, I also provide an overview of different sociological theories of marriage. I review contemporary scholarship on marriage and its ties to patriarchy and heteronormativity, the social systems that serve to privilege men and heterosexuality, respectively. I also highlight under explored areas of marriage research that this

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dissertation speaks to, particularly the experiences of married bisexual, queer, and pansexual people.

I provide a detailed explanation of the research methods I developed and utilized for this project in Chapter Three. I begin by justifying the method I used for this research, in-depth interviewing. I then explain eligibility requirements I put into place for this study, discuss how I recruited participants, and provide some demographic information for my sample. I go into greater detail about the interview process, the modes in which the interviews were conducted, and ethical considerations I made to ensure the well-being of my participants. I explain my methods of data generation and analysis for this qualitative project, and conclude by acknowledging the limitations of my approach and the reflexivity I engaged in situating my own background and personal investment in this project, and how that likely shaped the interview process for my research.

In Chapter Four, I explore ways in which the 41 married people I spoke with are both challenging and reinforcing gender and sexual norms. I examine contemporary motivations for getting married, behaviors practiced within marriages, and attitudes pertaining to the purpose of marriage, today. I also provide an analysis of the 18 married people I interviewed who challenge the marital norm of monogamy. I unpack the ways in which married people practicing consensual nonmonogamy (CNM) or polyamory are redefining the rules and expectations of marriage. While some of these individuals described their open marriages as a means to pursue casual sex with others, many of the individuals who identified as polyamorous pursued or practiced multiple intimate relationships simultaneously while married. Married people in polyamorous relationships challenge the norm of the nuclear family as they reconstruct the meaning of marriage and family to be inclusive of the extended kinship formations

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representative of their relationships. However, the married polyamorous people I spoke with could not evade the deeply established marriage norms of coupledom and monogamy. Redefining their families required constant work as married polyamorous people had to continuously evaluate and negotiate when and where they could disclose and practice their non-normative family formations.

I unpack the complex experiences and negotiations made by the 23 married bisexual, queer, and pansexual (BQP) people I interviewed in Chapter Five. In doing so, I address the question of how married people beyond the hetero/homo binary are held accountable to gender and sexual binary structures, and how their behaviors and responses to these accountability structures can produce both privileges and marginalization. Our society's binary understanding of gender and sexuality coupled with the permanence associated with marriage often renders the identities of BQP married people invisible in everyday interactions. Drawing from the theory of doing gender (Deutsch 2007; West and Zimmerman 1987), I use the theoretical application of doing sexuality to explain how married BQP people must decide when to disclose their sexuality in everyday interactions. I explore the privileges married BQP people in mixed-gender marriages (Q-MGM) are able to access by "passing" as heterosexual. At the same time, I also consider the deleterious effects of having one's BQP sexual identity consistently disregarded, given that married couples are predominantly understood to be straight or gay and nothing between.

Overall, this project is intended to advance our understanding of gender and sexual inequalities in the realms of marriage and family by examining the lived experiences of married people. Drawing on qualitative social science methods, it speaks to unanswered questions regarding the capacity of a more gender-fluid society to reshape key social institutions (like

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marriage) in ways that make them more accessible to a wider population by reshaping cultural ideas about what marriage and family can look like. Theoretically, it broadens our understanding of how gender and sexuality are connected, the mechanisms that reinforce and disrupt gender and sexuality norms, and the larger implications of undoing for greater gender and sexual equality.

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CHAPTER TWO. THEORY AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND HETERONORMATIVITY

The History of Marriage in the United States

The purpose of marriage has shifted throughout U.S. history. While people today tend to describe marriage as a relationship formation that people willingly choose to enter to symbolize unity, love, and commitment, the original functions of marriage served far more regulated purposes. Through much of the eighteenth century, marriage was largely viewed as a pragmatic, economic institution. As marriage and family historian Stephanie Coontz, explains:

> For centuries, marriage did much of the work that markets and governments do today. It organized the production and distribution of goods and people. It set up political, economic, and military alliances. It coordinated the division of labor by gender and age. It orchestrated people's personal rights and obligations in everything from sexual relations to the inheritance of property. Most societies had very specific rules about how people should arrange their marriages to accomplish these tasks, (2005:9).

During the Colonial Era, the marriage-based family was considered so essential to the maintenance of society that laws were put into place making it illegal for people to live alone (Cherlin 2009). Religious mores stemming from Christianity guided much social conduct in the colonies, including sexual relations (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012). As such, the only morally acceptable sexual act in colonial times was intercourse between a married man and woman who had the intention to procreate. Any other form of sexual behavior that would not result in procreation within a marriage – including sexual relations between members of the same sex – was considered an act of sodomy. All acts of sodomy were considered religiously immoral and were subsequently written into the law as criminal acts subject to legal persecution (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012).

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The idea that two people would marry "for love" was not commonly recognized until the late 1700s. Two social changes are primarily responsible for this shift. The first is the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of the paid labor market. The Industrial Revolution spurred the development of factories and institutions that could perform essential functions that were previously considered the responsibility of the family – producing household goods and food, educating children, caring for the sick and elderly, etc. The rapid expansion of the labor market enabled children to become financially independent. Prior to this expansion, men would typically need to wait to get married until they inherited property from their fathers, and women would need to wait until they inherited a dowry (Coontz 2005; Mintz and Kellogg 1988). As both men and women became able to achieve financial independence at younger ages, they also became more independent in their motivations for marrying.

The economic autonomy of younger generations was also met with a new individualistic way of thinking stemming from the Age of Enlightenment. Philosophers began advocating for the pursuit of individual happiness, encouraging people to marry for love rather than pragmatic reasons (Coontz 2005). The growing belief that marriage should promote individual happiness encouraged the state to become less involved in the regulation and gatekeeping of marriage. As a result, legislators began increasing access to divorce and remarriage.

Around this same time, the medical industry began to suggest that women lacked the carnal sexual desire that was natural of men (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012). This sexual reformation socially reconstructed women as a sexually passive group in comparison to the sexually active group of men. As such, it was socially expected that married women's desires shifted from those of sexual satisfaction to desires for nurturing and domesticity. This cultural

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shift was bolstered by changes in economic and familial structures wherein the gendered division of labor became highly specialized (Rutter and Schwartz 2012). This male breadwinner/female homemaker division of labor cemented the new norms of married life. With the strict division of labor dichotomizing the normative behaviors and spheres for husbands and wives, heterosexual marriages became highly distant and detached. As such, both married men and women compensated for their absent spouses by developing romantic friendships with members of the same gender, thus normalizing homosociality (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012; Katz 2007).

The social acceptance of femininity as represented by purity and passivity created a massive double standard in terms of the policing of sexual transgressions of women in comparison to those of men. During colonial times, a woman could repent and be socially forgiven if she engaged in a sexual act that was not intended for procreation within a marriage. However, as a result of the strict changes in the gender norms of the Victorian Era, a single sexual offense of such sort during this new era would tarnish a woman's reputation for the remainder of her life (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012).

Starting in the early 1900s, a growing number of women started to challenge Victorian gender norms and embrace the idea that women deserve treatment equal to men (Coontz 2005; Mintz and Kellogg 1988). With increasing regularity, women were pursuing higher education, participating in paid work, postponing marriage, and declaring autonomy as sexual beings, all of which had profound impacts on married life. Divorce rates in the United States were climbing and fertility rates were declining (Cherlin 1992; Coontz 2005; Mintz and Kellogg 1988.) While conservatives panicked that the family was in crisis, family scholars began theorizing new meanings of marriage and family that more adequately matched the cultural shifts that were occurring. The notion of

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companionate marriages surfaced, wherein patriarchal unions were replaced by marriages that emphasized friendship, mutual attraction, and equality, including equal rights to sexual desire and activity (Farrell 1999).

During the Great Depression, marriage and birthrates declined. Widespread unemployment and rapidly increasing poverty rates forced many people to postpone getting married and having children (Mintz and Kellogg 1988). World War II also largely affected marriage in the U.S. The onset of the war brought with it a surge in marriages. Some married to establish a sense of foundation during a time of great uncertainty, while others married to avoid the initial drafts. The swell of marriages was accompanied by a baby boom as the birth rate climbed to its highest level in twenty years. Ironically, the WWII marriage surge was matched with unprecedented divorce rates, likely a result of the increased autonomy many women developed as they entered the workforce and lived alone during their husbands' deployments.

The post-war era brought with it a reinvigorated focus on marriage and family. The average age of first marriage reached a record low, divorce rates leveled off, and birth rates skyrocketed (Mintz and Kellogg 1988). The male breadwinner/female homemaker paradigm resurfaced, as increasing numbers of women chose to focus on the fulfilling the roles wife and mother over student and employee. However, not all women were eager to leave the workforce and reclaim the role of homemaker. A clear propaganda campaign disseminated through media and other social institutions supported the emphasis on entering married life, often stigmatizing individuals (especially women) who chose to forgo or delay marriage (Coontz 2005).

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The sexual liberation movement and "second-wave" of feminism in the 1960s and 70s relaxed society's obsession with marriage. People began marrying at older ages, the male breadwinner/female homemaker archetype waned as growing numbers of women (re)entered the workforce, and divorce rates, once again, started to climb (Coontz 2005). Marriage intersected with the Civil Rights Movement as states throughout the U.S. began repealing their anti-miscegenation laws. In the 1967 case Loving vs. Virginia, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that denying interracial couples the right to marry was unconstitutional.

With marriage being recognized as a fundamental civil right, same-gender couples began to publicly advocate their right to wed. In 1970, Minnesota residents Jack Baker and Michael McConnel became the first same-gender couple to file for a marriage license. Their request was denied, leading the couple to file a suit in district court arguing that Minnesota law lacked a specific ban on same-gender marriage. Their case would make it to the Supreme Court, where it was dismissed in a one-sentence ruling (Pierceson 2013). While the decision clearly announced the Supreme Court's disapproving position on same-gender marriage, the case garnered national attention and served as a catalyst for the lesbian and gay rights movement to concentrate on the issue.

The next major milestone in the fight for the legalization of same-gender marriage in the U.S. took place over two decades later. The Supreme Court of Hawaii's 1993 decision of *Baehr v. Lewin* determined that denying same-gender couples the right to marry constituted discrimination based on sex (Bernstein and Taylor 2013). The case was sent back to trial court where, in 1996, it was ruled that limiting marriage to man/woman unions was unconstitutional (Pierceson 2013).

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While the judicial approval of same-gender marriage in Hawaii was monumental, it did not result in the legalization of same-gender marriage in Hawaii. The widespread media attention of the case brought about a significant backlash on the national political front. In 1996, opponents of same-gender marriage presented the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to congress. Under federal law, the bill defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman (Andersen 2006). While DOMA did not restrict individual states from legalizing same-gender marriage, it permitted states to disregard same-gender marriages performed in other states. DOMA also restricted the federal benefits that would be available to same-gender married couples. The bill made it through congress and was signed into law by President Clinton in September of 1996 (Bernstein and Taylor 2013). In 1998, Hawaiian legislators proposed an amendment to their state's constitution that would ban same-gender marriage. Nearly 70 percent of Hawaiians voted in favor of the amendment, making same-gender marriage illegal in Hawaii (Andersen 2006; Bernstein and Taylor 2013).

It was not until 2003 that Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-gender marriage (Bernstein and Taylor 2013). The following year, San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom ordered that marriage licenses be administered to same-gender couples. Over 4,000 same-gender couples applied and were wed within a month before their marriages were overturned by the California Supreme Court. Then, in 2008, the California Supreme Court ruled that excluding same-gender couples from marriage was unconstitutional. Over 18,000 same-gender couples were married from June 17 through November 4, until Proposition 8 was passed by California voters, banning same-gender marriage in the state (Taylor et al. 2009).

By the time Proposition 8 was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013, making same-gender marriage legal yet again in California, a number of other states had already joined

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Massachusetts in legalizing same-gender marriage. In 2012, President Obama became the first sitting president to support same-gender marriage, and by 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that Section 3 of DOMA – which defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman – was unconstitutional. In June of 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that all state bans on same-gender marriage were unconstitutional, making same-gender marriage legal throughout the U.S (Ghaziani, Taylor, and Stone 2016). While the exact number is unknown, as of 2017, it is estimated that over half a million same-gender marriages have occurred in the U.S (Romero 2017).

Although many members of the LGBT+ community have spent the past several decades fighting to gain access to legal marriage, today many people are choosing to postpone marriage. The average age of first marriage is currently 29 for men and 27 for women (Manning, Brown, and Payne 2014; US Census Bureau 2011; Yodanis and Lauer 2017). Several factors contribute to the higher ages of first marriage. Marriage used to be the primary marker of entering adulthood, but many people currently prefer to pursue higher education and secure a job prior to marrying (Yodanis and Lauer 2017). The choice to get married is often connected to feelings of financial security. This explains why people of lower education and lower income are less likely to marry (Cherlin 2009; Wilson 2012). People with lower socio-economic status often put off marriage out of fear that they lack the financial stability needed to succeed (Edin and Kafalas 2005; Silva 2015). Along these lines, married people today are also having children later in life, and they are having fewer children when they do (Hayford, Guzzo, and Smock 2014).

Despite news headlines that imply marriage is on the decline, marriage remains a widely supported societal norm. A recent survey found that only five percent of Americans said they were never married and had no desire to ever get married (Newport and Wilke 2013). In 2017,

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more than half of Americans 18 years of age and older were married (Geiger and Livingston 2019). Americans are marrying later in life, but the vast majority will marry eventually (Yodanis and Lauer 2017), and when they do, they will likely follow marital norms that have been in place for centuries. In most contemporary mixed-gender marriages in the United States: men propose (Lamont 2014); women take men's last names (Gooding and Kreider 2010); spouses live together (US Census Bureau 2012); spouses share financial resources (Lauer and Yodanis 2011); monogamy is practiced (Conley et al. 2012); children are had (Martinez, Daniels, and Chandra 2012); and women complete a disproportionate amount of work (Bianchi et al. 2012; Chesley and Flood 2016; Hochschild and Machung 1989; Yavorsky, Kamp Dush, and Schoppe-Sullivan 2015).

While less in known about the practices of married same-gender couples, a growing body of research is exploring the attitudes and behaviors of people in same-gender marriages. One study found that people in same-gender marriages – especially men – were more likely to at least consider engaging in CNM in comparison to mixed-gender marriages (Green, Valleriani, and Adam 2016). Same-gender couples have also been found to practice more egalitarian divisions of household labor (Biblarz and Savci 2010; Goldberg, Smith, and Perry-Jenkins 2012; Kurdek 2007). Across most other marriage norms, research on same-gender married couples reveals that they are more similar to mixed-gender marriages than they are different (Badgett 2009; Kimport 2014; Ocobock 2013).

Contemporary Theories on Marriage

Deinstitutionalization and The Individualization of Marriage

The status of marriage is highly debated in contemporary scholarship. Some argue that the legalization of same-gender marriage and the high divorce rates suggest that marriage is

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becoming deinstitutionalized such that the norms and rules that dictate the behaviors of married life are weakening (Cherlin 2004). This perspective implies that marriage is becoming individualized. The individualization of marriage theory purports that the loosening of social rules pertaining to marriage – rules informing when people are supposed to get married, who they are supposed to get married to, what behaviors they should practice in married life, etc. – affords people today greater autonomy to make choices about marriage free from social constraints (Cherlin 2009; Giddens 1992).

Others are critical of the individualization thesis and argue that the informal rules governing marital conduct remain salient and may even be growing in power (Lauer and Yodanis 2010; Yodanis and Lauer 2014). Yodanis and Lauer (2014) argue that most empirical evidence examining the behaviors of married people suggest that marriages remain highly integrated and interdependent. For instance, the majority of married people report feeling personally responsible for their spouse's overall wellbeing, more than 90 percent of mixed-gender married couples share the same last name (Gooding and Kreider 2010), and most married couples choose to pool their financial resources (Lauer and Yodanis 2011). Further, divorce rates have stabilized since the 1980s (Stevensen and Wolfers 2007).

A prominent limitation of these findings and research testing the individualization hypothesis is that they focus almost exclusively on the experiences of mixed-gender couples. The little research available on the behaviors practiced by same-gender couples indicate support of the individualization of marriage. For instance, people in committed same-gender relationships may be less likely to share the same last name (Clarke, Burns, and Burgoyne 2008; Patterson and Farr 2017) and be more likely to maintain financial independence (Burns, Burgoyne, and Clark 2008).

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Social Exchange Theory and Marriage

Social exchange theory examines interpersonal exchanges occurring within relationships using cost-benefit analyses. In the context of marriage, social exchange theory posits that individuals enter into marital relationships under the assumption that the rewards will outweigh the costs, resulting in a profit of favorable relationship outcomes (Blau 1964; Blood and Wolfe 1960; Nakonezny and Denton 2008). In order for a marriage to produce a sustainable positive outcome, the social exchanges occurring within the marriage must be viewed as profitable (rewards outweighing the costs) for both individuals within that marriage. When both individuals in the marriage view the social exchanges within the relationship as profitable, it results in higher marital satisfaction (Homans 1974) and lower marriage dissolution (Levinger 1979). Conversely, if either individual within a marriage considers the costs or efforts required of the relationship to be higher than the rewards or benefits offered of the relationship, it can result in negative outcomes. Given the intended permanency associated with marriages, it is societally expected that the individuals within a romantic couple will – to varying degrees – assess each other's relationship expectations for compatibility prior to marrying. This assessment is typically completed while a couple is dating and may involve conversations about how the couple would negotiate paid and unpaid work, distribute resources, and so on.

The seemingly subjective negotiations of cost-benefit analyses within marriages are largely informed by social structures, including education, religion, and media. Every individual enters a marriage with a unique socialization and a subsequently unique belief system of how social exchanges within marriages are expected to take place. For instance, the social exchanges expected within a conservative mixed-gender marriage could vary greatly from those expected within a liberal same-gender marriage.

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Once couples choose to enter marriage, they are subject to the social pressure to remain in their marriages, even if the costs begin to outweigh the benefits of their relationship. In such instances, couples may begin to comparatively assess the negative outcomes of their own marriage to those expected of potential alternative relationships. Even if one or both individuals within a couple begin to view their marriage as unprofitable, they may still choose to remain in their relationship if they do not envision any alternative relationship providing them with a higher quality of life. For example, a woman in an abusive marriage may find the costs of being in that relationship outweigh the rewards, but she may remain in her marriage if the abuse she has endured has disabled her from perceiving any alternative relationship as being profitable.

Gender and Sexual Inequalities in Marriage

At the macro level, marriage is an institution that has historically helped society to function properly. For centuries, the institution of marriage has been used to structure family life, gender norms, and sexual behaviors in the United States. Marriage is the foundation of what sociologist Dorothy Smith referred to as the Standard North American Family (SNAF). The SNAF consists of a legally married, heterosexual, mixed-gender couple who procreate and raise their children in the same household (Smith 1993). This standard or normative family structure is dependent on a binary understanding of gender (man/woman). Built upon this binary, the SNAF provides society with rigidly defined gender roles that are expected to be followed by married people in man/woman marriages. These norms of marriage inform the behaviors and attitudes of married men and women in many ways: how they should distribute paid and unpaid work, how they should perform as mothers and fathers, and how they should monitor their sexual desires and behaviors, to name a few. In short, marriage is a powerful institution.

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While marriage may have served a functional purpose in terms of structuring family, gender, and sexuality, as an institution it is not without its problems. Marriage is built upon the social system of patriarchy, advantaging men and disadvantaging women (Coontz 2005; D'Emilio and Freedman 2012; Mintz and Kellogg 1988). For centuries in the United States – and still presently, elsewhere – women in man-woman marriages were treated as the property of their husbands. This historical devaluing of women and femininity continues to have deleterious effects on contemporary married women. Decades of sociological and feminist scholarship have examined the many ways in which the gendered expectations of mixed-gender marriages and the SNAF have produced systems of inequality that disadvantage women. Norms informing marital name change (Goldin and Shim 2004; Gooding and Kreider 2010), the division of labor (Benard and Correll 2010; Budig and England 2001; Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007; Graf, Brown, and Patten 2018), and the policing of sexuality (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012; Katz 2007) have all historically bolstered the patriarchal foundations of marriage.

The custom of married women taking their husbands' last name remains widely practiced (Goldin and Shim 2004; Gooding and Kreider 2010). This norm stems from the patriarchal doctrine of coverture wherein married women would legally lose much of their autonomy as separate individuals and become the possessions of their husbands (Cherlin 2009; Zaher 2002). While the passage of married women's earnings acts and married women's property acts in the late 1800s and early 1900s afforded women greater opportunities to possess property and establish financial independence, the patriarchal effects off coverture can still be seen in contemporary society. Up until the passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act in 1974, single women were not able to apply for credit cards. The only way a married woman could apply was if her husband agreed to cosign, giving him access to the line of credit.

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In these ways, coverture laws made married women financially dependent on their husbands. Through both structurally embedded policies and culturally reinforced norms, the institutions of the workforce and the family in the United States continue to disadvantage women in ways that limit their autonomy (Benard and Correll 2010; Budig and England 2001; Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007; Graf, Brown, and Patten 2018). This is exemplified through the structurally reinforced gender role of married men being breadwinners and married women being caregivers (Bernard 1981; Chesley 2016; Christensen and Palkovitz 2001; Dillaway and Pare 2008; Zuo 2004). While more women are entering the workforce, they still only get paid a fraction of what men in equivalent positions earn (Graf, Brown, and Patten 2018). Women with children are further vulnerable of experiencing inequality as evidenced by the "motherhood penalty" phenomenon, an occupational disadvantage experienced by employed mothers that employed fathers do not similarly experience (Benard and Correll 2010; Budig and England 2001; Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007). Furthermore, even in dual-earner mixed-gender marriages, women continue to be tasked with the responsibility of completing a disproportionate amount of unpaid work around the home (Chelsely and Flood 2016; Hochschild and Machung 1989; Sanchez and Thomson 1997; Stone 2007; Yavorsky, Kamp Dush, Schoppe-Sullivan 2015).

Coverture laws also contributed to the unequal policing of married women's bodies and sexuality. The devaluation of women's bodies traces back to the early years of colonialism in the United States (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012; Katz 2007). During this time, the ideals of Puritanism shaped social standards for sexual activity. As such, any non-procreative sex act was believed to be sinful, especially those that took place outside of marriage. While both men and women who had sex outside of marriage were held accountable for their deviant behaviors,

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the punishments administered varied by gender. Men, who had access to property and money, were typically fined for fornication. Women, lacking access to such capital, had to accept physical punishment, often by means of whipping.

Women, who were viewed as the "weaker vessel" and less able to control their sexual desires, also received harsher punishments for engaging in extramarital sexual activity. In some colonies, adultery was a crime that could only be committed by married women (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012; Katz 2007). Married men could have sex with single women and were often charged with fornication. However, married women who had sex with men other than their husband would be charged with adultery, a crime found worthy of the death penalty if convicted.

Although married women faced harsher punishments than single women if they committed sexual transgressions, married women held an advantage in rape trials. Accused rapists were less likely to be convicted when the victim was a single woman, as single women were considered to be more willing to give consent than married women (D'Emilio and Freedman 2012). Furthermore, the rape of a man's wife was interpreted as an attack of his property. Framing rape trials as crimes against men's property rather than the sexual assaults of women further enticed the courts to condemn the rapes of a married woman.

The patriarchal denigration of (married) women's bodies has had long-term effects. It was not until 1993 that all 50 states criminalized marital rape (Martin, Taft, and Resick 2007). Given that the vast majority of rape victims are women, this delayed legal protection exemplifies gender inequality. The reality that it took hundreds of years for the legal system to recognize that married women could indeed be sexually assaulted by their spouses demonstrates the pervasive and sustained patriarchal effects of coverture and the perpetuation of the sexual double standard

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that continues to affect women today (Farvid, Braun and Rowney 2017; Jackson and Cram 2003; Kitzinger 1995; Marks and Fraley 2005; Reid, Elliott, and Webber 2011).

While these examples illustrate how normative practices associated with marriage contribute to the maintenance of gender inequality, married men and women who follow these gendered marital norms are socially rewarded. At a societal level, the symbolic capital of marriage often results in married couples being more highly valued by society (Cherlin 2009). There are also structural advantages to being married (DePaulo and Morris 2005; Yodanis and Lauer 2017). According to a report filed by the Congressional Budget Office, marriage affords its constituency over 1,100 legal rights, including tax breaks, adoption and parenting privileges, access to family health care coverage, hospital visitations, and end of life decision-making (Holtz-Eakin 2004). People in unwed relationships do not have the same access to these privileges, which results in a system of inequalities based on marital status. In comparison to unmarried people, married people are happier (Holt-Lunstad, Birmingham, and Jones 2008), wealthier (Gibson-Davis 2009; Zagorsky 2005), and healthier (Holt-Lunstad et al. 2008; Horn et al. 2013; Waite and Gallagher 2002). Given that, for centuries, marriage was restricted to mixed-gender unions, the inequalities caused by marriage largely affect individuals in same-gender relationships. In these ways, marriage has served to normalize and privilege both the gender binary and heterosexuality. This particular social system of privileging is referred to as *heteronormativity*.

Problematizing Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity is the set of ideas and practices that normalize and privilege heterosexuality and the gender binary (Bernstein & Taylor 2013; Hopkins, Sorensen, & Taylor 2013; Kimport 2014; Kitzinger 2005; Schilt & Westbrook 2009; Ward & Schneider 2009;

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Warner 1991). Heteronormativity has garnered much attention in the sociology of gender and sexuality scholarship since its original conceptualization in queer theoretical circles decades ago. The advent of queer theory problematized the societal assumptions that gender, sex, and sexuality are all fixed, dichotomized classification systems that are inextricably linked (Butler [1990] 2011; [1993] 2011; Sedgwick 1990; Warner 1999). Queer theorists were critical of society's wide-held belief that a person's gender is expected to be reflective of their sex, and subsequently expected to be reflective of their sexuality. For example, it is normatively expected for a person who is assigned the female sex to present herself in accordance with feminine gender norms and to be attracted to persons whose sex and gender are opposite of her own.

Heteronormativity, like gender, is a pervasive element of society. Heteronormativity is maintained through institutional, cultural, and interpersonal practices that produce and sustain heterosexuality as the preferred means to guide social conduct (Bernstein and Taylor 2013; Kimport 2014; Kitzinger 2005; Schilt and Westbrook 2009; Ward and Schneider 2009). Virtually every arena of social life serves to maintain heterosexuality's normalcy, from religion (Henshaw 2014; Yip 2007), to medicine (Davis, Dewey, and Murphy 2016; Kitzinger 2005), to work (Giddings and Pringle 2011; Ozturk and Rumens 2014; Schilt and Westbrook 2009), to family (Martin 2009; Wolkomir 2009), to education (Blackburn and Smith 2010; Garcia 2009; Wilkinson and Pearson 2009), to media (Drew 2016; Martin and Kayzak 2009). In this regard, heteronormativity produces sexual and gender inequality. When institutionalized regulations and interpersonal practices simultaneously operate in ways that normalize and privilege heterosexuality, homosexuality – heterosexuality's binary opposite – becomes stigmatized and marginalized (Butler [1990] 2011; Jackson 2006; Valocchi 2005; Warner 1999). As Jackson (2005) states, heterosexuality and homosexuality "are co-constructed in

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a reciprocal, but hierarchical relationship. Heterosexuality in these terms is sustained by the very presence of its marginalized other, which constantly threats to destabilize it," (23).

I conceptualize heteronormativity as a set of expectations that perpetuate sexual and gender inequality through the privileging of mixed-gender couples and men. Marriage has historically been a locus of both patriarchy and heterosexism, making it a notable arena of social life worthy of study in relation to heteronormativity.

The Effects of Heteronormativity on LGBT+ Families

The tumultuous history of the legalization of same-gender marriage underscores how heteronormativity has institutionally shaped social understandings of what constitutes a family. By legally denying same-gender couples the right to marry, LGBT+ individuals have been facing structural disadvantages in their relationships for centuries. These disadvantages are clearly seen in the context of family life. Married or not, same-gender parents have faced a number of structural and cultural barriers in their efforts to claim familial status. Despite the fact that there is no empirical evidence to suggest that same-gender parents are in any way inferior or inadequate in comparison to mixed-gender parents (Biblarz and Stacey 2010; Kitzinger and Wilkinson 2004), same-gender parents have faced obstacles barring them from legal adoption for decades. Even though same-gender marriage is legalized at the national level, adoption policies for same-gender parents vary greatly from state to state. As the family law director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights stated in a 2017 *New York Times* piece, "'You can be completely respected and protected as a family in one state and be a complete legal stranger to your children in another. To know that you could drive into another state and not be considered a parent anymore, that's a pretty terrifying situation.'" (Harris 2017, para. 3).

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These heteronormative legal restrictions defining family have shaped cultural perceptions of same-gender relationships. In one of the most extensive studies measuring public opinion on same-gender relationships to date, Powell et al. (2010) found that a large portion of Americans either oppose or remain uncertain about whether same-gender couples count in their definitions of family. Many individuals who resisted the inclusion of same-gender couples argued that families are contingent on man/woman relationships wherein the gender binary enforces specific roles upon men and women within the family unit. As of 2017, 32 percent of U.S. adults still oppose same-gender marriage (Pew Research Center 2017).

Empirical evidence from a diverse array of studies suggest that perceptions of family continue to be shaped by heteronormativity. Health care providers presume that children belong to married heterosexual couples who live in the same household (Kitzinger 2004). Television advertisements of same-gender families rarely deviate from the SNAF mold (Drew 2016). Children's films associate heterosexual love stories with magical, exceptional powers (Martin and Kayzak 2009). The majority of parents raise their children under the assumption that they are heterosexual, rendering the possibility of a gay identity invisible (Martin 2009). As these studies show, the family – through a myriad of ways – is both produced and reproduced with the underlying presumption that heterosexuality is not only normal but also compulsory (Rich 1980). Comparable to the manner in which male is typically understood to be the neutral standard against which female is judged, heterosexuality is the unwavering standard against which all other permutations of sexuality are measured in patriarchal and heteronormative societies.

However, a growing body of literature examining both heterosexual and same-gender families suggests that a number of heteronormative underpinnings of the family are being challenged. These studies demonstrate how individuals deviate from heteronorms through

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interpersonal practices including the resistance of heterosexist wedding rituals (Fetner and Heath 2016), the adoption of nonmonogamous practices in married life (Green 2010; Green et al. 2016), and the enactment of gender-neutral parenting styles (Averett 2016). From a cultural level, attitudes supporting challenges to heteronormative family norms have also improved. Support for same-gender marriage has risen 25 percent over the past ten years (Pew Research Center 2017), and a 2014 Gallup Poll found that 63 percent of Americans agree that same-gender couples should be allowed to adopt children (Swift 2014).

While same-gender marriage may be perceived as a significant milestone in in the gay rights movement, there has been much debate about the ability of same-gender marriage to challenge heteronormativity. Several queer and feminist scholars have expressed concern that SGM would only assimilate queer individuals into heteronormativity (Butler 2004; Conrad, Chavez, Nair, and Loeffler 2014; Duggan 2002; Ettelbrick 1989; Jeffreys 2004; Warner 1999). However contemporary scholarship in sociology argues that the practices of married same-gender couples and their growing social presence have the capacity to challenge the normalcy of heterosexuality and its subsequent social system of heteronormativity (Bernstein 2015; Fetner and Heath 2016; Heath 2013; Hull 2006). While individuals in SGM may reinforce some aspects of heteronormativity, they also simultaneously challenge others.

Assimilation into Heteronormativity: A Critique of Same-Gender Marriage

Many feminist scholars have long been critical of marriage, bringing attention to the oppressive underpinnings of the heteronormative institution that enables gender inequality, the subordination of women, and the perpetuation of patriarchal structures (Bevacqua 2004; Ettelbrick 1989; Jeffreys 2004; Josephson 2005). While much of this critique has been aimed at marriages that are perceived to be heterosexual, the arguments have also been extended

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to SGM. Jeffreys (2004) argues for the abolishment of both mixed-gender and same-gender marriage, alike, saying:

> I do not think marriage can be saved and made into a neutral and egalitarian institution that would be open to either heterosexuals or lesbians and gay men. Marriage exists to form the cement for the heteropatriarchy. The demolition of male dominance requires that marriage should, as the foundation stone, be withdrawn (330).

Jeffreys and her fellow radical feminists are not alone in arguing that legalizing SGM would not transform marriage as an institution, but rather, merely normalize queer folks into the current heteronormative institution. Queer theorists have also argued that legalizing same-gender marriage encourages what Duggan (2002) calls homonormativity, a social system that silences the critical voices of queer lifestyles and encourages queer assimilation into heteronormative practices. Duggan (2002) more poignantly critiques the growing presence of homonormativity in queer culture saying "…we have been administered a kind of political sedative – we get marriage and the military then we go home and cook dinner, forever," (p. 189).

If heteronormativity is a set of practices that privileges heterosexuality, homonormativity may be understood as the belief that sexual minorities should conform to these practices to gain greater acceptance in society (Robinson, 2016). When sexual minorities conform to homonormative practices by entering into domesticized relationships and relinquishing queer political agendas, they benefit from what Puar (2007) refers to as homonationalism – national recognition and inclusion for distancing oneself from sexual (and racial) others. The distinction between heteronormativity and homonormativity is important, as the two terms tend to be conflated in the literature on SGM.

Recent research suggests that homonormativity may be increasingly prevalent in the contemporary queer community. Ghaziani (2011) argues that the gay rights movement

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has entered into a "post-gay" era, a positionality that deemphasizes the contentious political and social history of queer activism in an attempt to normalize the appearance of the LGBT+ community. Ghaziani argues that in today's post-gay era, the gay community is increasingly focused on building bridges to the dominant group rather than distinguishing boundaries between them. Indeed, the growing body of qualitative research examining the allure of SGM for both married and unmarried same-gender couples suggests that a salient reason that marriage is appealing is because of the symbolic and cultural capital associated with (heteronormative) marital status (Hull 2006; Green 2010; Kimport 2014; Lanutti 2005; Ocobock 2013). For example, the majority of married gay men in Ocobock's (2013) study admitted that marriage's social benefit of relationship legitimacy was an influential factor when deciding to marry. While it remains unclear if same-gender couples will be able to access and benefit from the privileges associated with heteronormative relationships (see Doan, Loehr, and Miller 2014), the reality that many queer individuals desire those privileges supports the claims of both Ghaziani (2011) and Duggan (2002) that queer culture may be in the process of being consumed by heteronormative culture.

Despite the concerns that queer individuals are assimilating into heteronormative lifestyles, much scholarship is hesitant to jump to the assimilation conclusion just because some queer folks are aspiring to lifestyles similar to those of prominent heterosexual culture. For instance, Calhoun (2000) argues that lesbians and gay men have been socially constructed as "family outlaws" and, therefore, have historically been viewed as unfit candidates for marriage and parenting. Calhoun contends that challenging this conception requires placing family at the center of queer politics. By focusing their efforts toward gaining access to familial

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and marital statuses, Calhoun argues that queer folks will be better able to challenge heteronormative family models in ways that diversify the family unit to make it more inclusive. A number of scholars have developed this line of reasoning, arguing that SGM holds the power to challenge the heteronormative underpinnings of marriage. While many of these scholars acknowledge that gay men and lesbians who wed may simply want to attain the social benefits of marriage and not always *intend* to disrupt heteronormativity with their marital unions, some scholars argue that the mere presence of same-gender couples in the prominently heterosexual social context of marriage challenges its heteronormative structure (Bernstein 2015; Hull 2006).

Positioning Same-Gender Marriage as a Challenge to Heteronormativity

Scholars who acknowledge the potential benefits of SGM argue that the growing presence and subsequent social awareness of same-gender relationships challenge the normalcy of heterosexuality and its subsequent social system of heteronormativity (Bernstein 2015; Heath 2013; Hull 2006). For example, Bernstein (2015) argues that events and lifestyles such as same-gender weddings and same-gender parenting often force same-gender couples to publicize their relationships. This public exposure of gay lifestyles – even if they resemble the lifestyles of heterosexuals – challenges the dominance of heterosexuality as the only normative mating arrangement. Hull (2006) offers a similar perspective regarding the transformative power of the increased visibility of same-gender couples. Before the U.S. legalized SGM, Hull argued that same-gender commitment ceremonies were cultural performances that served as instances of political resistance wherein family, friends, and clergy watched queer individuals embody a heteronormative institution.

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However, many contemporary explorations of SGM agree that reducing the practice to being purely supportive or oppositional to heteronormativity oversimplifies the issue (Bartholomay 2018; Bernstein and Taylor 2013; Ghaziani, Taylor, Stone 2016; Green 2010; Heath 2013; Kimport 2014; Olsen 2013; Weber 2015). For instance, Weber (2015) argued that typecasting all support of SGM as being purely assimilationist or radical in nature glosses over individual motivations behind advocacy for SGM. Examining the tactics employed by several organizations protesting the passage of Proposition 8, Weber (2015) argued that the radical, "queer-in-your-face rather than privately gay" demands issued by protesters illustrated that aspiring equal rights through marriage does not necessarily equate to heteronormative aspirations (p. 1158). Weber's work exemplifies that limiting analyses of SGM to the binary outcome of being either assimilationist or disruptive in regard to heteronormativity inaccurately captures the complexities of the phenomenon.

Other empirical research examining the attitudes and behaviors of individuals in same-gender marriages further supports the claim that heteronormativity is both embraced and challenged by this constituency (Green 2010, Heath 2013; Kimport 2014; Weber 2015). Green (2010) found that, while many of the same-gender married persons he interviewed challenged heteronormativity in their marriages by deviating from the norms of monogamy and stereotypical gendered divisions of labor, many also valued marriage for its normative attributes of stability and social legitimacy. However, rather than accusing these individuals of being assimilationists uncritical of heteronormativity, Green explains that "homosexuals live alongside heterosexuals and heteronormativity, and are, in significant measure, subject to the latter's socializing properties," (p. 427). Heath (2013) presented similar findings in that the married same-gender couples in her study expressed sentiments that both reinforced and challenged

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heteronormativity. While many of Heath's participants desired the symbolic capital associated with marriages that are perceived to be heterosexual, they also acknowledged a desire to contest the legal restrictions that limited their rights.

Kimport (2014) is another scholar who argues that SGM cannot be solely explained as either the debilitation or the stabilization of a heteronormative institution. Analyzing interviews from individuals who wed in San Francisco's 2004 "Winter of Love," Kimport found that the motivations for marrying varied among her participants. While some wed with the intentions of challenging and transforming the oppressive heteronormative underpinnings of marriage, others entered the institution with the goal of assimilating into the normative roles of married life, further enforcing marriage's symbolic and cultural capital as a distinctive social status.

Accessing Heteronormative Privilege in Marriage

The most recent sociological literature favors the argument that same-gender marriage may simultaneously serve to challenge and reinforce heteronormativity (Bartholomay 2018; Bernstein and Taylor 2013; Green 2010; Heath 2013; Hopkins et al. 2013; Kimport 2014; Olsen 2013; Weber 2015). However, inconsistent conceptualization and operationalization of heteronormativity make it difficult to formulate any extensive arguments in this area. A person in a same-gender relationship may position oneself within the social regime of homonormativity by adopting and practicing heteronormative values and behaviors (Acosta 2018; Duggan 2002). Doing so may enable a person in a same-gender relationship to gain access to heteronormative institutions that serve to maintain and privilege "normal" relationships/marriages, but accessing the privileges of an institution and accessing the micro interactional privileges of heteronormativity are two distinct areas that are often conflated.

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Consider the example of SGM. Previous scholarship has articulated how the legalization of SGM was – at least partially – the result of the LGBT+ community establishing convincing narratives of sameness rather than difference to heterosexual society (Bernstein 2015; Bernstein and Taylor 2013; Ghaziani, Taylor, and Stone 2016; Kimport 2014). It is a fair argument that endorsing the behaviors and values that are normatively expected to be held by people in mixed-gender marriages (i.e., having children, practicing monogamy, etc.) helped same-gender couples gain entrance to the institution of marriage. Access to marriage simultaneously provides same-gender married couples access to the legal benefits (access to spouse's health care, tax breaks, etc.) and the cultural benefits (the relationships of married couples are taken more seriously) of marriage. However, those institutional benefits are distinct from interpersonal benefits. In everyday interactions, people in same-gender marriages still do not access the heteronormative privileges that are afforded to people in man-woman marriages. For example, while a man/woman married couple can unremarkably engage in moderate displays of public affection with no social consequences, a same-gender married couple would still need to practice a degree of circumspection when holding in hands in many public spaces. Being married does not liberate a same-gender couple from the maltreatments of homophobia, nor does it grant them access to heteronormative privilege. The privileged status of being married may help mitigate some of these mistreatments, but that should not be confused as access to heteronormativity.

The only instance in which a person in a same-gender marriage may access the interpersonal privileges of heteronormativity is if they are misrecognized as heterosexual in a specific interaction. As Pfeffer (2014) explains of Connell's (2009) concept of recognition, "social rights, privileges, and group membership connected to categories of sex, gender, and sexuality depend largely upon social interpellation," (5). People in same-gender marriages who

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are read and subsequently treated as heterosexual can experience the interpersonal privileges of heteronormativity, but such instances may be fleeting and are dependent on the person's continuous misidentification within that social interaction. These privileges may be mundane, such as having one's sexuality be unremarkable and taken for granted as "normal." In such instances, these interactions may afford hetero-privileges to people in same-gender marriages, but only at the expense of their identity misrecognition.

This growing body of literature examining the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of people in same-gender marriages provides new insight on the changing institution of marriage. Despite these advancements, there remain several areas in need of further examination regarding the status of gender and sexual inequalities within marriage. One such area is the limited research available on married people whose identities challenge binary understandings of gender and sexuality.

Marriage Beyond the Binary

While sociology recognizes that gender and sexuality are socially constructed and that their normative alignment is an ideological source of power, sociologists often reproduce the normalcy of this alignment by accepting it as the assumed starting point for research and using it as the lens through which research is predominantly analyzed (Valocchi 2005). The way sociologists tend to study homosexuality as "outside" of social norms is problematic. Sociological studies of homosexuality typically focus on homosexual identities and experiences independently rather than assessing their social construction in relation to the construction of heterosexuality. Queer theory thrives in that it places sexual difference at the center of intellectual inquiry in comparison to sociological examinations that tend to examine sexuality in

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the margins through minority statuses or deviant behaviors (Namaste 1994; Stein and Plummer 1994; Warner 1991).

Queer theory calls scholars to question how the boundaries for categories, specifically the boundaries defining the heterosexual/homosexual binary, are created, regulated, and contested, and argues that we cannot define homosexual identities in opposition to a naturalized, stabilized heterosexuality (Butler 1993; Namaste 1994; Seidman 1994; Rubin 1993). To better understand how the hetero/homo binary is maintained and how it can potentially be challenged, queer theory calls for explorations of folks who identify beyond the binary. As Namaste (1994) explains, "If heterosexuality is something which is taken for granted, and if the adoption of a homosexual identity only serves to bolster the strength of heterosexuality, then perhaps the most effective sites of resistance are those created by people who refuse both options. A critical sexual politics, in other words, struggles to move beyond the confines of an inside/outside model," (p. 230).

The institution of marriage is built on two socially constructed, systemic binaries: gender and sexuality. Much scholarship on inequalities within marriage focuses on these two variables. Through both macro structures and micro interactions, marriage has historically served to privilege men, masculinity, and heterosexuality. Given the binary expectation of both gender and sexuality, the privileging of men, masculinity, and heterosexuality also results in the marginalizing of women, femininity, and homosexuality within marriage.

While exploring gender and sexual inequalities at this binary level of conceptualization has produced a rich body of scholarship, there are critical restrictions to the sociological study of gender and sexuality when these characteristics are only examined as dichotomies. Rather than binaries, some scholars now recognize that gender and sexuality exist on spectrums (Bem 1993; Connell 1995; Halberstam 1998; Lucal 1999; Valentine 2007). Gender identities exist far beyond

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male or female, including trans, non-binary, non-conforming, agender, genderqueer, gender-fluid, pangender, and bigender. Similarly, sexual identities also extend beyond heterosexual or homosexual to include bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual, demisexual, gynesexual, and androsexual. I provide definitions of these gender and sexual identities in Appendix A.

These evolving and expanding definitions of gender and sexuality do not cleanly fit within the historical definition of marriage. From a methodological perspective, there are severe limitations to scholarship when gender and sexual identity categories are limited to binary conceptualizations (Frohard-Dourlent et al. 2017; Geist, Reynolds, and Gaytán 2017; Magliozzi, Saperstein, Westbrook 2016; Westbrook and Saperstein 2015). The majority of research on LGBT+ people has focused on the experiences of gay men and lesbians, casting BT+ folks and their experiences to the periphery. Scholars have recognized this shortcoming in the sociology of sexuality. As Biblarz and Savci (2010) advocate, "An important direction for future research is to loosen B and T from L and G and conduct more independent studies on family relationships and processes for bisexual and transgender people over the life course," (492). Given that bisexuals account for roughly 50 percent of Americans who identify as part of the LGBT+ community (Gates 2010), there are an estimated 7 million bisexual people living in the U.S. Excluding the perspectives and behaviors of people who do not identify as either straight or gay from sociological studies limits our understanding of the complex ways gender and sexual inequalities are reproduced and challenged in varied contexts.

This limitation is especially pertinent to studies of marriage. While there is a growing body of research comparatively exploring the experiences of heterosexual marriages with homosexual marriages, these studies often fail to distinctively take into account the experiences of married people who challenge the binary understanding of gender and sexuality.

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In much marriage scholarship, the experiences of married people who do not identify as man or woman, gay or straight, are altogether ignored. Other times, the identities of married gender and sexual non-binary folks are miscategorized or misrecognized by researchers, resulting in their distinct experiences being associated with identity categories that they personally do not identify with (for example, a bisexual woman married to a man may be misrecognized as a heterosexual woman). This possibility presents salient data and methodological limitations to the study of gender, sexuality, and family.

The lack of scholarship examining the experiences of married people with non-binary gender and sexual identities is a gap in need of exploration. This research builds upon the previously established sociological critique of overly simplified biological frameworks of gender and sexuality (Pfeffer 2014) through the examination of married people who identify beyond the man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual binaries. The already complicated question of how people in same-gender marriages may access heteronormative privilege in everyday interactions becomes further complex when considering the same question for married people who do not identify as straight *or* gay. Bisexual, queer, and pansexual (BQP) folks in both same-gender and mixed-gender marriages raise unexamined questions about the ways in which heteronormativity can be accessed and rejected in everyday interactions. A main focus of this research is to explore the ways in which BQP social actors manage how their social identities are recognized as they simultaneously navigate and negotiate opportunities to access benefits afforded to (hetero)normatively recognized genders and sexualities.

Doing and Undoing Gender and Sexuality

My research is theoretically informed by the frameworks of "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987) and "undoing gender" (Deutsch 2007). The doing gender perspective

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acknowledges gender as a pervasive feature of society that is produced and maintained through social interaction (West and Zimmerman 1987; Fenstermaker, West, and Zimmerman 2002). When developing this theory, West and Zimmerman (1987) distinguished the terms sex, sex category, and gender. Sex refers to the socially agreed upon biological traits that distinguish males and females; sex category refers to the assumed sex individuals are placed in during interactions based on the evaluation of their appearance and behavior; and gender refers to the act of displaying masculinity and/or femininity in accordance to the social expectations of one's sex category. Doing gender positions gender as a situated accomplishment and argues that gender is not merely something we are, but rather that it is something we do in interactions with others, (Fenstermaker, West, and Zimmerman 2002; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Doing gender posits that we are constantly being held accountable for our conduct. Failing to adequately perform masculinity or femininity that others expect of us based on the sex category they placed us in during our interaction can have negative consequences. West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that when an individual challenges their expected gender behavior, it is the individual that gets called into question, not the gender system. This is because gender is so deeply embedded into the social structure that it serves as a pervasive institution, designed to endure and withstand individual acts of resistance (Martin 2004). The accountability enforced by a number of institutions such as family, work, and religion maintains the gender binary and inherently produces a systematic understanding of gender differences, enabling the reproduction of gendered differences in power (Fenstermaker, West, and Zimmerman 2002). Repetitively doing gender discursively creates "essential" differences between men and women, resulting in the material embodiment of gender inequality. The pervasiveness of the gender binary's

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accountability structure makes gender differences seem real and inborn rather than something societies collectively construct and control.

However, people do challenge gender norms. West and Zimmerman (1987) explain that "to 'do' gender is not always to live up to normative conceptions of femininity or masculinity; it is to engage in behavior at the risk of gender assessment," (136). While individuals who challenge gender norms may be held accountable in interactions and experience stigmatization, individual acts of resistance may be capable of producing institutional change. Deutsch (2007) supports the idea that everyday interactions can serve as potential sites to produce structural change regarding gender. Offering the theoretical extension of undoing gender, Deutsch (2007) speculates that interpersonal interactions can disrupt the inequality that is produced through our society's oppressive gender system and questions whether interactions can become less gendered and whether gender can become irrelevant in interactions.

Building on this conception of doing and undoing gender, I theorize that marriage experiences contribute to the doing and undoing of sexuality rooted in a heterosexual gender system. My research positions the normalizing of heterosexuality as an ongoing, "emergent aspect of social interaction," (Deutsch 2007:107). In their everyday interactions, married people are held accountable for doing heterosexuality in accordance with the normative behaviors expected of man/woman couples. Yodanis and Lauer (2014) discuss several different behaviors that are normatively expected of married couples that are perceived to be heterosexual, including sharing the same last name, living together in the same household, and having children. If a person deviates from these norms, both their marriage *and* their heterosexuality may be called into question. For example, if a married opposite-sex couple does not have children, their commitment to one another may not be taken seriously, given that society today still considers

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the production of children to be a normative outcome of marriage (Koropeckyj-Cox and Pendell 2007; Sassler and Cunningham 2008). Furthermore, the heterosexuality of one or both of the individuals may also be called into question, given that an absence of children in a mixed-gender marriage may also be interpreted as an absence of heterosexual sex, implying a potentiality for same-gender attraction in our society's binary understanding of sexuality. I position sexuality in this same framework and ask whether social interactions that disrupt heteronormative assumptions render the individual disruptors accountable, or, do these disruptive interactions hold the potential to produce change via the undoing of heteronormativity?

Research Questions

Previous theory and literature make clear that a "gender system" is really a gender *and* sexuality system that is both sustained and transformed through the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of the individuals who exist within it. Understanding how this gender and sexuality system (heteronormativity) is being both reinforced and challenged in the context of marriage calls for several important and unanswered questions. Interpersonal behaviors such as deciding to get married, changing one's last name, and choosing whether or not to practice monogamy are all mechanisms through which the current status of heteronormativity can be assessed.

Attributing scholarly attention to the everyday interactions of married people is valuable given that these behaviors can function to not only maintain but to also disrupt gender and sexual norms. The pervasiveness of heteronormativity ensures that the gender and sexual binaries are policed throughout society. However, being held accountable to the gender and sexual binaries does not mean people must follow them. As West and Zimmerman (1987) argue, people can do gender – and as I argue here, do sexuality – in a range of ways that challenge societal expectations at risk of assessment. In this research, I question what happens when

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heteronormativity is challenged at the interpersonal level in marriage. What are the consequences of deviating from gender and sexual norms of married life, and what potential do these deviations hold for transforming society's understanding of marriage and family in ways that promote greater diversity and inclusivity at both the interpersonal and policy level?

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CHAPTER THREE. METHODS

In-Depth Interviewing

I utilize in-depth interviewing (also referred to as intensive interviewing) to collect data for this study. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative data collection technique typically used by researchers whose goals are to better understand and explore complex ideas, concepts, and phenomena (Guion, Diehl, and McDonald 2001). For this reason, in-depth interviewing is commonly used in inductive research, wherein researchers begin by making specific observations, followed by identifying themes and patterns in their data, and conclude by making general inferences or theoretical contributions. The exploratory nature of in-depth interviewing is facilitated by the usage of open-ended questions, which are questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no", but rather, require the interviewee to explain or elaborate upon a response. In-depth interviews are typically semi-structured, meaning the interviewer goes into the interview with a premeditated list of questions or topics they wish to cover, but the interview itself is conversational in nature, allowing the interview to explore interesting – and often revelatory – ideas as they emerge. This technique also allows for the possibility of unanticipated responses to emerge as part of the data collection.

I decided that in-depth interviewing was the most appropriate data collection technique for this study for several reasons. Foremost, the aim of my research was to explore the everyday experiences of married people. In-depth interviews afforded me the ability to ask open-ended, exploratory questions that enabled me to better understand the complexities and nuances of married life. The semi-structured nature of in-depth interviewing also allowed me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, a strategy I leveraged frequently to clarify the thoughts and stories that my participants shared.

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Study Eligibility

The two main criteria for inclusion in this study were residency and relationship status. To be eligible for this study, participants had to reside in the state of Wisconsin, and they also had to be married for a minimum of six months. Restricting my sample to Wisconsin residents offers a unique contribution to research on marriage. With the exception of Ocobock's 2013 study out of Iowa, the majority of scholarship examining the experiences of married sexual minorities has focused on samples from either Canada (see Fetner and Heath 2016; Green 2010) where same-gender marriage has been legal since 2005, or from historically liberal states such as California (see Kimport 2014). The majority of my participants were recruited from the Milwaukee area. Southeastern Wisconsin presents a unique geographic and cultural demographic for research on gender and sexual inequality. Couched within the oft-conservative Midwest, Milwaukee itself is a culturally diverse, liberal metropolitan area. As such, it is particularly attractive to examine how societal norms pertaining to gender and sexuality within marriage are being practiced in this specific region so that comparisons with other U.S. regions and previous research are possible.

I wanted my participants to be married for a minimum of six months to ensure that they had some time to settle into married life and to eliminate people who planned to divorce only months after marrying. I had debated restricting my sample to people who had been married for at least one year, but given that same-gender marriage had only been legal in Wisconsin for a few years at the time of my recruitment, I was wary of limiting my sample too much in fear of not being able to find people in same-gender marriages willing to participate in my study. Two individuals that contacted me had only been married for four months, but I decided to interview them despite not meeting the six month threshold I had hoped to maintain. Following the

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practices of other researchers who have qualitatively examined the experiences of both mixed-gender and same-gender married couples (see Fetner and Heath 2016; Green 2010; Green, Valleriani, and Adam 2016; Ocobock 2013), I did not limit participation in this research based on race, age, or socioeconomic status. While it was not my goal to achieve a sample that reflects the demographic make-up of the general public, I strove to recruit a diverse array of participants representing different ages, races, genders, and sexualities to more fully examine how marriage is experienced across a variety of lived contexts.

I only interviewed one person in any marriage. While I understand that marriages comprise two individuals who may have different perspectives on married life, my research is not focused on exploring couple-level dynamics. Rather, my research strives to broadly understand the ways in which individuals from diverse sexual orientations view and behave in their marriages. Generating this understanding requires drawing from the experiences of a wider variety of married persons. As a practical matter, requiring both individuals in a marriage to participate in the study would have likely imposed limitations on my recruitment.

Initially, I had planned to interview 40 people: 10 heterosexual women, 10 heterosexual men, 10 homosexual women, and 10 homosexual men. In the early stages of recruitment, I realized that this sampling frame had severe limitations. By limiting my sample this way, I would have reinforced gender and sexual binaries and excluded married people that did not identify as man or woman, heterosexual or homosexual. Given that there is little to no research examining the lived experiences of married folks with non-binary gender and sexual identities, I decided to revise my sampling frame to include these perspectives. In fact, I intentionally oversampled married folks who identified as BQP to address this gap in knowledge.

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Participant Recruitment

This research was approved by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board (Appendix B). I advertised my call for participants in a few different ways. I designed a recruitment flyer (Appendix C) which briefly outlined the purpose of my study, participation logistics, and my contact information (email address and phone number). I contacted administrators at several universities throughout the state of Wisconsin and asked them to electronically distribute my recruitment flyer to their employees. I also posted hard copies of the recruitment flyer around a local university's campus. Most of my married LGBT+ and polyamorous interviewees were recruited via social media. With permission from the groups' administrators, I posted my electronic recruitment flyer on several Milwaukee-based LGBT+ Facebook pages. The majority of the married heterosexual people I spoke with either worked at a Wisconsin university or were the spouse of someone who worked at a university. On a few occasions, I leveraged snowball sampling, wherein participants connected me with another individual whom they thought would be interested in participating in the study. A limitation of snowball sampling is that it can curb the diversity of participants (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). To address this, I leverage respondent-driven sampling techniques wherein each interviewee was limited in the number of referrals that they could make (Schutt 2012). No one in my sample referred more than one potential interviewee.

I employed a theoretical sampling frame (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967) wherein I continued interviewing individuals until the theoretical categories of my research were saturated and no new themes emerged from the data. For example, regarding the theoretical category of "doing sexuality," I continued interviewing married BQP individuals (n=17) until their accounts became repetitive to the point that I could begin to predict how they would

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respond to the majority of questions I was asking about their lives pertaining to being married and identifying as BQP. The consensus in qualitative research is that studies tend to require anywhere from 20 to 50 participants to achieve saturation, but this of course depends on the scope of the project at hand (Charmaz 2006; Creswell 2013; Mason 2010; Morse 1994). In total, I ended up recruiting 41 people representing a diverse array of gender and sexual identities.

Interviewee Characteristics

Table 1 displays the overall demographics of my sample; Table 2 provides individual-level demographic information for each of the 41 people I interviewed; and Appendix D provides a brief personalized description for each of each of my interviewees. The average age of the people I interviewed was 39.4 years, with a range of 24 to 75 years of age. Of the 41 interviewees, 27 identified as cisgender women, 10 as cisgender men, three as gender non-binary, and one as a transgender woman. Regarding sexuality, 15 individuals identified as bisexual, 10 as heterosexual, eight as gay or lesbian, seven as queer, and four as pansexual. Thirty-four of the interviewees identified as white, three identified as black or African American, three identified as multiracial, and two identified as Asian. All of the people I interviewed had at least some college education. Seven people had some college, but no degree, one person had trade or technical training, five people held associate's degrees, 13 held bachelor's degrees, 12 held master's degrees, and three held doctorates. Interviewee's total household annual income ranged from less than $10,000 to more than $150,000. The majority of the people I spoke with identified as not at all religious (n=25) or slightly religious (n=10), while only two individuals identified as very or extremely religious. In terms of political views, eleven of the people I interviewed identified as extremely liberal, 22 identified as liberal, three identified as slightly liberal, and five identified as moderate.

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When finding people to interview for this study, my primary objective was to recruit married people with varied sexual identities. In addition to finding interviewees who were diverse in terms of sexual identification, I also strove to recruit people from different backgrounds. While I was able to achieve this in regard to age and somewhat with education, my sample skewed heavily in other demographic areas. The majority of my participants reported annual household incomes of at least $60,000, perhaps reflecting previous findings that people of lower socio-economic status are more likely to avoid marriage out of fear that they lack the financial stability expected of those within the institution (Cherlin 2009; Eden and Kafalas 2005; Silva 2015; Wilson 2012). Nearly two-thirds of my sample identified as cisgender women and four-fifths of my sample identified solely as white. One particular demographic intersection my sample completely missed was married heterosexual men of color. Lastly, the vast majority of people I spoke with identified as liberal and not religious. This is likely due in part to the phrasing used on my recruitment flyer, which liberally encouraged people in same-gender marriages to participate. A consequence of having a homogenous sample is that I likely reached saturation early, given that the backgrounds and demographics of many members of my sample were similar.

While having somewhat of a homogenous sample can be viewed as a methodological limitation, I do not consider it a limitation in this research. The goal of my research is not to make generalizable claims about the larger population, but rather to explore in-depth the social context and nuance of people's everyday lives, specifically for married people from diverse sexual backgrounds. Furthermore, having a sample that skews secular and liberal provides an interesting lens for some findings I generated. For instance, even the most liberal-identified

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people I spoke with engaged in some very conservative behaviors regarding gender, sexual, and familial norms.

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Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Interviewee Sample

Interviewees (41)
Age: Mean = 39.4 years Range = 24 – 75 years
Length of Marriage Mean = 7 years 9 months Range = 4 months – 33 years 2 months
Gender: Cisgender woman (27) Cisgender man (10) Non-binary (3) Transgender woman (1)
Sexuality[ab]: Bisexual (15) Heterosexual (10) Gay/Lesbian (8) Queer (7) Pansexual (4)
Marriage coupling by gender: Cisgender woman/cisgender man (24) Cisgender woman/cisgender woman (8) Cisgender man/cisgender man (5) Non-binary/cisgender man (1) Non-binary/cisgender woman (1) Non-binary/non-binary (1) Transgender woman/cisgender woman (1)
Race[a]: White (34) African American/Black (3) Multiracial (3) Asian (2)
Highest education level: Some college, no degree (7) Trade/technical training (1) Associate degree (5) Bachelor's degree (13) Master's degree (12) Doctorate (3)
Household income: ≤ $29,000 (3) $30,000-59,999 (6) $60,000-79,999 (10) $80,000-99,999 (7) $100,000-$149,999 (9)

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$150,000-$249,000 (6)
Religiosity:
Not at all religious (25)
Slightly religious (10)
Moderately religious (4)
Very religious (1)
Extremely religious (1)
Political Views:
Extremely liberal (11)
Liberal (22)
Slightly liberal (3)
Moderate (5)
[a] Some participants selected more than one response option
[b] Some participants typed in their own response

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Table 2: Individual-Level Participant Characteristics (n=41)

Pseudonym	*Gender*	*Sexuality*	*Race*	*Age*	*Spouse's Gender*	*Spouse's Sexuality*
Anna	Woman	Heterosexual	White	38	Man	Heterosexual
Barret	Man	Heterosexual	White	47	Woman	Pansexual
Bianca	Woman	Heterosexual	White	45	Man	Heterosexual
Brandi	Woman	Bisexual	White	31	Man	Heterosexual
Brook	Non-Binary	Bisexual	White	60	Man	Bisexual
Carl	Man	Gay/Lesbian	White	39	Man	Gay/Lesbian
Charlie	Man	Heterosexual	White	32	Woman	Heterosexual
Chester	Man	Gay/Lesbian	White	44	Man	Gay/Lesbian
Delilah	Woman	Bisexual	Black or African American	39	Man	Heterosexual
Emery	Woman	Heterosexual	Asian, White	48	Man	Heterosexual
Evelyn	Woman	Pansexual	White	51	Man	Heterosexual
Farrah	Woman	Pansexual	White	40	Woman	Bisexual
Felicity	Woman	Bisexual	White	75	Man	Heterosexual
Fiona	Woman	Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer	White	30	Man	Bisexual
Harrison	Man	Queer, Androsexual	Black or African American	38	Man	Gay/Lesbian
Jordyn	Non-Binary	Queer	White	35	Non-Binary	Queer
Kalvin	Man	Gay/Lesbian	White	37	Man	Gay/Lesbian
Karla	Woman	Heterosexual	Black or African American	32	Man	Heterosexual
Kat	Woman	Queer	White	38	Man	Bisexual
Kaylin	Woman	Gay/Lesbian	White	53	Woman	Gay/Lesbian
Kiana	Woman	Pansexual	White	40	Woman	Bisexual
Kimberly	Woman	Bisexual	White	30	Man	Bisexual
Lana	Woman	Bisexual	White	35	Woman	Gay/Lesbian
Layla	Woman	Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer	White	33	Woman	Gay/Lesbian
Leona	Woman	Bisexual	White	39	Woman	Gay/Lesbian
Lydia	Woman	Gay/Lesbian	White	48	Woman	Gay/Lesbian
Maya	Woman	Heterosexual	White	56	Man	Heterosexual
Morgan	Woman	Bisexual	Asian	31	Man	Heterosexual

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Nathan	Man	Bisexual	White	50	Woman	Heterosexual
Nia	Woman	Heterosexual	Black or African American	24	Man	Heterosexual
Olivia	Woman	Heterosexual	Multiracial	27	Man	Heterosexual
Sahar	Woman	Queer	White	39	Man	Heterosexual
Sawyer	Non-Binary	Bisexual	White	59	Woman	Asexual
Steven	Man	Heterosexual	White	27	Woman	Heterosexual
Taylor	Woman	Gay/Lesbian	White	32	Woman	Gay/Lesbian
Teagan	Woman	Bisexual	White	38	Man	Heterosexual
Teresa	Woman	Bisexual	White	37	Man	Bisexual
Trevor	Man	Bisexual	White	33	Woman	Heterosexual
Trina	Woman	Gay/Lesbian	White	34	Woman	Gay/Lesbian
Whitney	Woman	Queer	White	27	Man	Heterosexual
Zeke	Man	Gay/Lesbian	Multiracial	25	Man	Gay/Lesbian

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The Interview Process

Once I disseminated my recruitment flyer, I waited for interested individuals to reach out to me via phone call, text message, Facebook message, or email. Whenever a person would reach out to me, the first thing I would do is request an email address so I could send them the official informed consent document for the study (Appendix E). I would instruct the interested individual to carefully read through the informed consent document and then ask them to follow up with me with any questions or concerns. If, after reading the informed consent document, the individual wished to continue with the study, I would send them a link to complete a preliminary online survey via Qualtrics (Appendix F). The preliminary survey asked several demographic questions, such as age, race, education, income, gender, sexuality, spouse's gender, spouse's sexuality, etc. Once an individual completed the preliminary survey, I would contact them to schedule the interview. A total of 51 people contacted me expressing an interest in the study. Of the 51 people, 45 proceeded to complete the preliminary survey, and 41 continued to the interview stage. The four individuals who completed the survey but were not interviewed did not reply to my follow up emails to schedule an interview.

When scheduling the interviews, I offered my participants the option of conducting the interviews face-to-face or over the phone. Thirty of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the remaining 11 interviews were conducted over the phone. While face-to-face interviews are typically praised as the ideal practice for qualitative research, there is minimal empirical evidence suggesting that telephone interviews provide inferior data (Novick 2008). Furthermore, the literature on qualitative methods has supported telephone interviewing as an advantageous approach for specific research endeavors. Phone interviews offer greater degrees of flexibility in

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terms of location and scheduling (Novick 2008), and they can increase participants' comfort when discussing sensitive information (Opdenakker 2006).

I made efforts to check the robustness and richness of the interviews generated by phone to those conducted in person. The phone interviews were a bit shorter. The average length of the phone interviews was 68.5 minutes in comparison to 77.1 minutes for face-to-face interviews. Despite lacking the opportunity to view and analyze individuals' body language during phone interviews, I was still able to capture their emotions as they responded to questions. Particularly with the interviews I conducted over the phone, I took careful notes when participants laughed, when their voices cracked as they started cry, and when they raised their volume to speak loudly about things that angered or frustrated them. Even though I was unable to observe their nonverbal cues, the observational notes I took during phone interviews often surpassed the length and detail of those I took during face-to-face interviews. Overall, my comparison of interviews conducted over the phone versus in person suggests that both modes of interview contributed valuable and rich information about marriage experiences. Further, the ability to conduct phone interviews as well as in-person interviews likely allowed me to recruit a more diverse sample of participants. Phone interviews allowed me to connect with people living throughout Wisconsin in cities including Madison, Menomonee Falls, Oshkosh, Mount Pleasant, and Thiensville. The use of phone interviews also enabled me to speak with a few individuals who were homebound taking care of young children, and a handful of people who penciled in interviews during their lunch hours.

In the event that the participant wished to hold the interview face-to-face, I allowed them to choose the location for the interview. I let the participants choose the location to increase their comfort and to help establish rapport. Before they chose the location, I informed the participants

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that the interview would cover some sensitive topics, including lines of questioning pertaining to finances and sexuality. To ensure that participants felt comfortable speaking openly about these topics, I requested that they complete the interviews away from their spouse. Along those lines, I always offered my office on campus as a private option for the interview. While the majority of face-to-face interviewees chose to hold the interviews in my office, several participants elected to hold the interviews in coffee shops or cafes throughout Milwaukee that were more conveniently located for them. I conducted all phone interviews in the privacy of my office.

Before beginning the interview, I would thank the participant for volunteering to participate in my study. While the participants had already read through the informed consent document via email, I provided all of my face-to-face interviewees a hard copy of the informed consent document before beginning the interview and asked them to sign and date the back page, acknowledging their agreement to participate in the study. For the phone interviews, I required participants to electronically sign the consent form and email it to me prior to the interview.

The informed consent document told participants how their confidentiality would be protected, and that no personally identifiable information would be revealed at any point in the study. The informed consent also explained how the data would be stored. When not in use, the recording device storing all interview recordings remained in a locked drawer in my secure university office. The interview transcripts were stored on a password-protected computer that only I and my IRB-trained research assistants could access. In all writing and discussion, pseudonyms are used in place of the participants' names, and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that the findings reported do not expose an individual's identity. For example, when discussing participants in the following chapters, I was careful not to reveal too many demographic features of any given individual. Once participants had a chance to review and sign

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the informed consent document, I asked them if they had any questions or concerns for me before we started.

I used an interview schedule (Appendix G) to guide my semi-structured interviews. To ease participants into the interview process, I began each interview with a brief life history component, asking a few questions about their upbringing. Once the participants seemed comfortable, I would start asking questions about their relationship with their spouse. I organized my questions chronologically, first asking how a participant met their spouse, what their relationship was like before they got married, what their wedding was like, and, lastly, what their relationship has been like since being married. The majority of the questions I asked participants inquired about their behaviors and attitudes pertaining to marital norms that are informed by gender or sexuality. For example, I asked each participant questions about how they and their spouse divide household chores, whether or not they and their spouse share the same last name, and whether or not they are monogamous.

Once the interview concluded, I would again ask the participant if they had any questions for me. I would also request their permission to contact them in the future should I have any follow up questions. Lastly, I encouraged them to provide my contact information to anyone whom they thought would like to participate in the study. On average, interviews were 75 minutes in length, ranging anywhere from 35 minutes to 139 minutes.

Data Generation

The main source of data I analyzed in this research was interview transcripts. With the participants' consent, all the interviews were audio recorded. I uploaded the audio files onto a secure computer. Word for word, the interviews were transcribed into Word Documents and electronically stored on the secure computer.

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To facilitate the transcription process, I recruited a team of undergraduate and graduate students – many of whom had taken courses under my instruction – to work as my research assistants. While I did not have the funds to compensate my research assistants monetarily, I offered them several professional development services in exchange for their work, which I clearly outlined in their written offers (Appendix H). For example, I have written my research assistants letters of recommendation, served as a reference for their job applications, helped in the construction of their resumes, and mentored them as they pursued graduate study. One student also chose to enroll in an independent study under my supervision to receive college credit for their assistantship work. In order to participate in this project, my research assistants had to complete our university's Institutional Review Board training for social and behavioral researchers. In addition to this training, I also organized a mandatory qualitative research workshop in the spring of 2018, wherein I taught my research assistants more about the ethics and techniques of qualitative research specific to my current project.

Since there were multiple people transcribing the interviews, I performed random quality control checks to ensure that the audio files were being transcribed accurately. If the transcriber could not clearly hear what was being said in the audio file, they noted so in the document and cited the time stamp of the incident. In such cases, I would revisit the audio recording to see if I could decipher what was being said. This rarely occurred and did not affect the overall quality of the data.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was not to produce generalizable findings, but rather to examine thickly descriptive accounts of the lived experiences of married people and to further theorize how these accounts contribute to contemporary discussions on gender and sexuality inequalities in relation to marriage. My analyses drew from the techniques and procedures of

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Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory (1967). Working with a small team of research assistants, we transcribed the interview recordings in Microsoft Word. The interview recordings totaled more than 51 hours of data, which resulted in several hundred single-spaced pages of text. To code the data, I uploaded the transcribed interviews into NVivo, a qualitative analysis software program.

I began analyzing the data utilizing line-by-line coding. Line-by-line coding refers to the microanalysis technique used in the initial stages of a study wherein a code or description is ascribed to every line or phrase of the data (Charmaz 2006; Straus and Corbin 1998). I tried to construct these initial codes as gerunds to attempt to capture the action being described in each line of the transcripts. Once I completed line-by-line coding, I implemented the strategy of focused coding wherein I identified and organized the most significant or frequently occurring initial codes to conceptualize the main themes of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser 1978). During the focused coding process, I was particularly interested in identifying frequently occurring initial codes that pertained to participants' attitudes or behaviors in relation to gender and sexual inequality.

For example, I provided the initial line-by-line code of "having sexual identity ignored" to the following passage: "Nobody believed me, like, 'how could you be gay but spend your life with a man?' I mean, I got a lot of that, even from very close friends." Once I completed line-by-line coding, I noticed that this initial code and others similar to it resurfaced several times across multiple interviews. After more closely examining the interviews from which these initial codes pertaining to sexual identity misrecognition were generated, I noticed that they only occurred in the interviews I conducted with married bisexual, queer, and pansexual (BQP) folks. As such, I created the focused code of "experiencing BQP erasure." Figure 1 provides additional examples of interview excerpts and how they were coded in this project.

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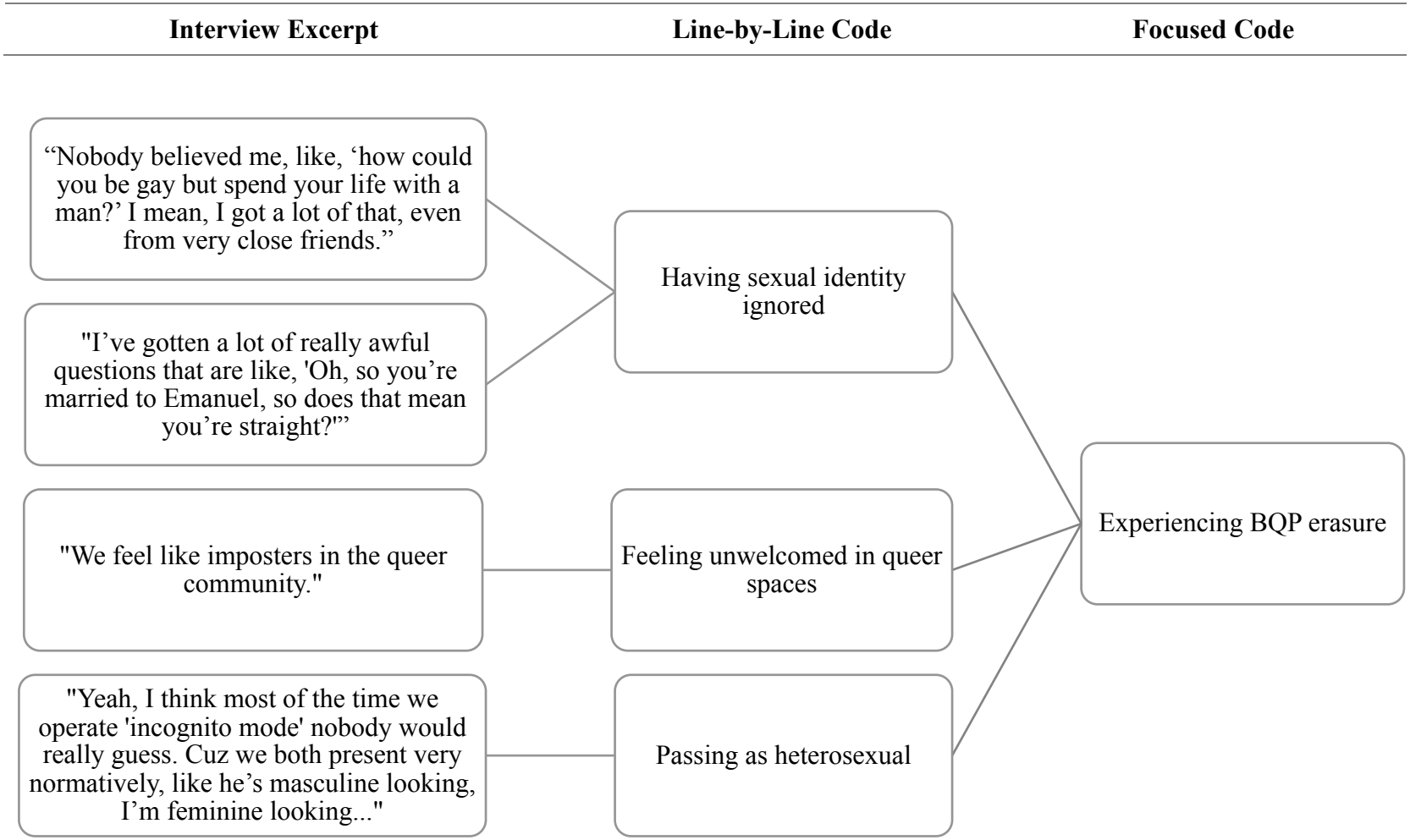
Figure 1: Coding Examples



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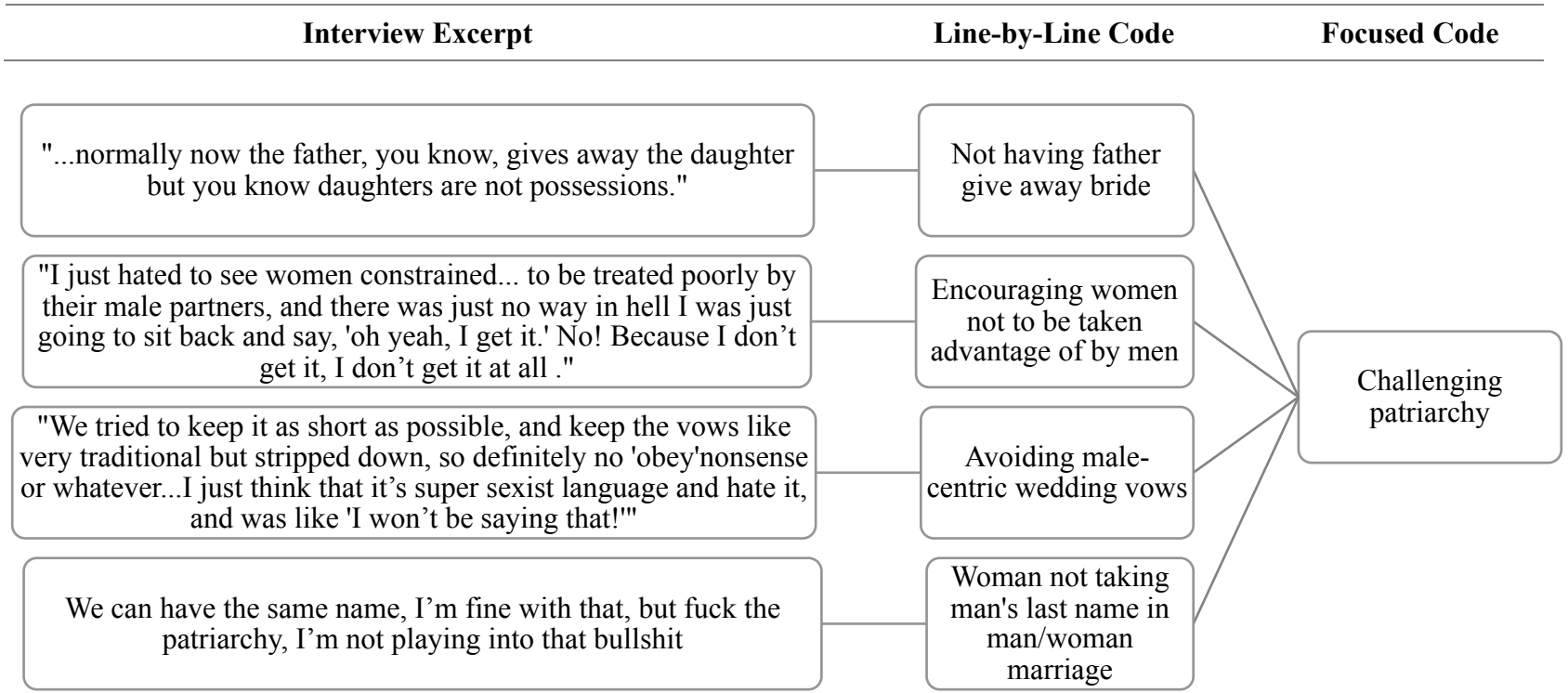

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Method Limitations

There are limitations to the methods I leveraged for this project. Conducting in-depth interviews is a time-consuming process which limited the number of people I was able to speak with for this project. Following up with individuals who expressed an interest in the study, logging their signed consent forms, ensuring they completed the online survey, scheduling (and rescheduling) interviews required a great deal of patience, organization, and time management. Transcribing the interviews was an extremely laborious process. Between myself and my four research assistants, we logged several hundred hours typing out each and every word of the 41 interviews I conducted. Coding each of the interview transcripts also required a great deal of time.

Conducting the interviews was emotionally draining. A number of the people I spoke with discussed in detail hardships they have experienced within their relationships and families. Several of the people I spoke with cried during their interviews, many used profanity to express their anger towards instances of injustice they had experienced, and others took full advantage of our confidential conversations to unload private aspects of their lives that they do not openly share with everyone. Some individuals would go on tangents about topics unrelated to the questions I was asking, requiring me to find a way to redirect our conversation without shutting down the dialogue. Navigating the balancing act between a researcher seeking information to answer his questions and a compassionate human who genuinely cares about the wellbeing of others proved to be challenging at times.

Due to my small sample size and use of convenience sampling, I am unable to make any generalizable claims from my data. Making generalizations about certain populations was not a goal of this project, but it may nonetheless be considered a shortcoming by those who question

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the import of the findings of this research if they do not accurately represent the attitudes or behaviors of a larger group. My sample was also fairly homogeneous, especially in terms of political views and religiosity. Even with these limitations, the study design I utilized generated important data that can further scholarly conversations on gender and sexual inequalities within the contexts of marriage and family.

Reflexivity

As a white, cisgender man conducting this research, I attempted to remain very aware of the ways in which my privileged identity influenced the power dynamics of the interviews. Given that the majority of my participants identified as women and members of the LGBT+ community, I leveraged practices advocated in feminist and queer methodologies to recognize the intersectional privileges of my identity, while I simultaneously strove to ensure the comfort and wellbeing of my interviewees (see Connell 2018; Crenshaw 1991; Schilt, Meadow, and Compton 2018). To develop rapport with my participants, I typically began the interviews by sharing my personal connection to this research. I disclosed that I am a queer man who was in a relationship with another man for several years, and that my own lived experiences spiked my curiosity on the effects marriage may have on relationship dynamics. I informed my participants that my goal with this research is to better understand the lived experiences of married individuals, and that by participating in this study, they are contributing to a field of scholarship that strives to promote gender and sexual equality.

At the beginning of each interview, I would confirm the individual's gender and sexuality based on the responses they entered on the survey. I would then ask for their and their spouse's preferred name and pronouns to ensure that I was addressing them in alignment with their identities. If, at any time during the interview, I sensed that a participant was confused or

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uncomfortable with a question, I would attempt to rephrase the question in a more accessible manner. After rephrasing, if I sensed that a participant was still uncomfortable, I would remind them that they did not need to answer the question, and I would proceed to the next question. Over the course of the 41 interviews, there were very few instances where participants appeared uncomfortable or skipped questions.

I tried to remain very conscious of the physical space and features of the environment in which the interviews were being held. As I previously mentioned, I let each interviewee choose the location for their interviews. While the majority chose to hold the interviews in the privacy of my office, others opted to have the interviews in a public setting. In the event that the individual opted to be interviewed at a coffee shop or restaurant, I would remind them that I will be asking some intimate questions to ensure that they were comfortable discussing such matters in public. I tried to be very aware of my posture and body language. I attempted to maintain eye contact throughout the duration of our conversations, and I frequently provided affirming body language by gently nodding my head and smiling, when appropriate, to the interviewee's responses. In one of the first interviews I held in my office, I noticed that the height I had set for my adjustable chair made me sit several inches higher than the interviewee. In future interviews, I made sure to lower the height of my chair as to sit at eye-level with the interviewee. To ensure their comfort, I also let my interviewee's take breaks as needed during our conversations. This happened most often during phone interviews, wherein people often called me during their lunch hour or at home while taking care of their children.

Upon completing the interviews, I also provided participants with a list of potential resources, containing the names and contact information for family therapists, relationship counselors, and other community and well-being support groups that could be of service to

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anyone currently experiencing instability or trauma within their marriage or family. I would thank the interviewee, again, and give them an opportunity to ask me any questions they had. Some individuals had no questions, while others inquired further about the goals and purpose of my research. A few individuals asked if they could read my final research project when it was finished, to which I said yes.

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CHAPTER FOUR. MARRIAGE MOTIVATIONS, DECISIONS, AND BEHAVIORS RELATED TO GENDER AND SEXUALITY

What do the accounts of married people today tell us about the current relationship between marriage, family, and systems of gender and sexual inequality? Do married people continue to default to norms that stem from patriarchal practices, or has the latest surge of feminism stemming from the #MeToo movement heightened criticism to male-centric marriage practices? And what of the legalization of same-gender marriage? Are same-gender married couples assimilating into homonormative lifestyles, or are they challenging heteronormative assumptions and redefining the gender and sexual norms of married life? These are the questions I explore in this chapter.

Analyzing the perspectives of the 41 married people I interviewed, I begin by questioning what we can learn about society's current stance on marriage by qualitatively exploring people's attitudes and behaviors pertaining to married life. I take a closer look at decisions pertaining to marital name change and examine the import of accessing legal benefits of marriage in shaping people's decisions to marry. I also provide an analysis of the married people I interviewed who challenge the marital norm of monogamy. I consider how married people engaging in CNM or polyamory are redefining the rules and expectations of marriage. Through challenging the norm of monogamy and the foundation of the SNAF, married people in polyamorous relationships disrupt the norm of the nuclear family as they reconstruct the meaning of marriage and family to be inclusive of the extended kinship formations representative of their relationships (Sheff 2016). However, the married polyamorous people I spoke with live in a society with deeply established marriage norms of coupledom and monogamy (Conley et al. 2012).

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Redefining their marriages and families required constant work and often came at the expense of being held accountable for their deviant behavior.

I Now Pronounce You… Negotiating Decisions about Marital Name Change

The U.S. marital norm of a woman taking her husband's last name stems from coverture laws originating in the Colonial Era. Wives are no longer considered the property of their husbands, but the act of women abandoning their maiden names and taking their husband's upon marriage is still commonly practiced in the U.S. (Gooding and Kreider 2010). In MGMs, women who marry at younger ages, have lower incomes, and lower levels of education are more likely to take their husband's last name (Hoffnung 2006; Johnson and Scheuble 1995; Scheuble and Johnson 2005). The legalization of same-gender marriage disrupts this norm. When marriages deviate from the man/woman standard, how do couples make decisions regarding last names? Overall, 46 percent (n=19) of the people I interviewed do not share the same last name as their spouse. Eleven of these individuals were in MGMs, accounting for 42 percent of the people in MGMs I spoke with. The remaining eight were in SGMs, representing 53 percent of the people in SGMs in my sample. Justifications for challenging this marriage norm tended to stem from people's egalitarian beliefs. A number of women made comments about not wanting to imply ownership in their marriages. Layla, a 33-year-old BQP woman in an SGM said, "I'm not Mrs. anyone so my name is *my name*." Evelyn, a 51-year-old pansexual woman in an MGM, felt similarly, explaining, "I would never take somebody else's last name. Why would I do that? Nobody owns me." Sahar, a 39-year-old queer woman in a MGM, more bluntly dismissed the idea of a woman feeling pressured into taking her husband's last name:

> My mother was just astounded. She was just like. "Well, I just feel like it creates unity." It's like, well that's nice. I've been with him for ten years. I think we're pretty dedicated and united whether or not I take his name. And Shane could have cared less. He didn't care if I took it or not. It didn't really matter to him. I did joke

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> around about him taking my name, but I was also a little half serious too, cuz it's like, why not? If we're gonna buck traditions, you're marrying a lesbian, take my name, why not? We can have the same name, I'm fine with that, but fuck the patriarchy, I'm not playing into that bullshit… But I do remember a lot of people, even in 2008, which you'd think, "people we're already in the twenty-first century!" But there were still a lot of people that were very surprised. They were like, "Really?! You didn't take his name?" and I was like "Is this the 1950s? Should I be wearing pearls and vacuuming?" Like what? No! I didn't take his name, it's my name! *It's my name.* I'm not giving it up that easy.

While Sahar was able to challenge this patriarchal marriage tradition by choosing to keep her own name, she was still affected by the societal expectation of married women taking their husbands' last names. She continued:

> I will say, it made for some very confusing... like when people would be writing out checks for our wedding gifts, they're writing them ahead of time and some people wrote them assuming that I would take his name which causes problems when you got to the bank and you're trying to deposit or cash stuff… They didn't know and I didn't feel like I needed to notify my guests ahead of time… "by the way, if you're writing a check, I'm not taking his last name." So it actually caused a bit of a logistical problem later.

Challenging this norm can also have interpersonal consequences including invalidating one's marital status in everyday interactions. For instance, Maya, a 56-year-old heterosexual woman in a MGM, was miscategorized as being single for not sharing the same last name as her spouse. She explained, "A girl next door babysat for us… and we came home and our son was like, 'Babysitter wanted to know why you guys aren't married?' And I'm like, 'What, why would she ask you that?' And he goes, "Well, you don't have the same last name. You guys aren't married?"

Another concern the people (specifically the women) I spoke with faced pertaining to changing their names was becoming disassociated from their professional identities. Some married women discussed the career and educational ties they had to their last names. Lydia, a 48-year-old lesbian woman in an SGM, had a scholarly article

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published with her surname, and Fiona, a 30-year-old BQP woman in an MGM, completed multiple degrees prior to getting married and did not want to disassociate herself from the name under which they were conferred.

Among the 22 individuals I interviewed who shared the same last name as their spouse, the choice for one (or both) spouses to change their last name was not frequently taken for granted. Almost everyone I spoke with mentioned having a discussion with their spouse prior to getting married about what they would do regarding last names. A small number of women in MGMs that I spoke with (n=3) said they wanted to take their spouse's last name to distance themselves from their father's names. As Anna, a 38-year-old heterosexual woman in a MGM, explained, "I had always considered myself a feminist, but I decided to change my name because I didn't want to have my father's name because he was so, you know, destructive in my life. So I wanted to erase him by taking my husband's name." It is interesting to note that only women in MGMs defended their name change decisions in this way, perhaps as a rationalization technique for women who took men's last names but do not want to be seen as failing feminism. A few of my interviewees said that both they and their spouse hyphenated their last names when they got married (n=2) and one individual said she and her spouse created a new last name that both of them took. It is important to note that not one man in a MGM took a woman's last name as his own. Men in MGMs may be more accepting of instances when women do not want to give up their own last names, but there seems to remain a double standard given that when people in MGMs do share the same last name, it is still predominantly women who take men's names.

One final factor that played a meaningful role in last name decisions were children. The presence or absence of children was frequently used to explain last name decisions among the married people I spoke with (n=8). Interviewees with children often said it was easier to be

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recognized as a child's parent if everyone in the family shared the same last name. Similarly, married people without children acknowledged that they felt no need to go through the hassle of a legal name change since they did not need to worry about justifying parental status during everyday interactions. Even in marriages with children where spouses did not share the same last name, the couples needed to strategically decide what the last name of their children would be. Kalvin, a 37-year-old gay man in an SGM, explained why he and his spouse decided to give their daughter Kalvin's last name: "Since I was staying home with her [their daughter] just school stuff I thought would probably be easier like interacting with teachers and that they would know Mr. X is her dad they might not question as much as if Darius was coming in and was Mr. Y coming to see Seline X instead."

The reality that some conversations and negotiations pertaining to marital name change are occurring – especially in MGMs – highlights one way that married people today may be disrupting heteronormativity. Growing societal acceptance for women's autonomy, the legalization of same-gender marriage, and waning expectations for married couples to have children were all factors that influenced the last name decisions of the married people with whom I spoke. Whether or not they chose to share the same last name, the reality that marital name change was not a taken-for-granted norm but a topic of discussion for the majority of people I interviewed suggests that this aspect of married life may be one pathway through which couples are challenging the hidden expectations of heteronormative marriage.

Legal Rights and Benefits as a Motivation to Marry

Even though many of individuals I spoke with recognized that marriage was a flawed institution, they pursued it nonetheless. For example, Trevor, a 33-year-old bisexual man in a MGM, labeled marriage as an "antiquated ritual." Both Jordyn, a 35-year-old queer gender non-

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binary individual in an SGM, and Nia, a 24 year-old heterosexual woman in an MGM, minimized marriage to "a piece of paper." Despite the cynicism, my interviewees recognized that marriage mattered. As Kat, a 38-year-old queer woman in an MGM, said, "I don't know how that piece of paper changed things for us, but it did in a way." One of the most frequently discussed ways marriage changed relationships was that marriage granted couples access to legal benefits. Eighty percent (n=33) of the people I interviewed acknowledged that the legal benefits afforded to married couples played a part in their decision to get married. This percentage is noticeably higher than a recent national survey which found that only 23 percent of Americans thought legal rights and benefits were an important reason to get married (Geiger and Livingston 2019).

Interestingly, gaining access to legal benefits was not only important to the people in SGMs that I spoke with. Ninety-three percent (n=13) of the married people in SGMs said accessing legal rights and benefits were an important factor in their decision to get married, but a notable 74 percent (n=20) of the people in MGMs I spoke with agreed that the legal benefits attached to marriage played a part in their decision to marry. The degree to which accessing the legal benefits of marriage influenced people's decisions to wed varied. For some individuals, the legal benefits of marriage were merely a nice perk. For others, accessing these benefits was the primary, if not sole reason, they chose to get married.

One of the most commonly discussed legal benefits of marriage amongst my interviewees in MGMs was the ability to share health insurance with their spouses. Trevor, a 33-year-old bisexual man in an MGM, illustrated one of the most extreme examples of the importance of being able to access a spouse's health insurance. Months before their scheduled wedding date, Trevor's spouse, Leah, was changing jobs. During that transition, Leah had a medical exam that

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yielded concerning results. To ensure that Leah remained insured, she and Trevor decided to get married in a courthouse six months before their originally planned ceremony. Trevor refers to the day as their "insurance-aversary." The day carries little meaning to either of them, and he could not even recall the actual date. They refer to the ceremony they held six months later as their real wedding.

Beyond accessing a spouse's insurance, other legal connections between marriage and health care weighed heavily on many of the people I spoke with. Emery, a 48-year-old heterosexual woman in a MGM, said that the legal benefits of marriage were "90 percent" of the reason she and her spouse chose to marry. Emery and Christopher had been in a relationship for eight years and they "didn't feel a need to get married… this [their relationship] is working, we don't really need to get married." When I asked why they changed their mind, she explained:

> He had a health scare. He had a cancer diagnosis, and I think for both of us it kind of was the realization that there's a lot of legal reasons to get married and just logistical reasons in terms of taking care of each other from a health care standpoint, and inheritance and all that kind of financial stuff. So, that's really what prompted the conversation… I mean that (legal benefits) – aside from the emotional, that you do love each other and you're obviously already spending the rest of your life with that person – but the reason to actually legally get married was probably 90 percent the legal.

In both Trevor and Leah's case as well as Emery and Christopher's, the decision to get legally married when they did was driven primarily by the legal benefits marriage affords its constituency. Until recently, having the option to get married when legal complications arose was a privilege that was only accessible to people in mixed-gender relationships. While the majority of people in MGMs that I spoke with agreed that accessing legal rights and benefits of marriage were important to them, discussions about accessing these rights most strongly surfaced in my interviews with people in SGMs.

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Accessing a spouse's health insurance was a luxury that many of the people in SGMs that I interviewed had to live without for many years. As a result, that particular marriage benefit seemed to be more commonly desired by people in MGMs. However, other spousal rights pertaining to health care played a much larger role influencing the decision to marry for people in SGMs. Many of these individuals cited the ability to unequivocally be able to visit their partner should they end up in the hospital as a driving factor influencing their decision to marry. Even though Layla and Laura were in a relationship for 10 years prior to marrying, Layla was concerned about not being Laura's next of kin in the event of an emergency. She explained:

> The laws in Wisconsin aren't what people think they are. So we started talking about very logistical and practical things like what if you get in a car accident and you're in the hospital? Are they going to call your mom or are they going to call me? Umm, and this was still when you know, it [SGM] wasn't legal and so this was just sort of a hypothetical but we were kind of like what do we need to do to like, what do we need to put in place to make our lives function legally as a marriage, um, so basically our bases are covered, because like I said her mom has definitely gotten better with me but like in a crisis, she's gonna push me out of that room, like there's no way.

Zeke, a 25-year-old gay man in an SGM, shared similar concerns as Layla. Zeke's spouse, Jeff, has conservative parents who discredit their relationship. Zeke discussed how getting married was important to insure his place in Jeff's life:

> The end of life decision was really important to me, because Jeff's family does not support our relationship, and if something did happen to him during that time we were engaged, they would literally cut me out of everything. I wouldn't get to say goodbye. I wouldn't have some possessions that we got together, they would probably just take. So it's just, like, nice to have that security knowing that we are in charge of each other now… I just don't want anyone to short me out of it or cut me out of it. Like I want to be protected.

Another marriage benefit that was important to several of the people in SGMs that I talked to was parental rights. Several legal barriers and complications affect people in same-gender couples who wish to foster or adopt children together. For Chester, a 44-year-old gay

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man in an SGM, the decision to get married was driven by his and his spouse's desire to gain legal recognition as parents of their adopted children. Prior to getting married, Chester and Eric had adopted three children. However, since they were not married, Chester and Eric were not legally allowed to adopt children together. As a result, the couple had to choose which of them would become the legal guardian of each child they adopted. Chester described what the adoption process was like, and why the legalization of SGM facilitated his and Eric's ability to have a family together:

> We started adopting children, and when we were adopting children, it was…it was what we expected. It was slightly insulting, because we had to pick who was going to get which children, and that sucked… We were okay with domestic partnership. We were pretty much figuring that was going to be it. We had thought about going to have a ceremony done, but then that felt silly to have a ceremony that really wasn't going to do anything. It almost felt like a fake wedding, you know? So then when it [SGM] became legal, it was definitely what we wanted. We always wanted to get married, we always wanted to have kids, so it was just kind like the fact that we were allowed to was a nice option.

Later in the interview, Chester reiterated how important the legal benefits of marriage were to his and Jeff's decision to get married:

> Huge, huge, huge, huge. Especially with the children. Like I said, before we were married, we had to pick who was going to be which child's parent, legally. I went up against the judge because I was having a difficult time deciding on, you know, one of the things [who was going to be the legal parent of one of their adopted children], and the judge said to me, 'you need to make a decision,' and I said, 'I'm faced with the decision of which child is not going to legally be mine, and if it ever comes to someone passing away, I am a stranger by law to that child.' And he [the judge] said 'I see your point," so he gave me more time.

Lydia also pursued marriage to ensure that she, along with her partner and their child on the way, would be recognized and protected as a family. She explained:

> The symbol of being married wasn't important to me. What was important to me was the rights and responsibilities that come along with marriage. I wanted to make sure that if something happened to me, all of my assets would be left to Krista and my daughter, the same way that it would be for any spouse. That was number one, just wanted to protect our family.

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Lydia's indifference towards the symbolism of marital status was shared by other people in SGMs. Leona, a 39-year-old bisexual woman in an SGM, also discussed how the prospect of having children and being legally recognized as a family played an important role in her and her spouse's decision to wed:

> I think we were both really comfortable being where we were at in our relationship and not necessarily having this legal, binding document. But knowing we had been together for so long, and now we actually had legal rights to get married, that's where we went forth… We both had domestic partnerships, so she could use the benefits that I fall under, so we still had that prior to the law changing, so I wouldn't say that was a pusher for us, but I think when it comes to knowing that we want to raise a family, and knowing if something happened to one of us, having a legal right to make sure that we had access to them in the hospital or making decisions on their life, or if it came down to children, that we had equal rights to both being parents to that child, and with marriage sometimes that makes it a little bit easier.

Taylor, a 32 year-old lesbian woman, was the only person in an SGM I interviewed that said that the legal benefits of marriage played no part in her decision to get married. However, Taylor shared that she and her spouse, Jenna, had access to many of the benefits marriage offers prior to being married. Both Taylor and Jenna worked at places that offered benefits to both of them before they were married. When Taylor gave birth to their child, both she and Jenna were able to take several weeks of leave from work to stay home with their newborn. Being white and of high socio-economic status, Taylor and Jenna may be able to rely on other privileged aspects of their identities to overcome structural inequalities that affect members of the LGBT+ community, such as being denied marriage and the legal benefits that accompany it.

People in SGMs were not the only ones who pursued marriage for the parental benefits it offers. Maya said, "My husband's great, don't get me wrong, but I'd never get married again… I didn't want to be a parent on my own. For me, it [getting married] was all about family. If I didn't want kids, I don't know if I ever would've gotten married."

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The reality that accessing legal benefits of marriage played such an important role in the decisions to marry for the people I interviewed is important to consider. While many thought that the legalization of SGM meant that marriage and the benefits that come with it were now accessible to all, being married remains a privileged status that is not accessible to everyone. In a society where only two people are legally allowed to be married to one another, people practicing CNM and polyamorous relationships must navigate complex decisions pertaining to married life.

Practicing Consensual Non-Monogamy (CNM) and Polyamory while Married

Research suggests that monogamy still reigns as the norm guiding romantic relationships (Conley et al. 2012), but the number of people practicing and expressing an interest in CNM is on the rise. One recent study estimates that one-in-five Americans have practiced CNM at some point in their lives (Haupert et al. 2017). A number of celebrities have also been open about practicing CNM in their relationships, hinting at a growing societal acceptance of the practice. Oscar-winning actress and comic Mo'Nique has had an open relationship with her spouse for more than a decade, and up-and-coming genderfluid actor Nico Tortorella and their spouse were recently featured in *US Magazine* for going public about their polyamorous marriage.

Scholarship often denotes that the highest rates of non-monogamy occur among men and sexual minorities (Green et al. 2016; Haupert et al. 2017; Rubin et al. 2014). One factor that likely curtails women's participation in non-monogamy is the sexual double standard through which society disproportionately polices women's sexuality and affords men greater sexual freedom (Farvid, Braun and Rowney 2017; Jackson and Cram 2003; Kitzinger 1995; Marks and Fraley 2005; Reid, Elliott, and Webber 2011). Previous studies have found that many gay men endorse non-monogamous relationships (Adam 2006; Green et al. 2016), but current research

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raises questions about this claim. In one of the most recent studies on CNM, Haupert et al. (2017) confirmed that while both sexual minorities and men (in general) were more likely than heterosexuals and women to have practiced CNM, there was no significant interaction between gender and sexuality, suggesting that gay men were not driving the effect. In one of their studies, the researchers also found that bisexuals were more likely than gay, lesbian, and heterosexual identified individuals to have engaged in CNM (Haupert et al. 2017). However, this particular study focused on the experiences of single adults. Less is known about the motivations and experiences of married people who practice CNM.

I draw attention to these recent discoveries in non-monogamy research to set the stage for the findings from my dissertation on the experiences of married people who practice CNM. I interviewed 18 married people who either currently or previously practiced CNM or polyamory in their marriage. While I deliberately recruited people who had practiced open marriages, it is still important to recognize that 44 percent of my sample had engaged in CNM at some point during their current marriage. Of these 18 individuals, 16 identified as BQP and two identified as heterosexual. This means that 70 percent and 20 percent of my BQP and heterosexual interviewees practiced CNM, respectively. Not one of the eight gay or lesbian identified married people I interviewed for this project practiced CNM in their marriages. My small convenience sample prevents me from making any generalizable claims about this finding, but I hypothesize that married lesbian and gay identified individuals may feel more strongly pressured to follow the increasingly disseminated cultural script of homonormativity (including the practices of monogamy and childrearing) in comparison to BQP identified married individuals. This claim is supported by the behaviors of the lesbian and gay individuals in my sample, all of whom practiced monogamy and 88 percent of whom either currently had children or planned to have

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children. Furthermore, when I asked the gay and lesbian individuals I interviewed if they thought they did anything that challenged the norms of married life, not one of them identified being in a SGM as a deviation to the norm. These finding align with Ghaziani's (2011) claim that gay individuals desire entering a post-gay era wherein they emphasize their similarities to heterosexual society rather than their differences.

The norms of married life and the SNAF are rooted in monogamy. As a result, the married people I spoke with who practice(d) CNM and/or polyamory are redefining the ways in which they do marriage and family. Many of the married people practicing CNM that I interviewed saw great potential in CNM and polyamory to improve marital satisfaction and expand society's limited understanding of what constitutes a family. However, there are social consequences to challenging norms. Housed within the structure heteronormativity, monogamy is one mechanism through which heteronormativity operates and holds married people accountable for their behaviors. Married people who practice CNM do so at the risk of being sanctioned and having the legitimacy of their marriages being called into question.

The Potential of Polyamory

A few of the married people I spoke with who practiced CNM did so solely to pursue casual sex with people other than their spouse, but the majority of the people in this group were seeking meaningful sexual and romantic relationships to supplement their marriages. Teresa, a 37-year-old bisexual woman in a MGM, explained how practicing polyamory affected her marriage:

> It means that everything has to be really intentional. Everything about our relationship is a choose your own adventure. We had to talk about all of it and decide this is actually what we want our marriage to look like. And that's my actual favorite part of poly… It's not multiple people or being able to, you know, date people of different genders... that's a big part of it... It's literally that my relationships then have to be custom and intentional.

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Successfully achieving this relationship style required a great deal of communication that many of the people I spoke with felt improved the quality of their relationships (Schippers 2016; Sheff 2014). Teresa continued:

> I honestly think we talk about things that not everyone does. Probably partially because of the poly, like, I think we treat jealousy different than your average straight monogamous couple [where] jealousy is a thing to be avoided. And we try to treat it as something, as it's an emotion, and I try to approach it with curiosity, we both do. We don't have a lot of jealousy, but if we do, usually, "Ok what does that mean? Is there something that you need? Do you need to take time to process this? What is it?" It doesn't mean that we need to stop something so you never feel that feeling, and I think that's how most people are.

Others experienced similar improvements in communication and the quality of their marriages as a result of practicing polyamory during their marriage. Whitney, a 27-year-old queer woman in an MGM, said, "Our communication and trust in each other has really skyrocketed in that time. That's been really cool." Kimberly, a 30-year-old bisexual woman in an MGM, also felt positively about the impact polyamory has had on her marriage, saying, "I think it's made it even better. Cuz we've had to have conversations that we might not have had otherwise. And it's really got us to know ourselves in new ways."

Given the emphasis placed on open communication and honesty, it is unsurprising that many of the married people practicing CNM that I spoke with endorsed equality and egalitarianism throughout their relationships. Fiona directly acknowledged the potentially problematic power dynamic married people practicing poly could encounter, and how she and her spouse actively work to avoid such conflicts:

> We talk a lot about not really, not really wanting to buy into a lot of hierarchal things, but at the same time, he and I are married, and that affords us certain privileges. So we actually talk a lot about couples' privilege and spousal privilege in our discussions in the poly community, because that often goes unexamined. And then most of our partners are people who are, who identify as solo poly, who are

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> like living their own life, not looking to move in with anybody, not looking to, like get on that relationship escalator with anyone…But yeah, that's something we do continually have to reassess, because also if one of our partner's did decide "Hey, I'm also dating this other person, and yeah. We want to go get married" Or "I want to get married so I want to look for someone who wants that as well" and what that might mean as a changing relationship dynamic.

Encouraging communication and opportunities for relationships to change and grow challenges the monogamous standard of marriage and the rigidly defined SNAF. Teresa felt that the expectation of a married couple being dependent on one another for everything was unrealistic, saying, "I think some people look at marriage as like this one person has to be your 'be all, end all,' everything, and Dan and I do not. We Don't." Many of the married people I spoke with who practiced CNM were also critical of these limited definitions of marriage and family and viewed polyamory as a way to diversify, extend, and improve care networks. Evelyn shared how being polyamorous affects the way she views family:

> I still don't feel like the traditional model of marriage is appropriate and allows for growth. I think the concept of two people being everything to each other for the rest of their lives, and being the sole supporters of children, I just think it's so sparse. You know what I mean? Like I love the concept of the way, the way you live in a village… the way we did for millennia until we got agriculture and that was a progress trap. But we lived together, and everybody took care of everybody, and you had connections that were familial or sexual or whatever, and who cares? But now we make all these rules, and yeah, it just seems very, like we're fragmenting down to the nuclear family, that concept is fragmentary to me. And I don't think it's helpful for humanity. Because once that, when you get that little nuclear family, it's just down to the couple, and now the couple can divorce, so then the couple is down to one person with kids, and then it just gets more and more where it's like, very isolating. My hope for poly was that it would be connected... It would add connection to people.

Today's norm may be that of the individualistic nuclear family, but some of the polyamorous married people with children whom I interviewed have developed new family formations reminiscent of the "village" family style Evelyn alluded to. For example, Delilah, a 39-year-old bisexual woman in an MGM, currently has two boyfriends, and her spouse, Emile, has two

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girlfriends. She discussed how her son, Elijah, acquired a brother through their polyamorous relationships.

Delilah: And he [Elijah] has met one of Emile's girlfriend's who also has a son about the same age. It's interesting, they've started referring to each other as brothers. I'm like… Sure, ok... You can do that.

Daniel: How do you feel about Elijah talking about Emile's girlfriend's son as a brother?

Delilah: It's a little heart-wrenching only because, you know, I see how he is with other kids, and he latches on so quickly, and… I mean, it's from the heart, you know? We had been trying to have a second child since he was two, and we recently, just recently, basically gave up that idea. But yeah, just seeing him, he's claiming this other child as his brother and he asks me about having a younger sister, I'm like… from that standpoint, it's pretty like ugh, kill me! But, aside from that, I mean it's wonderful! I mean, it's kind of a poly-utopia type thing. Everybody's getting along and able to be in the same room together. Yeah, if we're able to allow our children to be part of that, that's fantastic!

Daniel: What's your experience been like being a parent and being poly?

Delilah: Well there was that whole incident with… We are all, the three of us were in the van. We were coming from Emile's parents' for dinner, and that's when it all actually came out in the open. And Elijah was just flat out, "Is Bella your girlfriend?" And we both just kind of froze for a couple seconds and then Emile was like. "Yes… Yes she is."… Cool. I mean, if we had said something like "Oh no, you can't ask that," that would've been all he asked. He asked a question. We answered it. We moved on. Done. I mean there's the whole thing of him repeating stuff, like in front of my dad, that daddy has a girlfriend that's not mommy. But, I mean, again, aside from whatever he says that might be construed as inappropriate, like if he says something at school, it is what it is. Yeah, daddy's got two girlfriends. Mommy's got two boyfriends. I've got an extra brother. Alright. Why hide it? We're all happy.

Delilah's positive "poly-utopia" family and parenting experience is something others aspire to. While raising a child with three parents challenges the SNAF norm, it is the parenting arrangement Teresa wishes to have if she, her husband Craig, and her boyfriend Paul were ever to have a child. She said, "On the kid front, like, my ideal scenario, and Craig's too, even though he's not sure if wants them, would be Craig and Paul and I, the three of us raising a child

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together, mostly because we just feel like three adults would work better, because it's a lot of fucking work."

Engaging in CNM or polyamory challenges the marital norm of monogamy and subsequently disrupts the structure of the SNAF. With few intuitional or cultural scripts available to inform the behaviors of married polyamorous people, the individuals I spoke with in this group relied on frequent communication as they established the unique rules and expectations of their own relationships and families. For polyamorous married people who communicated successfully, engaging in CNM enhanced their relationships and presented opportunities to extend familial relations. As Maya succinctly explained, when it comes to poly, "The options can be kind of endless."

The Challenges of Being Married and Polyamorous

All of the married people I spoke with who practiced CNM had positive things to say about this non-normative relationship style. However, being married and polyamorous was not without its complications. Engaging in a behavior that challenges a widely supported norm puts married polyamorous people at continuous risk of assessment. Farrah, a 40-year-old pansexual transwoman in an SGM, said going out in public with her wife, her girlfriend, and her daughter can draw a lot of unwanted attention. She said, "They won't say anything, but they'll definitely give me looks, especially if I'm there with my wife and my girlfriend and I'm kissing both of them, the kid is coming up [to us]. People don't know." Other married polyamorous people I spoke with talked about damaged relationships from friends and family who disapprove of polyamory. Fiona shared, "We've lost friends over it and everything, who just like, absolutely cannot believe that this would be ok or whatever, and make a lot of assumptions and everything." To avoid stigmatization and losing relationships, some of the married people practicing CNM

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that I spoke with chose to conceal their polyamorous identities in certain environments (Sheff 2014).

The majority of the married polyamorous people I spoke with agreed that being *married* versus unmarried made it more difficult for someone to be open about their polyamory. Fiona felt that people hold a "romanticized notion" about what marriage should look like that prevents many people from being able to even fathom marriage beyond monogamy. Whitney talked about the difficulties her and her husband Chad faced courting potential partners in public settings due to the symbolic marital status afforded to them for wearing their wedding rings. She explained:

> People definitely, like, see my ring and assume "oh, she's unavailable." So there's a lot of explaining myself. Chad has been out, and he doesn't take his ring off when he goes on dates, and he'll have people make snide remarks, like bartenders or stuff like that make snide remarks. So, I get it. I think that if I was in a monogamous relationship and my husband was out on a date, I would want the bartender to be like "what the hell dude?!" But they also don't know our situation, so I know it's frustrating for him to have to deal with that shit.

Barret, a 47-year-old heterosexual man in a MGM, also spoke about the challenges of meeting new partners while being married. He jokingly referred to his wife as a "cock block," implying that being married made it difficult for him to attract sexual partners.

Unsurprisingly, scheduling and finding time to be with multiple partners was also a common challenge brought up in our conversations. Delilah emphasized the importance of communication when juggling multiple schedules. She said, "Well yeah, we both work full-time, so you know carving out that time where we can be with our secondary partners, again, a lot of communication. You know, and making sure that we still take that time to be with each other and with our son and… yeah, I mean there's some juggling with the schedules, but, I think we both are mindful of red flags you know, if some part of that is suffering, then we need to kind of like stop and reset." Whitney also admitted that she and Chad had yet to find a functional balancing

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act, saying, "I mean, it's definitely been a learning curve to kind of figure out how to manage like both of us. So I have another partner, so figuring out how to have adequate time with Gloria and spend time with Chad and spend time as a family and see my friends and have time by myself, because we're both very much, like need our own selfcare time… Like finding that balance is very hard." Teresa also discussed the challenge of navigating multiple people's schedules and addressed a common misconception about polyamory, saying, "The thing in poly, is people always say it's not as sleazy as it sounds. It's mostly about Google Calendars."

Legal restrictions defining who constitutes a family, especially in terms of parental rights, also presented complications for married polyamorous people who were contemplating having children with more than two parents. Brandi, a 31-year-old bisexual woman in an MGM, said she, her husband Michael, and her girlfriend Ava had discussed a variety of scenarios to find a way that all three of them could be legal guardians of a child together. During our conversation, Brandi told me that the three of them had discussed having her and Michael get divorced so she and Ava could get married. Then Ava and Michael would procreate affording them both parental status, and Brandi would adopt the child as Ava's spouse. These complicated discussions about divorce, remarriage, and impregnation were all necessary to find a way to legally parent a child beyond the SNAF structure.

The many interpersonal and structural barriers preventing polyamory from being more widely socially accepted – especially amongst married people – produced some cynicism amongst the people I spoke with. After endorsing polyamory for its potential to expand society's limited definition of marriage and family, Evelyn explained that she has recently become somewhat skeptical about polyamory. Her spouse, Dakota, was struggling after a difficult breakup with a recent partner:

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> Dakota met somebody and they had kids and they [met] right away.. and I was like "woah that's really.. we have to take this slow." Yes, I would love to have some children in my life that I feel connected to because of those relationships, because of sexual relationships amongst parents… I think that's a fantastic thing for your kids. If those are all loving relationships, that for a child to have multiple parents, I think that's a great thing! But that's not how it worked out. So it basically just ended up with Dakota getting super attached to these children, and then having them.. "Nope, you can't see them…" In the past, I would have been super pro poly, super pro diversity of relationships… this recent experience has kind of made me… I don't know where it's put me. Cuz it was just such a horrible experience, that it was like, "wow… *this could have been great.*" And instead of just "not great," it's miserable. So some of the criticisms that I've heard in the past of poly from sort of traditionalists has sort of come to bear fruit and that's like, well shit… were they right? Was it stupid to even try to do this? Is it stupid to try and fight the cultural paradigm of coupledom and marriage and all that? Is that how it's supposed to be? I've never thought that in my life. I've never thought that.. I've always thought marriage was a silly construct.. and maybe it's from having parents that got divorced and stuff… so I don't know…

The experiences of married people practicing CNM and polyamory present many topics in need of further examination. My findings suggest that, despite facing a plethora of structural and interpersonal barriers, the practice of CNM and polyamory within marriage has the potential to expose society to more diverse and egalitarian kinship formations. If CNM is increasing in popularity as much as recent studies are suggesting, institutions such as marriage and family may soon experience social pressure to be redefined and restructured to accommodate such relationships, similar to the ways in which the boundaries defining marriage and family were redefined as a result of social movements advocating for the legalization of SGM.

Discussion

Marriage remains a powerful familial institution that informs human behaviors (Yodanis and Lauer 2014). However, the findings I present in this chapter suggest that marriage does not completely control its constituents, nor do they suggest that marriage has become completely individualized (Giddens 1992) or deinstitutionalized (Cherlin 2004). Rather, the everyday behaviors of people who are married – especially those that challenge marriage norms –

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demonstrate a reciprocal relationship between the institution of marriage and the individuals who occupy it. As I highlighted through this chapter, marriage norms are not merely grounded in the institution of marriage. Marriage norms are intertwined within the gender/sexuality system of heteronormativity. Qualitatively examining the accounts and outcomes of individuals who challenge marriage norms can be used to inform policies that strive to protect the rights of diverse family formations, particularly those formed by gender and sexual minorities.

By engaging in conversations about martial name change, the married people I spoke with challenge the patriarchal association between marriage and women's disempowerment. This once oft taken for granted marital norm may now be increasingly met with circumspection as women continue to gain autonomy throughout various sectors of society. While most of the people I spoke with still engaged in some patriarchal marriage customs (for example, the majority of women were "given away" by their fathers or a family patriarch on their wedding day), one of the most robust themes I generated in my analysis was "challenging patriarchy," a theme representing a myriad of codes denoting the many ways in which married people I spoke with questioned or challenged male dominance in their marriages.

The majority of my interviewees reported legal benefits of marriage as a primary factor influencing their decision to marry. This finding contradicts national polls which estimate that less than 25 percent of Americans think accessing legal benefits is an important motivator to marry. Previous scholarship has drawn attention to the importance of accessing marriage's legal benefits for people in SGMs (Goldberg and Kuvalanka 2012; Rostosky, Riggle, Rothblum, and Balsam 2016; Schecter, Tracy, Page, and Luong 2008). The findings I present here reiterate this claim, and further suggest that accessing legal benefits of marriage may also be a primary factor

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influencing people in mixed-gender relationships to get married, perhaps more so than previous scholarship has identified.

There are several sociological implications if a growing number of people are getting married primarily for legal privileges such as accessing their partner's health insurance or the ability to adopt children together. First, it challenges the assumption made by the individualization of marriage theory that people maintain independence in their marriages (Lauer and Yodanis 2011). Second, it provides an example of the power of collective social interaction to redefine institutions. Being excluded from the heteronormative legal definitions of marriage and family, people in same-gender relationships fought to gain access to the institution of marriage to protect and preserve their relationships with their significant others and their children. By gaining entrance to this heteronormative institution, people in SGMs queer its boundaries and complicate the gender and sexual norms expected of its constituency (Bernstein 2015; Kimport 2014). The presence of same-gender couples in a heteronormative society disrupts the presumed normalcy of mixed-gender marriages (Bernstein 2015; Hull 2006). SGMs also call into question the gender binary, as people in SGMs continuously challenge and renegotiate what constitutes as "masculine" and "feminine" behavior, as was evidenced in my interviewees' conversations about marital name change.

People in SGMs – perhaps more specifically gay and lesbian identified individuals in SGMs – may engage in practices representative of homonormativity (Duggan 2002) and a post-gay era (Ghaziani 2011), but these behaviors should not be misinterpreted as acts of heteronormativity (Bartholomay 2018). Even though many of the people in SGMs that I spoke with described their marriages and the behaviors they practice as "normal," they nonetheless deviate from the heteronormative alignment of gender/sex/sexuality and therefore challenge

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widely held societal understanding of what marriages and families can look like. A growing presence of these deviations from the norm holds the transformational potential to make institutions like marriage and family more inclusive and less oppressive with regard to gender and sexuality.

Married people who practice CNM also illuminate potential pathways of diversification for marriage and family that could make these institutions more inclusive and less oppressive with regard to gender and sexuality (Noël 2006). Polyamorous married people who pursue not only sexual but also intimate and familial relationships with multiple partners further complicate the binary gender and sexual assumptions of marriage and family life. By placing emphasis on communication (Schippers 2016), the people in open marriages that I interviewed endorsed egalitarian ideals within their marriages and experimented with queer extended familial formations that included their other partners and, at times, their children.

However, these polyamorous kinship formations are not without their setbacks. Despite efforts by many of the people I spoke with practicing CNM to acknowledge and address hierarchal power imbalances stemming from "primary" vs "secondary" partnerships, the legal benefits afforded to married couples and the legal and symbolic contracts recognizing their unions inevitably privilege married members of polyamorous relationships. The inability to marry multiple people and the power imbalances that could result may make long-term polyamorous relationships difficult to sustain. The potential brevity of polyamorous kinship formations can have deleterious effects, especially for children of parents practicing CNM given the negative affect of family instability on childhood development (Brown 2010; Cavanagh and Huston 2008).

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CHAPTER FIVE. THE MARRIAGE EXPERIENCES OF BISEXUAL, QUEER, AND PANSEXUAL PEOPLE

In this chapter, I explore how people who identify beyond the hetero/homo binary are held accountable to a heteronormative social structure in their everyday interactions. To do this, I focus on the experiences of the 23 married bisexual, queer, and pansexual people I interviewed for this project. The experiences of married BQP folks underscore the importance of studying everyday interactions as a means to empirically research the ways in which marriage intersects with gender and sexuality to affect people's everyday lives in both positive and negative ways. While on the inside, BQP folks identify as part of the marginalized LGBT+ community, on the outside, the ways they are treated during interpersonal relations largely depends on how they are perceived by others in terms of their gender and sexuality.

Such interactions underscore the claim that sexuality is an emergent feature of social interaction (West and Fenstermaker 1993; West and Zimmerman 1987; Schilt and Westbrook 2009; Schilt and Windsor 2014). Similar to West and Zimmerman's (1987) concept of sex categorization, social actors also assign individuals a sexuality category during interactions. This interpersonal process of sexuality categorization can be influenced by several factors. Given that gender and sexuality are inextricably linked (Schilt and Westbrook 2009; Seidman 1995), the alignment or incongruence of an individual's sex categorization and gender is often used by others during interactions to make a sexuality categorization. For example, a person who is sex categorized as male but presents effeminately may be sexually categorized as gay, whereas a person who is sex categorized as female but presents masculine may be sexually categorized as lesbian (Johnson, Gill, Reichman, and Tassinary 2007; Namaste 1996; Sirin, McCreary, and Mahalik 2004). Similar to the process of sex categorization, this process of sexuality categorization happens instantaneously during interactions. Informed by institutions that have

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established gender and sexual norms, individuals draw from their socialization of normative gendered behavior to make these accountability assessments. Just as we hold people accountable for their gender, I argue, here, that we also hold people accountable for their sexuality.

In this chapter, I advance the argument that being married affects this process of sexuality categorization. BQP folks who are in mixed-gender marriages are commonly categorized and treated as heterosexuals, while BQP folks in same-gender marriages are typically labeled as gay or lesbian. As I discuss throughout this chapter, this complex interactional process of sexual identity mis-categorization presents some married BQP folks with opportunities to tap into hetero privileges, while relegating others to the marginalized status of homosexual. BQP people in mixed-gender marriages also face complicated situations involving feelings of erasure and exclusion from LGBT+ communities and spaces. Others' placement of us into specific sex categories affects the way we are treated – and subsequently the way we behave – during interactions. When someone's sexuality is miscategorized during an interaction, they are expected to behave in accordance with the norms of that sexual group. Failing to follow the accountability structure of a sex category can result in sanctioning, such as having one's identity discredited and being denied access to certain spaces (Gonzalez, Ramirez, and Galupo 2017; Hartman-Linck 2014).

A Word on Sexual Identities Beyond the Binary

Sexual identities beyond heterosexual and homosexual are becoming increasingly common (Callis 2014; Rust 2000). In both popular culture and in academia, bisexuality is gaining attention. Recently elected Arizona Senator Kyrsten Sinema, actor Alan Cumming, and superstar Lady Gaga have all publicly advocated and defended their bisexual identities. Bisexuality has also become a popular topic of scholarly discussion. An entire journal, *The*

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Journal of Bisexuality, publishes research concentrating on the meaning and implications of bisexual experiences. Despite being both a socially recognizable identity category and a growing field of scholarly inquiry, bisexuality is not defined consistently. The term bisexual traditionally referred to a binary gender system, referring to individuals who are attracted to both men and women. Some people have redefined bisexual to be more inclusive as being attracted to people of one's own gender as well as other genders. Some current research suggests that bisexual is becoming an umbrella term more broadly representing a variety of people who identify as non-monosexual, including those who identify as pansexual and queer (Flanders et al. 2017). Singer/actresses Miley Cyrus and Janelle Monáe both identify as pansexual, which refers to individuals who experience romantic or sexual attraction to others regardless of their gender identity or presentation (Morandini, Blaszczynski, and Dar-Nimrod 2017; Rice 2015). Others choose to identify as queer, a once homophobic slur that has become an umbrella term used to refer to any non-normative sexual identity (Callis 2014; Levy and Johnson 2011). While the boundaries defining and distinguishing bisexual, pansexual, and queer are subjective and often overlap, I have provided definitions for these and several other gender and sexual identity terms in Table 1.

For this research project, I did not ask my interviewees to justify or define their non-binary gender or sexual identities. I respected that some people may resonate with a BQP identity solely based on their sexual attraction, while others may claim BQP status based on their sexual and romantic behaviors. Throughout the interview process, I did get the impression that the vast majority of people I spoke with who identified as BQP held perspectives that most closely aligned with the definition of pansexuality I provided above, stating that they were attracted to people regardless of their gender.

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Bisexual, Queer, and Pansexual People in Mixed-gender and Same-Gender Marriages

I interviewed 22 BQP people, 16 of whom were in mixed-gender marriages (Q-MGM), while the remaining 6 were in same-gender marriages (Q-SGM). Examining their accounts of married life, I argue that marriage and heteronormativity are inextricably linked. As a result, marriage reinforces the sexual binary, erasing bisexuality, queerness, and pansexuality as a readily recognizable identity categories in social interactions. Consequently, Q-MGM are routinely mis-categorized by others as heterosexual, while Q-SGM are commonly misrecognized as gay or lesbian. This interactional process of misrecognition can both help and harm married BQP folks. Many of the Q-MGM individuals I spoke with discussed the privilege of choosing if and when they wished to disclose their BQP identity. While some Q-MGM acknowledged and enjoyed having access to this privilege, others seemed unaffected or nonchalant. A minority of Q-MGM expressed the cognitive awareness that choosing when to be out in social interactions was a privilege to which people in SGMs did not have the same access.

It makes sense that the majority of Q-MGM either enjoyed or were indifferent to the ability to choose when to be out. The privilege of "passing" in this context, as heterosexual – makes Q-MGM "unremarkable" (Serano 2013) in mainstream society. While being unremarkable may sound depressing, it is, in fact, a social benefit in that it renders one free of stigma or marginalization as a result of appearing to follow a clear societal norm. It is interesting that, while Q-MGM are unremarkable in mainstream spaces and interactions, they become *remarkable* in queer spaces and interactions. The majority of Q-MGM I interviewed discussed instances wherein they felt their queer sexual identities were erased because of their mixed-gender marriages. This feeling of erasure often resulted in feeling unwelcomed at LGBT+ spaces and events.

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Q-SGM also experienced the erasure of their BQP identities, as they were often treated as gay or lesbian, depending on the gender of their spouse. However, the Q-SGM that I spoke with did not discuss experiencing exclusion from LGBT+ spaces or events. Even though some of the BQPPSMG I interviewed had previously been in mixed-gender relationships, being married to a person of the same-gender resulted in their unquestioned acceptance in LGBT+ spaces.

The Heteronormative Privilege of Choosing When to Be Out

Sixty-nine percent (n=11) of the Q-MGM I spoke with discussed their experiences of being able to choose if and when they wanted to be out. Q-MGM offered unique accounts regarding their decisions whether or not to disclose their sexual minority identities. Some Q-MGM considered their sexual identities private information, and only disclosed their status as a sexual minority if asked directly about it. Other Q-MGM attempted to publicly display their association with the LGBT+ community by adorning their bodies and their personal belongings with symbols of LGBT+ pride. However, being in mixed-gender marriages, Q-MGM had the heteronormative privilege of selectively deciding when and in which environments they wished to be out.

Given the ubiquitous power of heteronormativity, a married masculine-presenting man and feminine-presenting woman will automatically be sexually categorized as a heterosexual couple and, therefore, be treated normatively and unremarkably as a heterosexual couple, *unless* one or both members of the couple outwardly express their sexual minority status. For instance, Nathan, a masculine-presenting 51-year-old bisexual man married to a feminine-presenting heterosexual woman recognized his ability to "pass" as a heterosexual, saying: "I don't come across as, *clearly* don't come across as your typical LGBT person, right?" Being married to a woman gives Nathan the privilege of choosing if and when he wants to make his bisexuality

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known to the public. In certain spaces where he feels comfortable, Nathan chooses to outwardly express his bisexuality. For example, I interviewed Nathan at his place of work, an environment where he is comfortably open about being bisexual. Nathan is actively involved with the LGBT+ Employee Resource Group at his place of work, which promotes inclusivity for LGBT+ employees. During our interview, he had a rainbow heart-shaped sticker displayed on his work laptop as a symbol of LGBT+ pride, and he mentioned that he sometimes wears a pink, purple, and blue ring to the office representing the colors of the bisexual pride flag. Nathan explained how the stickers and jewelry help provide "visibility for a largely invisible group of people." He continued:

> I either wear the ring or a similar colored woven bracelet to be visible as bisexual. If anyone asks, I explain it and who I am. It's part visibility, part conversation starter. I usually have a ton of conversations that start something like: "But I thought you were married?" It's like the rainbow stuff [i.e., the heart-shaped sticker] but more specific to me and sometimes lets me educate on the issues and questions bisexuals face.

In this way, Nathan and a few of the other Q-MGM that I spoke with deliberately made efforts to display their identities as sexual minorities.

However, Nathan admitted that he only wears his bi pride ring "periodically." And, unless he carries his laptop with him everywhere he goes and explains why it is adorned with a rainbow sticker to everyone he meets, he will still likely be read as heterosexual, and therefore access the micro-interactional privileges of heteronormativity. As Nathan said himself, he "clearly" does not get read as an LGBT+ person during everyday social interactions. In fact, Nathan admitted that he deliberately taps into this heterosexual privilege in certain spaces where he fears stigmatization towards his children stemming from his own bisexual identity. Nathan explained that he lived in a somewhat conservative suburb:

> I will tell you I am more out at work than I am where I live. Not because I personally have issues with it, but I have two high school aged boys that still have to get

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> through a football locker room, and kids can be mean. So I'm a little bit more protective of my orientation as it were… at least until such time as my boys graduate from high school, and then it's all ok. Then at that point, it's like, then I don't care. But I'm being sensitive to how they might be treated by their friends if their friends knew. So, like I said, I'm more out here.

Nathan's justification for choosing not to be out where he lives to protect his family from stigmatization illuminates the complexities of Q-MGM's decision-making processes of choosing when to be out.

During her interview, Evelyn addressed the complicated process of deciding whether or not to disclose her sexual identity. When we spoke, Evelyn was wearing a shirt provided from a resource group at her place of work which displayed the phrase "#Pride". She explained:

> I consider myself bisexual or I say pansexual now cuz I just don't care what gender, what equipment you have, I don't care. But, outside of wearing this t-shirt, nobody would know that about me, and I'm not going to volunteer it, but if somebody were to ask, I'd be absolutely truthful about it. So, I don't feel like that's hiding, but it's also not being like, "Hey guess what?! This is who I like to have sex with!" And I know it's… it's a weird thing. I know that's not available to everyone. I have a close friend that's a lesbian and married, and it's like, that's not available for her to just reveal things *if* people ask.

Evelyn mentioned a weirdness of identifying as part of the LGBT+ community and still being able to access heteronormative privileges, especially since her friend in a same-gender relationship does not have that luxury. Despite this awareness, Evelyn and several of the Q-MGM I spoke with shared the sentiment that their sexuality was a personal if not private matter that they did not feel entitled to disclose. When talking with Whitney, I asked her if she ever felt the need to conceal her relationship from anyone.

Daniel: Do you remember any times you felt like you needed to hide your relationship?

Whitney: No. Not in a heterosexual relationship.

Daniel: So, you just said 'in a heterosexual relationship,' even though you identify as queer. Did you ever have any instances where you felt uncomfortable, feeling like you were being read as a heterosexual even though that doesn't align with your identity?

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Whitney: Yeah, I mean there were times they [people] think that, especially cuz me and Chad came from kind of different worlds. He was raised very like, suburban Catholic boy, and I was not. So, there was a lot of times where I felt like I have always been kind of out and proud for most of my life. But, I worried about being out and proud with his family, so it was probably more hush hush for the first couple of years that I wasn't straight. But other than that, other than with his family in the beginning, no I don't think… I mean, I was also pretty ok with the fact that I was viewed in a heterosexual relationship as a heterosexual. I didn't struggle too much with that.

Daniel: Why didn't you struggle being identified as heterosexual? Just something that didn't bother you?

Whitney: Yeah, I guess. I guess I was just so busy in other things in life. I don't know if I really spent a lot of time thinking about it. Like the fact I was being viewed hetero… I was just happy being where I was in that moment. I didn't put a lot of thought into how other people viewed me. Like I was saying, when I was growing up, I was fine being out and proud, it wasn't ever really a thing that I felt like I've had to hide. I've never cared too much about what other people thought about I was doing. So being viewed as heterosexual I was just kind of like, "Well, whatever. People are going to see me how they're going to see me."

In this dialogue, Whitney justified her nonchalance toward being viewed as heterosexual as a result of her general indifference towards others' perceptions about herself. Teagan, a 38-year-old bisexual woman in a MGM, mirrored this sentiment, responding that "it's not worth it" to get upset about being read as heterosexual. Delilah felt similarly, saying:

> I don't care. I don't care who knows what. I was kind of shielding it from people, you know, relatives, cuz I knew that some of them would be like uncomfortable, and I just didn't feel like having that elephant in the room… I don't care anymore! I sincerely don't. So like I said, if it turns out that they have an issue with it, that's on them. If they want to know how it works, great. We can have a civil conversation about it. But my bisexuality and being married to a man, for the most part, has not been anything that I've been confronted with. I've been blessed that way.

While Evelyn, Whitney, Teagan, Delilah, and other Q-MGM are valid in owning their claims to privacy and indifference towards other people's opinions about their sexuality, as Whitney puts it, the Q-MGM I spoke with "didn't struggle too much" being recognized as heterosexual as it fits within the heteronormative framework of relationship respectability. Other

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than potential psychological harm caused from misidentification, there are few (if any) other disadvantages to being associated with a privileged group in society.

Several Q-MGM casually mentioned the ease of passing as a heterosexual in everyday interactions. As Sawyer, a 59-year-old bisexual non-binary man said, "Oh absolutely, it's really easy to hide in the bushes. Really easy." Likening the process to easily hiding "in the bushes", Sawyer implies that masking or broadcasting one's sexual identity is a conscious choice for Q-MGM. Aware of this choice, many Q-MGM take advantage of the ability to unremarkably pass as heterosexual. Kimberly said, "Most of the time, we operate incognito mode."

While some Q-MGM like Sawyer and Kimberly expressed recognition of the ability to pass as heterosexual, fifty percent (n=8) of Q-MGM directly acknowledged the benefits of being misrecognized as hetero. Trevor said:

> It doesn't really have a big effect on me that people view me as heterosexual… it's sort of nice…I can, you know, choose who I present that too, based on how I think they'll react to it or what I want to portray to them…I've always viewed it as a privilege.

Teresa also addressed the privileges of being recognized as heterosexual:

> I think I experience heterosexual privilege all the time. I don't have to wonder how people will react when I mention my husband or my living situation. I don't have to worry that coworkers will treat me different or that I might face discrimination. I don't have to worry about how any family will react. I don't even have to ask to know that I'm welcomed to bring my husband to almost any social gathering I'm invited to.

A few Q-MGM, such as Kat, went beyond merely recognizing their privilege of being in a MGM and engaged in forms of protest and activism. While Kat, a woman, could legally marry her male husband anywhere in the U.S., she refused to get married in a state that did not legally recognize SGM. She said, "I was not going to get married in Wisconsin because this was before the supreme court ruling, so we were still a

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discriminatory state, and I was *not* going to give my money toward a discriminatory state."

"So, Does That Mean You're Straight?" Negotiating Queerness in "Heterosexual" Marriages

Being miscategorized as heterosexual may afford Q-MGM the privilege of being able to avoid unwanted stigmatization, but Q-MGM also frequently discussed disadvantages that occurred as a result of having their sexual identities misinterpreted in social interactions. Sixty-three percent (*n*=10) of the Q-MGM I interviewed talked about the ways in which they felt being in a mixed-gender marriage erased their queerness. This feeling of erasure negatively affected Q-MGM in different ways. One of the most commonly discussed experiences of Q-MGM was having their sexual identity challenged or disregarded by friends. A majority of the time, when Q-MGM mentioned instances of having their sexuality called into question, it was due to the fact that they were not just in a mixed-gender relationship, but that they were in a mixed-gender *marriage.*

The permanence associated with marriage seemed to be the main factor that convinced the friends of Q-MGM that their BQP identities were no longer valid. As Sahar said, "Nobody believed, like, 'how could you be gay but spend your life with a man?' I mean, I got a lot of that, even from close friends." Kat had similar experiences, "Friends will be like, 'Oh, you're mostly hetero anyway, aren't you?' They assume that because I'm married to Ethan. I'll be like, 'No, I'm queer…' But I think people do assume because of Ethan that I'm probably either hetero or mostly hetero." The reality that even close friends would disregard the self-proclaimed identities of Q-MGM shows how strongly the social construct of marriage reinforces a binary system of sexuality in society. While unmarried people – whose relationships are taken less seriously –

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may be given the freedom to identify beyond the binary, married people are perceived to be either straight *or* gay, nothing between. Morgan, a 31-year-old bisexual woman in an MGM, confirmed this claim:

> I've gotten a lot of really awful questions that are like "Oh, so you're married to Emanuel, so does that mean you're straight?" I've gotten that so many times... I think that with the misconceptions about bi people not being able to make up their mind and all that, I think that when one of us 'makes up our mind' [laughs], or it *seems* like we're making up our mind by getting married, right? I think the misconception that we're now straight or we're now gay depending on who you're married to, it definitely is a little bit stronger because of marriage and commitment.

Having their BQP identities erased in everyday interactions had negative consequences for many of the Q-MGM I spoke with. Being married and viewed as a heterosexual meant that Q-MGM had to reconcile both their own understandings of who they were as well as their positionality in the LGBT+ community. Sometimes, the cynicism of others propelled Q-MGM to outwardly justify or defend their queerness. Brook, a 60-year-old bisexual non-binary woman in an MGM, said, "Folks would say, *'*Oh**…** you're married now**…** right**…***'* Well, yes, I am, but *I'm still Brook*! That can't change… a piece of paper doesn't change who I am! So, I don't remember how many people said that to me." Teresa also strove to publicly challenge the bisexual erasure she felt from others, saying, "Since I'm not seeing any women, if I want to be seen as a bisexual person, I need to be a lot more blatant. I do this by bluntly telling people, by wearing bi flag colors and rainbows and basically trying to be as loud as possible about my queerness."

However, Brook and Teresa were rare examples of Q-MGM who discussed actively resisting the queer erasure they felt as a result of being in mixed-gender marriages. Several of the Q-MGM I interviewed talked about the ways in which feeling erased from the LGBT+ community affected their willingness to participate in queer spaces and events. Kimberly

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mentioned that being married to a man made her feel like a fraud in LGBT+ spaces. She explained:

> We feel like imposters in the queer community. Like, we went to Pridefest for the first time last year together. And we were just behaving normally, holding hands sometimes, and we felt like, 'Wow… Should we be here? Are we allowed? 'Cuz we look like straight people.

Morgan expressed a similar feeling of self-doubt questioning her acceptance at LGBT+ spaces:

> The first two years of our marriage, I did not go to Pride and I did not take him with me. I did neither because I felt like I was emoting too straight. Which is, you know, obviously nuts. That's super dumb. But I felt that at the time, and I felt the pressure too, you know, I guess if I'm gonna go to Pride, I gotta look a little queerer.

Morgan's concern of "emoting too straight" affirms that sexuality is an emergent feature of social interactions. Despite identifying as bisexual, Morgan feared that she would be held accountable for appearing to be straight in a queer space, which affected her willingness to participate in the community she identifies as a part of. Feeling unwelcomed at LGBT+ spaces and events and choosing to avoid them can have deleterious effects on the wellbeing of BQP folks who are in search of community and acceptance that queer spaces can provide. For Q-MGM like Morgan and Kimberly, being married made it incrementally more challenging to have their BQP identities recognized and validated in everyday interactions, so much so that Morgan felt the need to "look a little queerer" in order to feel like she belongs in the LGBT+ community.

Often read as homosexual in everyday interactions, bisexual, queer, and pansexual people in same-gender marriages (Q-SGM) do not have the same access to heteronormativity that their counterparts in mixed-gender marriages do. Nonetheless, Q-SGM also experienced bisexual erasure. As Layla explained:

> It's pretty common for people to identify me as a lesbian, and then if I or my wife mention that I identify as bi or pan, they shrug it off as irrelevant to whatever point they're making, or even express that sentiment verbally. I was talking to one of my college roommates recently, who was one of the first people I came out as bisexual

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> to over 15 years ago. He called me a lesbian, and when I reminded him I was bi he said, "Oh please! You two have been together for a thousand years, you're not sleeping with dudes anymore!"

Leona also spoke about ways in which she experienced bisexual erasure:

> Leona: I think people pigeonhole that, and they don't, and even people that I work with that know that I've dated Julia, like still pigeonhole you that you only like one type of person, or one thing related to intimacy. I think those that are close to us may know, but I don't think they think about it, it's not really a first thought about how I identify. You still get a lot of the stereotypical responses as to who we should be as a married couple, but I'm also like, ok with it. Like, I'm not leaving Jen for another person, I don't wish to go elsewhere, you know what I mean?
>
> Daniel: What do you mean stereotypical responses?
>
> Leona: If friends are talking about guys, like they would assume there would be no interest in either of us to make comments about men, when that's not always true. Like, I can have some of those same feelings that our friends that are straight have. So, I think there's those assumptions that there's no interest or you can't have a thought or opinion related to the opposite sex.

Statements like these imply that people tend to more strongly consider people's sexual behavior rather than their self-proclaimed sexual identity when making individualistic decisions about someone's sexuality. Many (n=9) of the married BQP folks I spoke with discussed their experiences facing widely held stereotypes about bisexuality. Among these tropes was the belief that bisexuality was a phase of sexual confusion that people adopted to experiment with same-gender sex. Nathan talked about the concerns his wife expressed to him:

> If you would have asked Connie 25 years ago how she would've handled me being bisexual, if I had known enough to say it then and would've said it, it might have ended our relationship. I don't know. Maybe she wouldn't have been in the right spot mentally for that to even be something, where she could've been like, "Wait a minute!"…There are some things early on in our relationship that she wouldn't understand where they came from, and now all of a sudden made sense, you know? She was afraid of me… afraid of losing me. She was afraid that, you know, almost stereotypical things that spouse might go through, like, "Oh my God, I'm gonna lose him to a guy some day!" You know, those almost stereotypical thought processes. "I'm not gonna be enough for him."

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Leona also discussed how her spouse occasionally voiced concerns regarding Leona's attraction to both men and women, saying, "I think for her there's some insecurity sometimes, just by comments she makes." Sahar spoke about the resentment she faced when coming out as BQP, saying, "People wanted me to pick or choose…People were much like, 'You're being selfish and you should choose one or the other; I don't even understand what bisexual means.' I think a lot of people kind of thought it was bullshit."

A number of BQP married people I spoke with felt like other people assumed that when they got married, "a choice" clarifying their sexuality had been made. Layla said that since she married her partner, she has experienced more outright denial of her BQP identity. As she phrased, it was "almost like choosing *this* woman represents me choosing women, in general. I made a commitment to a person, not to change my identity." Fiona has also had her queer identity disregarded by others since she's been married. She explained, "People will just kind of assume like, 'Oh, you don't know what you're talking about, it doesn't matter, you guys are married, you've been married, just sit down!' kind of thing. You know, like not malicious but just people assuming that I don't have experience or voice in my own community."

Stereotypes about bisexuality may even affect married BQP individuals' ability to claim a bisexual identity. As Brandi explained:

> As much as I was part of the LGBT community and doing a lot of things for the community, it was still, like, not my space; it still very much *felt* like it wasn't my space. And part of that, I think, was even my own doing of, like… I like women, but before I met Ariel, like, there had only been one other woman that I would have really considered dating, like actually engaging in a relationship with. So, in my mind, I was like, 'Well, I've never had a full-on relationship with a woman," so I'm on the spectrum of, okay, I like women, but I'm not *really* bisexual because I wouldn't have a full-on relationship with a woman, and I think that was my own misconceptions of what it meant and what it took to gain entrance to those spaces.

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As Brandi's experience illustrates, the societal stereotype rendering bisexuality as an illegitimate and transitory identity can make it difficult for people who are attracted to multiple genders to claim ownership of this marginalized sexuality.

Discussion

The inseparable linkage between heteronormativity and marriage reinforces the sexual binary, erasing bisexuality, queerness, and pansexuality as recognizable identity categories in social interactions. As a result, BQP individuals in MGMs are often read and treated as heterosexuals, affording them the privileges associated with heteronormativity, and BQP people in SGMs are read and treated as homosexuals, putting them at risk of stigmatization and affecting their willingness to participate in queer spaces. This process demonstrates how identities and the meanings attached to them are socially constructed, and it subsequently underscores how having aspects of one's identity categorized (or miscategorized) during everyday interactions can have meaningful implications on people's lived experiences (Bosson, Prewitt-Frelino, and Taylor 2005; Bosson, Taylor, and Prewitt-Frelino 2006; Campbell and Troyer 2007). The implications of identity miscategorization have been examined in the realms of race (Campbell and Troyer 2007; Laster Pirtle and Brown 2015), gender (McLemore 2015; McLemore 2018) and hetero/homosexuality (Bosson, Prewitt-Frelino, and Taylor 2005; Bosson, Taylor, and Prewitt-Frelino 2006), and research on the experiences of BQP folks being miscategorized (Gonzalez et al. 2017; Hartman-Linck 2014) warrants further inquiry.

While bisexuals in MGMs may experience privileges from "passing" as heterosexuals, that is not always their intention. However, unless Q-MGM actively engage in outward displays of queerness that enable others to sexually categorize them as members of the LGBT+ community, the pervasiveness of heteronormativity compounded with the heteronormalcy of

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marriage renders the BQP identities of Q-MGM unrecognizable. The societal norm of marriage being an (intended) permanent union also erases the identities of Q-SGM, who become sexually categorized as gay or lesbian once they wed.

For Q-MGM, the inability to "do bisexuality" while in MGMs can prevent them from accessing queer communities and spaces. Interestingly, these feelings of not belonging in LGBT+ spaces seem to largely be self-induced. While several of the Q-MGM I spoke with discussed feeling that they were "imposters" in queer spaces, no one mentioned any specific acts of direct exclusion or harassment for entering LGBT+ spaces. Further research could examine whether these feelings of not belonging are actually accompanied by acts of exclusion from within the LGBT+ community (Alarie and Gaudet 2013; Bostwick and Hequembourg 2014; Flanders, LeBreton, and Robinson 2019). However, it may not matter if these individuals were forcibly excluded from LGBT+ spaces. Culturally pervasive views of what being married means – and similarly, what being BQP means – can affect individuals' attitudes and behaviors whether or not they are directly sanctioned. These findings can contribute to previous scholarly conversations examining excluding practices within queer communities (Serano 2013).

Typical stereotypes faced by BQP people, in general, continued to plague married BQP people. Many of the married BQP people I interviewed shared stories of their friends teasing them about "finally making up their minds" regarding their sexual preference as a result of getting married. A few even alluded to their own spouses questioning their BQP sexual identities. For the married BQP people I spoke with, the continuous discrediting they faced in interactions caused them to question their own identities and sense of belonging in queer spaces and communities.

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However, being held accountable to the gender and sexual binaries does not mean people must follow them. As West and Zimmerman (1987) argue, people can do gender – and as I argue here, do sexuality – in a range of ways that challenge societal expectations at risk of assessment. If challenges to the gender binary hold the potential to undo gender (Butler 2004; Connell 2009; Deutsch 2007), challenges to sexual binary similarly hold the potential to undo sexuality. Several of married BQP people I interviewed discussed ways in which they advocated their non-binary sexual identities in everyday interactions, increasing awareness of such identities within their communities. Similar to the manner in which the presence of married homosexuals has been labeled as a challenge to heteronormativity (Bernstein 2015; Hull 2006), the presence of married BQP people can also destabilize heteronormativity.

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CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION

After five years of research, marriage still leaves me with more questions than answers. Nonetheless, the findings I generated in this research extend previous theories on marriage, gender, and sexuality, as well as highlight areas in need of further research. The interviews I conducted with married people illustrate that marriage is still informed by heteronormativity and that married people still "do" gender and sexuality in normative ways (West and Zimmerman 1987). However, certain attitudes and behaviors of married people, today, may be challenging society's binary conceptualizations of married life. Many of the married people I spoke with challenged gender and hetero norms of marriage in some ways, from debating marital name change, to practicing consensual non-monogamy, to making public their LGBT+ identities. Each of these behaviors represent mechanisms that queer heteronormative gender/sex/sexuality alignment expectations and subsequently undo gender and sexuality (Deutsch 2007; Rupp et al. 2013) in the context of married life.

By qualitatively studying this topic, this research was able to unveil detailed explanations as to why married people chose to deviate from certain marital norms. For the people I interviewed, the heteronormative accountability structures that govern gender and sexual norms of marriage may be weakening. For the most part, the attitudes and behaviors of my interviewees support the idea that marriage is not "one size fits all," and that marriage, while still a powerful institution, may be becoming more individualized (Giddens 1992) specifically regarding gender and sexual expectations of married life. The women I spoke with were largely critical of patriarchal norms of married life, and felt strongly that facing sanctioning for breaking those norms was worth the risk. The people in SGMs and those practicing CNM that I interviewed did not cleanly fit within the gendered and sexual scripts of marriage and therefore challenged

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several norms as they negotiated everyday decisions of married life that have historically been informed by patriarchal and hetero norms. Further research should explore if these mechanisms of undoing of gender and sexuality within married life may be the result of increasing societal acceptance of gender and sexual behaviors that challenge binary understandings of these constructs and whether heterosexual men also contribute to the undoing of gender and sexual norms of married life.

The belief that one must behave in certain ways and follow certain norms in order to get married may also be declining – at least among the predominantly white, relatively affluent individuals I interviewed. While getting married as a symbol of love and commitment was still heavily reported among my interviewees, the most commonly discussed motivator to marry was gaining access to legal protections and benefits of marriage. This finding raises serious questions about the privileging of marriage and the subsequent marginalizing of individuals, couples, and other kinship formations who either choose not to marry or are not able to marry (such as polyamorous relationships).

To promote equality for all relationships and kinship formations, one of three policies could be advanced. The first option is redefining marriage, making it inclusive to all including polyamorous relationships (Aviram and Leachman 2015). The second option is to maintain the current laws defining who has access to marriage while simultaneously making the benefits currently afforded to married people available to others through alternative structures such as domestic partnerships or civil unions (Parkman 2005). This model most accurately reflects the policies currently in place in the U.S. However, domestic partnerships and civil unions are restricted to couples, and while they offer many of the same benefits as marriage, their exact protections vary from state to state (Strasser 2002).

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The third option is to abolish marriage as an institution and to extend the benefits and protections of marriage to all comparable domestic relationships (Jeffreys 2004; Meyerson 2013). The thought of abolishing marriage may sound extreme, especially given that marriage has been found to make people happier (Fresch and Williams 2007; Holt-Lunstad, Birmingham, and Jones 2008), wealthier (Gibson-Davis 2009; Zagorsky 2005), healthier (Holt-Lunstad et al. 2008; Horn et al. 2013; Waite and Gallagher 2002) and more stable parents (Amato 2000; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). However, future research should assess whether it is the actual status of being married or the privileges and protections afforded through marriage that improve the quality of life for married people.

An institution built upon gender and sexual binaries, the status of being married makes it easy for others to sexually categorize married people as heterosexual or homosexual based on the sex categorization of an individual and their spouse. This proved to be challenging for the BQP individuals I spoke with who commonly had their sexual identities miscategorized in everyday interactions. Being perceived as a certain sexuality affects the ways in which people are treated in social interactions. Being perceived and treated as heterosexual can afford individuals privileges, while being perceived as treated as homosexual can result in stigmatization. The worry of being miscategorized and misunderstood can also result in feelings of exclusion from certain communities and spaces (Serano 2013), as was evidenced by several of the Q-MGM I spoke with. Examining the lived experiences of married BQP individuals, I extended the theory of doing gender to argue that sexuality is also an emergent feature of social interactions against which we are held accountable (Deutsch 2007; West and Fenstermaker 1993; West and Zimmerman 1987). Despite the pressures of marriage's accountability structures, the married BQP people I interviewed for this project also defended ways in which their presence and their

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behaviors queered binary assumptions of gender and sexuality in ways that could contribute to the undoing of heteronormativity.

Nostalgic, angry, critical, jealous, excited, confused, and frustrated are all still emotions I associate with marriage. Completing this project has added another emotion to my list. Optimism. Marriage has changed a lot over time and will likely continue to evolve. Future research should pay attention to the affects gender and sexual equality movements have on the relationship between heteronormativity and marriage. While my sample is not representative of the larger population, hearing frequent accounts of married people critiquing patriarchal norms within their own marriages could represent an institutional shift on the horizon, legally and culturally redefining marriage in more egalitarian ways. A growing awareness and understanding of the social construction of gender and sexuality will likely play a meaningful part in future conceptions of what marriage is and can look like.

Closing Thoughts

I was sitting in a coffeeshop with Sahar, completing what would be my final interview for this project. As a researcher, I know I shouldn't have favorites, but my conversation with Sahar easily stands out as one of the most memorable. A polyamorous queer woman with a critical eye towards the patriarchal undertones of marriage, Sahar poignantly weaved in her own commentary on married life, gender, and sexuality throughout her responses to the questions I was asking. After responding to the concluding question I asked all my interviewees, I felt compelled to ask her one thing. I wanted to know what she envisioned for the future of marriage. Her thoughts adequately capture the new perspective this research has instilled within me.

> I think it's finally opening up the doors to a different understanding of what a commitment can look like… I think the people who live on the outskirts, like you know, queer people, poly people, people of color, the people that live on the outside of what "normal" is have such a great potential to like, influence what's on the

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inside because we've already seen the institution of marriage evolve so much over time, there's no reason it can't keep evolving! And I think it should, because I think it's potentially why a lot of them fail, because they're supposed to be monogamous, they're supposed to be this or that, or straight, or supposed to be involving children, or a home, where it's like, that's not what it *has* to look like.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Definitions of Gender and Sexual Identities [a]

agender	a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender; sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.
asexual	a continuum in which one experiences little or no sexual attraction to others
bigender	a person who fluctuates between traditionally "woman" and "man" gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with two genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender); a semantically different version of pangender
bisexual	a person who experiences attraction to some people of their gender and another gender; bisexual attraction does not have to be equally split, or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders an individual may be attracted to; often used interchangeably with "pansexual"
demisexual	little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction, until a strong romantic connection is formed with someone, often within a romantic relationship.
female	a person whose physical sex characteristics conform closely enough to social expectations of binary sex that the individual is assigned female at birth
gender-fluid	describes a gender identity that may change or shift over time, between or within the mix of the options available
(gender) non-conforming	a gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary; often abbreviated as "GNC"
genderqueer	a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify within the binary of man/woman; an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities
gynesexual	

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	being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to woman, females, and/or femininity
heterosexual	experiencing emotional, physical, and/or sexual attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of a different gender
homosexual	a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same gender
male	a person whose physical sex characteristics conform closely enough to social expectations of binary sex that the individual is assigned male at birth
man	one of two societally normalized and expected gender identities; one side of the gender binary
non-binary	a broad, inclusive class of gender identities that exists outside the gender binary of man and woman; individuals who have multiple, partial and/or no experiences of gender
pangender	a person who fluctuates between traditionally "woman" and "man" gender-based behavior and identities, identifying with two genders (or sometimes identifying with either man or woman, as well as a third, different gender); a semantically different version of trans(gender)
pansexual	a person who experiences sexual, romantic and/or physical attraction to members of all gender identities/expressions; often used interchangeably with "bisexual"
polyamory	refers to the practice of, desire for, or orientation toward having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners). Often shortened to "poly."
queer	an umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender
trans(gender)	an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man); an umbrella term covering a range of

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	identities that transgress socially-defined gender norms; trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).
woman	one of two societally normalized and expected gender identities; one side of the gender binary

[a] Most definitions from the uncopyrighted online educational resource https://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/#sthash.dgj1dfOF.jaXHHJUQ.dpbs

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Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE
Department of University Safety & Assurances

Melody Harries
IRB Administrator
Institutional Review Board
Engelmann 270
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
(414) 229-3182 *phone*
(414) 229-6729 *fax*

http://www.irb.uwm.edu
harries@uwm.edu

New Study - Notice of IRB Expedited Approval

Date: March 16, 2018

To: Noelle Chesley, PhD
Dept: Sociology

CC: Daniel Bartholomay

IRB #: 18.126
Title: Doing and Undoing Heteronormativity: A Comparative Examination of the Lived Experiences within Same-Gender and Man/Woman Marriages

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has been approved as minimal risk Expedited under Category 6 & 7 as governed by 45 CFR 46.110.

This protocol has been approved on **March 16, 2018** for one year. IRB approval will expire on **March 15, 2019**. If you plan to continue any research related activities (e.g., enrollment of subjects, study interventions, data analysis, etc.) past the date of IRB expiration, a continuation for IRB approval must be filed by the submission deadline. If the study is closed or completed before the IRB expiration date, please notify the IRB by completing and submitting the Continuing Review form found in IRBManager.

This study may be selected for a post approval review by the IRB. The review will include an in person meeting with members of the IRB to verify that study activities are consistent with the approved protocol and to review signed consent forms and other study related records.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintain proper documentation of study records and promptly report to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The principal investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., FERPA, Radiation Safety, UWM Data Security, UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts, state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,
Melody Harries
Melody Harries
IRB Administrator

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Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer

ARE YOU MARRIED?

Would you be willing to answer some questions about your life as a married person? I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, and I am seeking individuals to participate in a study examining the realities of married life.

- To participate, you must be married (for at least six months) and currently reside in Wisconsin.
- Participants will complete a brief online survey that will take approximately 10 minutes, and then participate in an interview (either in person or over the phone) that will take approximately one to two hours. The interview will be audio recorded.
- For the interview, I will work with you to find a meeting time and place that we are both comfortable with. I will only be interviewing one spouse per married couple.
- Your name, identity, and all information collected will be confidential.
- You will be asked questions on several personal topics about your relationship, including your sexuality and finances.
- I am hoping to hear from a diverse array of experiences, so people of all genders, sexualities, races, and religions are encouraged to participate.

If you or someone you know may be interested in participating, or if you have any questions, please e-mail, call, or text me:

Daniel Bartholomay | bartho23@uwm.edu | (414) 253-6444

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Appendix D: Detailed Descriptions of Interviewees

Anna, 38, identifies as a white, heterosexual woman and has been married to Aaron, a white, heterosexual man, since 2001. Anna and Aaron have been in a relationship since high school. They are monogamous.

Farrah, 40, identifies as a white, pansexual transgender woman and has been married to Faye, a white, bisexual woman, since 2009. Farrah began openly identifying as a woman after she and Faye were married. They have one child. Both Farrah and Faye are polyamorous.

Layla, 33, identifies as a white, bisexual/pansexual/queer woman and has been married to Laura, a white, lesbian woman, since 2015. Layla and Laura burst into tears the day same-gender marriage was legalized in Wisconsin. While they do not consider themselves to be in an open relationship, Layla and Laura have participated in consensual non-monogamy since they've been married.

Felicity, 75, identifies as a white, bisexual woman and has been married to, Frank, a white, heterosexual man, since 1998. Prior to marrying Frank, Felicity had been married three other times. They are monogamous.

Kaylin, 53, identifies as a white, lesbian woman and has been married to Kristin, a white, lesbian woman, since 2014. Kaylin and Kristin got married the day after same-gender marriage was legalized in Wisconsin. They were in a relationship for 14 years before they were legally able to get married. They are monogamous.

Kat, 38, identifies as a white, queer woman and has been married to Joey, a white, bisexual man, since 2014. As an act of protest, the couple got married in Illinois because Kat refused to get married in Wisconsin where same-gender marriage was not yet legalized. Kat is polyamorous.

Trevor, 33, identifies as a white, bisexual man and has been married to Tina, a white, heterosexual woman, since 2008. Trevor and Tina got legally married at a courthouse six months prior to their wedding ceremony so Tina could access Trevor's health insurance. They refer to that day as their "insurance-aversary." Trevor and Tina have been sexually active with other people together since being married, but they are not currently engaging in non-monogamy.

Harrison, 38, identifies as an African American, queer/androsexual man and has been married to Howard, a white, gay man, since 2014. Harrison and Howard were planning a wedding in Iowa where same-gender marriage was legal, but they ended up getting married in Wisconsin the very day same-gender marriage was legalized. Harrison and Howard have an open relationship.

Jordyn, 35, identifies as a white, queer gender non-binary person and has been married to Jaylin, a white, queer gender non-binary person since 2016. They have an open relationship.

Kalvin, 37, identifies as a white, gay male and has is married to Quinn, a white, gay male, since 2013. He and Quinn had a commitment ceremony in 2011 before same-gender marriage was legal. They are monogamous.

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Taylor, 32, identifies as a white, lesbian woman and has been married to Jenna, a white, lesbian woman, since 2016. She and Jenna found out they were pregnant five days after they got married. They are monogamous.

Nia, 24, identifies as a black, heterosexual woman and has been married to Jeremy, a black, heterosexual man, since 2014. She likened marriage to a roller coaster. They are monogamous.

Olivia, 27, identifies as a multiracial, heterosexual woman and has been married to Jax, a multiracial, heterosexual man, since 2016. Olivia wanted to keep her own last name when she and Jax married, but she eventually agreed to take his.

Steven, 27, identifies as a white, heterosexual man and has been married to Carly, a white heterosexual woman, since 2017. Steven asked Carly's parents for their blessing before he proposed. They are monogamous.

Trixie, 34, identifies as a white lesbian woman and has been married to Janae, a white lesbian woman, since 2017. In addition to accessing the legal benefits of marriage, Trixie wanted to get married so she could have her "pretty princess day." They are monogamous.

Lydia, 48, identifies as a white, lesbian woman and has been married to Krista, a white lesbian woman, since 2013. Lydia was very involved with the fight to legalize same-gender marriage in Wisconsin. They are monogamous.

London, 35, identifies as a white, bisexual woman and has been married to Claire, a white lesbian woman, since 2016. London wore a standard white dress to their wedding, but Claire wore a suit, a bowtie, and suspenders. They are monogamous.

Emery, 48, identifies as an Asian-America, heterosexual woman and has been married to Christopher, a Hispanic, heterosexual man, since 2016. Emery said accessing the legal protections of marriage was 90 percent of her and Christopher's decision to get married. They are monogamous.

Zeke, 25, identifies as a multiracial, gay man and has been married to Jeff, a multiracial, gay man, since 2015. Jeff's family does not approve of his and Zeke's marriage. They are monogamous.

Carl, 39, identifies as a white, gay man and has been married to Josh, a white, gay man, since 2016. Rather than best men, both Carl and Josh had "best women" stand next to them during their wedding ceremony. They are monogamous.

Kiana, 40, identifies as a white, pansexual woman and has been married to Laura, a white, bisexual woman, since 2016. Kiana, who is raising her ailing friend's children, described family as "the people who you love and love you." They are monogamous.

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Bianca, 45, identifies as a white, heterosexual woman and has been married to Phillip, a white, heterosexual man, since 1998. Bianca said she never really wanted to get married, but felt that she was at the age where she should. They are monogamous.

Chester, 44, identifies as a white, gay man and has been married to Andrew, a white, gay man, since 2015. The main reason Chester and Andrew got married was to make adopting children together easier. They are monogamous.

Brandi, 31, identifies as a white, bisexual woman and has been married to Michael, a white, heterosexual man, since 2008. She is in a polyamorous relationship and has another partner, Ariel, who also lives with her.

Leona, 39, identifies as a white, bisexual woman and has been married to Julia, a white, lesbian woman, since 2016. Leona described Julia as "old school" when Julia asked Leona's mom for her permission to marry Leona. They are monogamous.

Karla, 32, identifies as a Black, heterosexual woman and has been married to Alex, a Black, heterosexual man, since 2012. When asked why she wanted to get married to Alex, Karla said, "He provided for me the same way my dad provided for my family." They are monogamous.

Brook, 60, identifies as a white, bisexual gender non-binary woman and has been married to Roger, a white, bisexual man, since 1985. They raised their children in a very gender neutral household and are often told by friends that their relationship dynamic is an exemplar of what marriage should be. They have an open relationship.

Sawyer, 59, identifies as a white, bisexual gender non-binary person and has been married to Jane, a white, asexual woman, since 2000. Sawyer said he loves Jane, but doesn't need a partner to make him feel whole. He plans to have conversations about opening their relationship, soon.

Teresa, 37, identifies as a white, bisexual woman and has been married to Craig, a white, bisexual man, since 2015. Teresa and Craig had an adult flower girl and an adult ring "bear" – who literally dressed like a bear – at their wedding. Both Teresa and Craig are polyamorous.

Kimberly, 30, identifies as a white, bisexual woman and has been married to Sean, a white bisexual man, since 2018. Kimberly chose to walk herself down the aisle at her wedding because she didn't want to be given away. She and Sean are polyamorous.

Morgan, 31, identifies as an Asian, bisexual woman and has been married to Ben, a white, heterosexual man, since 2013. They got married in a dive bar at 9 a.m. They are monogamous.

Charlie, 32, identifies as a white, heterosexual man and has been married to Jayren, a white, heterosexual woman, since 2017. Charlie and Jayren went to Europe to have a private wedding. They are monogamous.

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Teagan, 38, identifies as a white, bisexual woman and has been married to Eric, a Black, heterosexual man, since 2011. She and Eric were dating for ten years prior to getting married. They are monogamous.

Barrett, 47, identifies as a white, heterosexual man and has been married to Natalia, a white, pansexual woman, since 1998. Barret and Natalia are polyamorous, and he thinks it has enhanced their marriage.

Maya, 56, identifies as a white, heterosexual woman and has been married to Adam, a white, heterosexual man, since 1996. Maya and Adam eloped to Las Vegas and had an Elvis impersonator officiate their wedding. They have a polyamorous relationship.

Fiona, 30, identifies as a white, queer woman and has been married to Felix, a white, bisexual man, since 2013. Fiona wanted to get married, but hated being the center of attention at her wedding. She and Felix are polyamorous.

Delilah, 39, identifies as a Black, bisexual woman and has been married to Emile, a white, heterosexual man, since 2007. She and Emile are polyamorous and are open about their relationships with their son, Elijah.

Whitney, 27, identifies as a white, queer woman and has been married to Chad, a white, heterosexual man, since 2015. Whitney didn't think that marriages should last a lifetime, but rather that people should make a commitment to their spouse knowing that people grow and change. She and Chad are polyamorous.

Evelyn, 51, identifies as a white, pansexual woman and has been married to Dakota, a white, heterosexual man, since 2003. Evelyn said she would never take someone else's last name when getting married, saying "no one owns me!" She and Dakota are polyamorous.

Nathan, 50, identifies as a white, bisexual man and has been married to Sharon, a white, heterosexual woman, sine 1994. Nathan didn't start openly identifying as bisexual until later in life. He and Sharon are monogamous.

Sahar, identifies as a white, queer, woman and has been married to Shane, a white, heterosexual man, since 2008. At the time of her interview, she and Shane were in the beginning stages of a divorce. Sahar is polyamorous.

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Appendix E. Informed Consent Document

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – MILWAUKEE
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

1. General Information

Study title:

Doing and Undoing Heteronormativity: A Comparative Examination of the Lived Experiences within Same-Gender and Mixed-gender Marriages

Person in Charge of Study (Principal Investigator):

Noelle Chesley, Ph.D. (Sociology) and Daniel Bartholomay, M.S. (Sociology)

2. Study Description

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to.

Study description:

The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences of married people. The interview will be audio recorded. This study is being completed as dissertation research for principal investigator Daniel Bartholomay. The goal of this study is to better understand how the roles of gender and sexuality are operating in marriages. This study is being conducted in the Milwaukee area. About 40 individuals will be participating in this study. Your participation in this study will take approximately one to two hours.

3. Study Procedures

What will I be asked to do if I participate in the study?

If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete one interview. The principal investigator will discuss different locations where the interview can be conducted, and you will get to choose the location that you are most comfortable with. If you are unable to conduct the interview in person, we can also discuss opportunities to conduct the interview via Skype or over the phone. During the interview, the principal investigator will ask you several questions related to the following subject areas:

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- Your demographics (such as gender, sexuality, age, religion, political affiliation, etc.)
- Your marriage and family
- Your interpersonal and sexual relationship with your spouse
- How you and your spouse complete certain tasks within your relationship

4. Risks and Minimizing Risks

What risks will I face by participating in this study?

The interviewer will be asking you questions pertaining to some private topics associated with your spouse and family, including questions about your personal and sexual life. Discussing this sensitive information may cause you some psychological discomfort. If at any time you are asked a question that you are not comfortable answering, you have the option to skip the question. The interviewer will also provide you with a list of family and relationship counselors in the Milwaukee area. In the unlikely event that you feel continued discomfort upon completing the interview, you may seek professional help as needed. Please know that all research personnel have completed all required training about ethical conduct in interactions with research participants.

5. Benefits

Will I receive any benefit from my participation in this study?

There are no direct benefits to you other than to further research in the fields of family, gender, and sexuality.

6. Study Costs and Compensation

Will I be charged anything for participating in this study?

You will not be responsible for any cost of taking part in this research study.

Are subjects paid or given anything for being in the study?

You will not be compensated for participating in this research study.

7. Confidentiality

What happens to the information collected?

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All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. The principal investigators will be the only people in this study who will be able to connect the information you provide to your identity. Pseudonyms will be used in place of your real name in all communications, written and oral, pertaining to this research. We will also take caution not to reveal combinations of demographic information that may expose your identity.

The device storing the interview recordings will be kept in a locked office. Transcripts of the interviews will be stored on a flash drive which will remain in a locked office, and only pseudonyms will be used in the transcripts. We may decide to present what we find to others, or publish our results in scientific journals or at scientific conferences. Only the principal investigators and a small team of UW-Milwaukee undergraduate research assistants will have access to the information collected during the interviews. However, the Institutional Review Board at UW-Milwaukee or appropriate federal agencies like the Office for Human Research Protections may review this study's records.

8. Alternatives

Are there alternatives to participating in the study?

There are no known alternatives available to you other than not taking part in this study.

9. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

What happens if I decide not to be in this study?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee.

If you decide to withdraw or if you are withdrawn from the study before it ends, we will use the information we collected up to that point.

10. Questions

Who do I contact for questions about this study?
For more information about the study or the study procedures or treatments, or to withdraw from the study, contact:

Daniel Bartholomay
Department of Sociology

www.manaraa.com

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
P.O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201
bartho23@uwm.edu

Who do I contact for questions about my rights or complaints towards my treatment as a research subject?
The Institutional Review Board may ask your name, but all complaints are kept in confidence.

Institutional Review Board
Human Research Protection Program
Department of University Safety and Assurances
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
P.O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201u
(414) 229-3173

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – MILWAUKEE
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

General Information

Study title:

Doing and Undoing Heteronormativity: A Comparative Examination of the Lived Experiences within Same-Gender and Mixed-gender Marriages

Person in Charge of Study (Principal Investigator):

Noelle Chesley, Ph.D. (Sociology) and Daniel Bartholomay, M.S. (Sociology)

I, _____ agree to the terms
Print Name Here

presented in this informed consent document.

_____ _____
Signature *Date*

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Appendix F: Qualtrics Survey

Background Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q0A What is your first and last name?

_____

Q0C How old are you?

_____

Q0D How old is your spouse?

_____

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Q0E How do you identify yourself with respect to your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Asian (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (3)
- ☐ Native American (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ White (6)
- ☐ Multiracial (7)
- ☐ Self-Identify (please specify) (8)

_____

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Q0F How does your spouse identify with respect to their race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Asian (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (3)
- ☐ Native American (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ White (6)
- ☐ Multiracial (7)
- ☐ Self-Identify (please specify) (8)

_____

Q0G What is your gender?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Transgender Male (3)
- ○ Transgender Female (4)
- ○ Gender Non-Binary (5)
- ○ Self-Identify (please specify) (6)

_____

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Q0H What is your spouse's gender?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Transgender Male (3)
- ○ Transgender Female (4)
- ○ Gender Non-Binary (5)
- ○ Self-Identify (please specify) (6)

_____

Q0I How do you identify with respect to your sexuality?

- ○ Heterosexual (1)
- ○ Gay/Lesbian (2)
- ○ Bisexual (3)
- ○ Pansexual (4)
- ○ Asexual (5)
- ○ Self-Identify (please specify) (6)

_____

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Q0J How does your spouse identify with respect to their sexuality?

- ○ Heterosexual (1)
- ○ Gay/Lesbian (2)
- ○ Bisexual (3)
- ○ Pansexual (4)
- ○ Asexual (5)
- ○ Self-Identify (please specify) (6)

_____

Q0K Are you currently diagnosed with a disability of impairment?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Prefer not to answer (3)

Q0L What political party do you affiliate with?

- ○ Democratic (1)
- ○ Independent (2)
- ○ Republican (3)
- ○ No Political Affiliation (4)
- ○ Self-Identify (please specify) (5)

_____

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Q0M Regarding your political views, would you say you are:

- 1. Extremely Liberal (1)
- 2. Liberal (2)
- 3. Slightly Liberal (3)
- 4. Moderate (4)
- 5. Slightly Conservative (5)
- 6. Conservative (6)
- 7. Extremely Conservative (7)

Q0N In what city do you currently live?

_____

Q0O Approximately how long (in years and months) have you lived in your current city of residence?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q0P Not counting yourself, how many other people live in your household?

_____

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Q0R Are you currently employed?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Skip To: Q0U If Are you currently employed? = No

Q0S What is your current job title and employer?

_____

Q0T Approximately how many hours per week do you work at your employed job?

- ○ 0 to 9 hours/week (1)
- ○ 10 to 19 hours/week (2)
- ○ 20 to 29 hours/week (3)
- ○ 30 to 39 hours/week (4)
- ○ 40 hours/week (5)
- ○ More than 40 hours/week (6)

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Q0U What, approximately, was your total family income from all sources last year (2017)?

- ○ Less than $10,000 (1)
- ○ $10,000 - $19,999 (2)
- ○ $20,000 - $29,999 (3)
- ○ $30,000 - $39,999 (4)
- ○ $40,000 - $49,999 (5)
- ○ $50,000 - $59,999 (6)
- ○ $60,000 - $69,999 (7)
- ○ $70,000 - $79,999 (8)
- ○ $80,000 - $89,999 (9)
- ○ $90,000 - $99,999 (10)
- ○ $100,000 - $149,999 (11)
- ○ $150,000 - $249,999 (12)
- ○ More than $250,000 (13)

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Q0V What is the highest degree or level of school that you have completed?

- 1. Some high school, no diploma (1)
- 2. High school graduate, or the equivalent (for example: GED) (2)
- 3. Some college credit, no degree (3)
- 4. Trade/technical/vocational training (4)
- 5. Associate degree (5)
- 6. Bachelor's degree (6)
- 7. Master's degree (7)
- 8. Professional degree (8)
- 9. Doctorate degree (9)

Q0W What is your present religion, if any?

- 1. Agnostic (1)
- 2. Atheist (2)
- 3. Buddhist (3)
- 4. Catholic (4)
- 5. Hindu (5)
- 6. Jewish (6)
- 7. Muslim (7)
- 8. Protestant (8)
- 9. Self-identify (please specify) (9) _____

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Q0X How religious would you say you are?

- ○ 1. Not at all religious (1)
- ○ 2. Slightly religious (2)
- ○ 3. Moderately religious (3)
- ○ 4. Very religious (4)
- ○ 5. Extremely religious (5)

Q0Y How important would you say family is to you?

- ○ 1. Not at all important (1)
- ○ 2. Slightly important (2)
- ○ 3. Moderately important (3)
- ○ 4. Very important (4)
- ○ 5. Extremely important (5)

Q0Z In your own words, how do you define "family"?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Q0AA Would you say you are:

- 1. Extremely Feminine (1)
- 2. Quite Feminine (2)
- 3. Somewhat Feminine (3)
- 4. Neither Masculine nor Feminine (4)
- 5. Somewhat Masculine (5)
- 6. Quite Masculine (6)
- 7. Extremely Masculine (7)

Q0AB Would you say your spouse is:

- 1. Extremely Feminine (1)
- 2. Quite Feminine (2)
- 3. Somewhat Feminine (3)
- 4. Neither Masculine nor Feminine (4)
- 5. Somewhat Masculine (5)
- 6. Quite Masculine (6)
- 7. Extremely Masculine (7)

End of Block: Default Question Block

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Appendix G: Interview Schedule

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
Question List ---
(PI: Daniel Bartholomay)

CASE ID: _____ DATE: _____

Q1. To begin, I'd like to hear about your upbringing.

Q1A. Where did you grow up? (Probe for cities/states as needed)

Q1B. When you were a child, who all lived in your household?
(Seek clarification on relationships and gender of all individuals listed

Q1C. Growing up, what was your family like?

Q1D. Are your parents currently married?

1. YES, CURRENTLY MARRIED
2. NO, DIVORCED
3. NO, NEVER MARRIED >> Jump to Q1F
4. OTHER_____ >> Jump to Q1F

(If one or both parents are deceased, record that here and ask about relationship status prior to death)

Deceased

1. YES
2. NO

Q1E. Reflecting on your parents' marriage, would you say that their marriage was:

1. VERY HAPPY
2. SOMEWHAT HAPPY

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3. NOT VERY HAPPY

4. DK

5. REF

Q1F. How would you describe the relationship between your parents?

Q1G. Were you previously married to anyone else before _____?

1. YES

2. NO >> Go to Q4

Q1H. When was that, and with whom? (Can I get a first name, in case we need to refer to this person later?)

Q2. Before you start telling me about your relationship with, _____. I was hoping you could tell me a little more about yourself *before* you and _____ started **dating**.

1.

Q2A. How would you describe yourself in the years before you started dating _____?

(Probe as needed to understand behaviors/lifestyle)

Q2B. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being absolutely miserable and 10 being the happiest you've ever been, how would you rate your overall quality of life at that time in your life, before you started dating _____?

Q2C. Can you tell me about how you and _____ started dating?

Q2D. When you were dating _____ about how frequently did you two see each other?

1. EVERY DAY

2. A FEW TIMES A WEEK

3. ONCE A WEEK >> Go to Q4F

4. A FEW TIMES A MONTH >> Go to Q4F

5. ONCE A MONTH >> Go to Q4F

6. LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH >> Go to Q4F

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7. DK

8. REF

Q2E. While you were dating but before you were married, would you say you and (spouse's name) spent more time together or apart from one another?

1. MORE TIME TOGETHER

2. MORE TIME APART

3. DK

4. REF

Q2F. When you were dating _____ what would you typically be doing if you weren't spending time with (spouse's name)?

Q2G. What types of things would you do together when you and _____ were dating?

Q2H. In general, how do you think the people in your life viewed your relationship with _____ when you were dating? Do you think people:

1. Took your relationship w/ _____very seriously

2. Took your relationship w/ _____ somewhat seriously

3. Did not take your relationship w/ _____ seriously

4. DK

5. REF

Q2I. So, you said that you felt as though people in your life (Refer to response above) when you were dating. Can you tell me why you feel that way?

Q2J. While you and _____ were dating, were there any times that you felt you needed to hide or conceal your relationship from anyone?

1. YES

2. NO >> GO TO Q4L

3. DK

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4. REF

Q2K. Can you tell me about any instances you remember when you felt that you had to hide your relationship with _____?

Q2L. How long were you and _____dating before you got married?

Q2M. So during this period of time when you and _____ were dating but before you got married, how would you rate your overall quality of life, from 1 being "absolutely miserable" to 10 being "the happiest you've ever been"?

Q3. Now I'd like to hear about your **decision to marry** _____.

Q3A. Why did you want to get married?

Q3B. Did one of you propose to the other?

1. YES
2. NO >> Go to Q5G.
3. DK
4. REF

Q3C. Did you and _____ discuss getting married before the proposal?

1. YES
2. NO >> GO TO Q5E
3. DK
4. REF

Q3D. What were your conversations with _____ like when you were talking about getting married?

Q3E. Who proposed to who?

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Q3F. Can you tell me about how the proposal went? >> Go to Q5H

Q3G. If neither of you proposed, how did you decide to get married?

Q3H. Did you tell people in your life that you and _____ were going to get married?

1. YES
2. NO >> GO TO Q6
3. DK
4. REF

Q3I. What was the general response from people when you told them you and _____ were going to get married? Were people:

1. MOSTLY SUPPORTIVE
2. SOMEWHAT SUPPORTIVE
3. SOMEWHAT UNSUPPORTIVE
4. MOSTLY UNSUPPORTIVE
5. DK
6. REF

Q3J. So you think people were (Insert response from Q5I) when you told them that you and _____ were getting married. Can you tell me why you felt that way?

Q4. The next questions are about the day you got married.

Q4A. When did you get married to _____?

Q4B. Where did your marriage take place?
(Get both city and state as well as actual location [I.e., church, outdoors, courtroom, etc.]

Q4C. How did you decide where to get married?

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Q4D. Did you invite people to view your marriage officiation?

1. YES
2. NO >> Go to Q6G
3. DK
4. REF

Q4E. How did you decide who to invite to view your marriage officiation?

Q4F. Approximately how many people attended?

Q4G. Often times, people who get invited to marriage ceremonies are unable to come for many practical reasons (prior commitments, cost of travel, etc.) Was there anyone you invited to your wedding who refused to come for reasons other than the type I just mentioned?

Q4H. Let's talk about the day you got married. What did you do in the hours before the officiation?

Q4I. To the best of your knowledge, what was _____ doing in the hours before?

Q4J. What were you wearing when you got married?

Q4K. What was _____ wearing?

Q4L. Did you have bridesmaids or groomsmen of any sort be part of your marriage?

1. YES
2. NO >> Go to Q6M
3. DK
4. REF

Q4M. Can you describe these people and what roles they filled?

Q4N. As best as you can, can you describe every event that took place during your marriage officiation, from the beginning to the end?

(Probe as necessary:

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- Was anyone "given away"? By whom?
- "I now pronounce you...?"
- "You may kiss" who?)

Q4O. Who officiated your marriage?

Q4P. Would you say that your marriage officiation was religious?

1. YES
2. NO >> Go to Q6R
3. DK
4. REF

Q4Q. How was religion a part of your marriage officiation?

Q4R. Did you have a reception following your marriage officiation?

1. YES
2. NO >> Go to Q6S
3. DK
4. REF

Q4S. As best as you can, can you describe every event that took place at your reception, from the beginning of the reception to the end?

Q4T. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being absolutely miserable and 10 being the happiest you've ever been, how would you rate your overall quality of life the day you got married?

Q5. Next, I'd like to ask you some questions about your life after **marriage**.

Q5A. Marriage offers a lot of legal benefits, such as access to a spouse's health insurance, tax breaks, etc. How important are these legal benefits to you and your spouse?

Q5B. Do you think marriages should last a lifetime? Explain…

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Q5C. Do you think you and your partner have a pretty "normal" marriage? Explain…

Q5D. How do you think other people, like your family, friends, coworkers, neighbors etc. view your marriage?

Q5E. Do you think you and your spouse do anything that challenges the norms or expected behaviors of married life? Explain.

Q5F. Do you think your relationship with your spouse has changed since you've been married?

1. YES
2. NO >> Go to Q7C
3. DK >> Go to Q7C
4. REF >> Go to Q7C

Q5G. In what ways do you think your relationship with _____ has changed since you've been married?

Q5H. Do you and your spouse live together?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DK
4. REF

Q5I. Did you live together before you were married?

1. YES >> GO TO Q7E
2. NO >> GO TO Q7G
3. DK >> GO TO Q7H
4. REF >> GO TO Q7H

Q5J. When did you and _____ start living together?

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Q5K. Do you remember why you and _____ decided to live together?

Q5L. Why did you decide to live in the same household with _____ after you got married?

Q5M. What about household tasks and maintenance? Who does what around the house? (Probe as needed)

Q5N.How did you decide who would do what tasks?

Q5O. Do both you and your spouse participate in paid work?

1. YES
2. NO >> GO TO Q7L
3. DK
4. REF

Q5P. If you had to approximate your income to your spouses income, about what would it be?

- Do you make equal amounts of money, so 50/50, do you make a little more than your spouse, so 60/40?

Q5Q. Do you and your spouse pool your money and financial resources (for example, do you have joint banking accounts)?

1. YES
2. NO >> GO TO Q7O
3. DK
4. REF

Q5R. Did you and your spouse pool your money and resources before you were married?

1. YES
2. NO

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3. DK

4. REF

Q5S. Why did you decide to start pooling financial resources after you were married? >> GO TO Q7U

Q5T. If no, why did you decide not to pool resources after you wed?

Q5U. When you have free time, do you enjoy spending time with your spouse?

1. YES

2. SOMEWHAT

3. NO >> GO TO Q7R

4. DK

5. REF

Q5V. What sorts of things do you enjoy doing together? >> GO TO Q7S.

Q5W. Why don't you enjoy spending free time with your spouse?

Q5X. Would you say you rely a lot on your spouse, or do you think you're pretty independent?

Q5Y. Do you think you rely more on your spouse now that you're married, or did you rely on your spouse more before you got married?

Q5Z. Do you currently have children?

1. YES

2. NO >> GO TO Q7X

3. DK

4. REF

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Q5AA. Did you have these children after you were married?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DK
4. REF

Q5BB. Why did you wait until after you wed to have children?

Q5CC. Did you and/or your spouse take any time off from work when you had your child(ren)? Explain the process…

Q5DD. How would you describe your life as a parent?

Q5EE. Do you think any aspects of your identity have impacted your parenting style in any way? (for example, gender, sexuality, race, religion, etc.)

Q5FF. Do you have any desire to have children? Why or why not?

Q5GG. Do you and _____ have the same last name?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DK
4. REF

Q5HH. How did you come to make the decision you did, regarding your last name?

Q6. Next, I'm going to ask you some questions about who completes certain tasks within your marriage. If you think you and partner equally complete a task, you would say 50/50. If you think you or your partner is more likely to complete a certain task, you could say 70/30, 80/20, etc. and specify which of you is more likely to complete that task. If the task does not apply to you and your spouse, say not applicable.

Q6A. What percentage of washing laundry do you complete?

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Q6B. What percentage of cooking supper do you complete?

Q6C. When it snows in the winter, what percentage of shoveling do you complete?

Q6D. When household appliances aren't working properly, what percentage of them do you attempt to repair?

Q6E. What percentage of brushing your children's hair do you complete?

Q6F. What percentage of reading books to your children do you complete?

Q6G. What percentage of teaching your children how to ride a bike do you complete?

Q6H. When it comes time to buy a car, what percentage of the final decision is yours?

Q6I. When it comes time to buy a couch, what percentage of the final decision is yours?

Q6J. When it comes time to move to a new home or location, what percentage of the final decision is yours?

Q6K. How do you and your spouse decide who does what tasks around the house?

Q7. Next, I'm going to ask you about your thoughts and behaviors pertaining to sexual activity.

Q7A. Do you think sexual intimacy between you and your spouse is an important component for a successful marriage?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DK
4. REF

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Q7B. How frequently would you say you and your spouse engage in sexual activity?

Q7C. When it comes to initiating sexual activity between you and your spouse, what percentage would you say that ***you*** initiate sexual activity?

Q7D. Do you think it is ever ok for married people to have sex with other people outside of their marriage? Explain…

1. YES
2. NO
3. IT DEPENDS
4. DK
5. REF

Q7E. Do you think it is ever ok for someone who is in a relationship but *not* married to have sex with other people outside of their relationship? Explain…

1. YES
2. NO
3. IT DEPENDS
4. DK
5. REF

Q7F. Before you were married, were you ever sexually active with other people while you were in a relationship with someone?

5. YES
6. NO >> GO TO Q7AL
7. DK
8. REF

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Q7G. Did the person you were dating know that you were being sexually active with other people?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DK
4. REF

Q7H. Since you married _____, have you ever been sexually active with another person?

1. YES
2. NO >> GO TO Q7AN
3. DK
4. REF

Q7I. Does _____ know that you have been sexually active with another person since you've been married?

1. YES
2. NO
3. DK
4. REF

Q7J. Do you consider yourself a religious person?

1. YES
2. NO >> GO TO Q7AQ
3. DK
4. REF

Q7K. What religion do you identify with?

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Q7L. Do you think your religion impacts the way you view and behave in your marriage?

Q7M. Focusing on the time since you've been married, how would you rate your overall quality of life on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is absolutely miserable and 10 is the happiest you've ever been?

Q7N. If you could imagine that an alien landed on planet earth, and you were tasked with the responsibility of explaining to the alien what the purpose of marriage is, what would you say?

CLOSING:

1. Thank participant;

2. Confirm all contact information.

3. READ THIS STATEMENT: "It is possible that I will follow-up with the participants in this study at a future date. If that happens, do I have your permission to contact you again about your interest in participating?"

    1. YES

    2. NO

5. Do you know other married people that might like to participate?

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Appendix H. Research Assistant Letter of Offer

Undergraduate Research Assistantship Offer

October 6, 2017

Dear (Name of student):

I am pleased to offer you a research assistantship working under the supervision of myself, Daniel Bartholomay, for the remainder of the 2017-2018 academic year. This is a flexible, part-time appointment. The time commitment for this position will average approximately five hours/week.

Your responsibility in this position is to assist me with my dissertation research at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee examining the lived experiences of married same-sex and heterosexual couples. Specific tasks for this position will include transcribing interviews, coding interview transcriptions, and meeting with myself and other research assistants to discuss the progress of this research. Future responsibilities, if any, and future changes, if any, will be communicated to you either in person or in writing.

This is an unpaid appointment. In exchange for your assistance, I will offer the following services to each undergraduate research assistant by the end of the Spring 2018 semester: 1) hands-on training in qualitative research methods, 2) assistance in constructing job documents (resumes, cover letters, etc.), 3) a letter of recommendation, 4) mentorship for those interested in applying to graduate school.

By accepting this appointment, you agree to perform duties and responsibilities which are assigned to you. If you accept this appointment and, at any point, become unable to fulfill its responsibilities, please notify me as soon as possible so I may find a replacement.

If you accept this position, please sign on the following page and deliver the signed page to my mailbox (located on the 7th floor of Bolton Hall) no later than Monday, October 16.

Sincerely,

Daniel Bartholomay, M.S.
Lecturer/Doctoral Candidate, Department of Sociology
Lecturer, LGBT+ Studies
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
(Pronouns in Use: he/him/his)

I _____ have read the description above for an undergraduate research
(Print first and last name here)

assistant working under the supervision of Daniel Bartholomay, and I accept this offer.

_____ _____
Signature Date

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CURRICULUM VITAE

DANIEL J. BARTHOLOMAY

(Pronouns in use: he/him/his)

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	2019	Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM)
		Dissertation: "Marriage Maintenance, Miscategorization, and New Manifestations: How People are Reinforcing and Disrupting Gender and Sexual Inequalities in Married Life."
		Graduate Certificate: Women's & Gender Studies
M.S.	2014	Sociology, North Dakota State University (NDSU)
B.S.	2011	Mass Communications, Minnesota State University-Moorhead

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2019-Present	Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Sociology, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi (TAMUCC)

AREAS OF INTEREST

Sexuality, Gender, Family, Health/Medicine, Research Methods, Community-Based Participatory Research, Culture, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Publications

2018 Bartholomay, Daniel J. "Making Room for Methods: Incorporating Full-Scale Research Projects in Non-Methods Courses." *Teaching Sociology* 46(3):247-261.

*Winner of the 2018 American Sociological Association Section on Teaching and Learning Graduate Student Contribution to the Sociological Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award

*Winner of the 2017-2018 UWM Sociology Department Graduate Student Research Paper Award

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2018 Bartholomay, Daniel J. "What, Exactly, Are We Measuring? Examining Heteronormativity in Relation to Same-Gender Marriage." *Sociology Compass*. doi:10.1111/soc4.12563

2016 Campos-Castillo, Celeste, Daniel J. Bartholomay, Elisabeth F. Callahan, Denise L. Anthony. "Depressive Symptoms and Electronic Messaging with Health Care Providers" *Society and Mental Health* 6(3):168-186.

2014 Bartholomay, Daniel J. 2014. "Society and The Individual: A Theoretical Examination of the Contemporary Era." *The Great Plains Sociologist* 24:5-15.

Refereed Teaching Resources

2016 Bartholomay, Daniel J. "Gender Inequality in Unpaid Work." Class Activity published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (http://trails.asanet.org)

Manuscripts Under Review

Bartholomay, Daniel J. "A Queer Ethical Vision: Revisiting *The Trouble with Normal,* Twenty Years Later." Under review at *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Bartholomay, Daniel J. "Gender, Marriage, and Heteronormativity"

Bartholomay, Daniel J. "First Comes Love, then Comes Health Insurance: Access to Legal Protections as a Motivation to Marry"

Bartholomay, Daniel J. "'Yeah, Daddy's Got Two Girlfriends.' The Challenges and Opportunities for Open Marriages to Redefine Family."

Bartholomay, Daniel J. "Doing Sexuality, (Un)Doing Heteronormativity: The Marriage Experiences of Bisexual, Queer, and Pansexual People"

Bartholomay, Daniel J. and Celeste Campos-Castillo. "Patients Practicing Privacy in Health Care: A Teaching Activity."

Campos-Castillo, Celeste, Daniel J. Bartholomay, and Denise L. Anthony. "Privacy Norms Following Terrorist Attacks."

Web-Based Publications

2016 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "My Boyfriend's Beef with My Drag Queen Crush." *Gender & Society* blog.

*Reprinted in the American Sociological Association Sex & Gender Section Newsletter, March 2016.

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FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2019	Casey O'Brien Outstanding Activist Award ($100)
2019	Alpha Kappa Delta Fellowship – AKD Workshop on Teaching & Learning ($500)
2019	UWM LGBT+ Resource Center LGBT+ Research Award
2018-2019	UWM Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship ($26,886)
2018	American Sociological Association Section on Teaching and Learning Graduate Student Contribution to the Sociological Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award ($250)
2018	Sage Teaching Innovations & Professional Development Award ($600)
2018	Alpha Kappa Delta Fellowship – AKD Workshop on Teaching & Learning ($500)
2017-2018	UWM Sociology Department Graduate Student Research Paper Award ($500)
2017	Sage Teaching Innovations & Professional Development Award ($600)
2016-2017	UWM Sociology Department Graduate Student Teaching Award
2014-2015	UWM Chancellor's Graduate Student Award ($2,000)
2013	Great Plains Sociology Association Graduate Student Paper Contest Winner ($30)
2013-2014	NDSU Joy M. Query Graduate Student Prize for Social and Behavioral Sciences ($150)
2013-2014	NDSU Jeffrey and Pat Reynolds Graduate Student Scholarship, NDSU ($150)

RESEARCH INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRESS

2018 Radio Interview: *Wisconsin Public Radio*. "The Rainbow Wave and Impacts of LGBT+ Candidates." Provided expert commentary on the upsurge of open LGBT+ candidates running in the 2018 elections.

2018 Radio Interview. *Wisconsin Public Radio*. "Did the 2018 Midterms Deliver a Rainbow Wave?" November 16. Provided expert commentary on the results of the 2018 elections pertaining to races involving LGBT+ candidates.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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2019 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "'Yeah, Daddy's Got Two Girlfriends.' How People in Open Marriages are Redefining Family." The Society for the Study of Social Problems, Annual Meeting, New York, August 9-11.

2019 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Bye Bye, Binary: Making Room for Queer Matrimony Beyond the Realms of Heterosexual and Same-Sex Marriage." The Midwest Sociological Society, Annual Meeting, Chicago, April 17-20.

2018 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Does Marriage Equality Mean Gender Equality? Comparing the Perspectives of People in Same-gender and Man/Woman Marriages." The Society for the Study of Social Problems, Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, August 10-12.

2018 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Different Marriage, Same Patriarchy? Exploring Accounts of Gender and Sexual Inequality in Same-Gender Marriage." The Midwest Sociological Society, Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 22-25.

2017 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Making Room for Methods: Using Extended Research Projects in Non-Methods Courses to Develop Future Sociologists and to Fight Social Problems at the University." The Society for the Study of Social Problems, Annual Meeting, Montreal, Quebec, August 11-13.

2017 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Learning through Doing: Developing Students' Sociological Imaginations and Skills through Extended Research Projects." The Midwest Sociological Society, Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 30-April 2.

2016 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Uprooting or Emphasizing Heteronormativity? An Exploration of Same-Sex Marriage." The Midwest Sociological Society, Annual Meeting, Chicago, March 23-26.

2015 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Is Marriage Deinstitutionalizing? Exploring Alternative Explanations for the Shifting Boundaries of the Field of Marriage." The Society for the Study of Social Problems, Annual Meeting, Chicago, August 21-23.

2013 Daniel J. Bartholomay. "Exploring the Gendered Efficacy of Photovoice Methodology." The Great Plains Sociology Association, Annual Meeting, Fargo, North Dakota, October 24-25.

2013 Gina Aalgaard Kelly, Daniel J. Bartholomay, and Jennie Lazarus. "Utilizing Photovoice Methodology to Examine Mental Health Medication Use." The Rural Sociology Society, Annual Meeting, New York, August 7-9.

CAMPUS TALKS

2019 "You've Got the Skills… Now What? Using Experiential Learning to Prepare Students for the Workforce." Teaching and Learning Symposium, Sponsored by The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UWM, January 10.

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2018 "The Captivated Classroom: Strategies to Keep Students Engaged through Interactive Learning." New Teaching Assistant Orientation, Sponsored by The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UWM, August 20.

2018 "Evaluate Before It's Too Late: Using Mid-Semester Evaluations to Facilitate Student Learning." Teaching and Learning Symposium, Sponsored by The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UWM, January 11.

2017 "Engaging Students in Small Groups." New Teaching Assistant Orientation, Sponsored by The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UWM, August 21.

2017 "Making Room for Methods: Incorporating Full-Scale Research Projects in Non-Methods Sociology Courses." Sociology Department Colloquium, UWM, April 28.

2017 "With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility: The Potential Heroics of Sociology." Department of Sociology Undergraduate Awards and Alpha Kappa Delta Ceremony, UWM, April 13.

2017 "Does Group Work Really Work?" Teaching and Learning Symposium, Sponsored by The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UWM, January 12.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Sociology of Sex and Gender
Instructor of Record: Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018

Solving Social Problems
Instructor of Record: Summer 2018-online

Intro to LGBT+ Studies
Instructor of Record: Summer 2016-online, Spring 2017, Summer 2017-online, Fall 2017-online

Capstone: LGBT+ Kinship
Course Developer & Instructor of Record: Spring 2018

Research Methods
Guest Lecturer: Fall 2018

Sociology of Health Care
Guest Lecturer: Spring 2015

Social Psychology

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Guest Lecturer: Spring 2015

North Dakota State University

Intro to Sociology
Section Instructor: Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014
Teaching Assistant: Fall 2012; Spring 2013; Fall 2013; Spring 2014
Guest Lecturer: Fall 2012; Spring 2013; Fall 2013; Spring 2014

Sociology of the Family (Graduate-Level Course)
Teaching Assistant: Fall 2012-online; Spring 2013-online

Social Problems
Teaching Assistant: Fall 2013, Spring 2014

Sociology of Medicine
Teaching Assistant: Spring 2014

Sociology of Aging
Teaching Assistant: Fall 2013

Teaching Certifications & Workshops

2019	Certificate of Professional Development in Teaching and Learning. Completed through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at UWM.
2018	American Sociological Association Section on Teaching and Learning Preconference: Using Technology to Improve Our Teaching. Completed at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA. August 10.
2018	Alpha Kappa Delta Teaching and Learning Workshop. Completed at the Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, MN. March 22-23.
2017	American Sociological Association Section on Teaching and Learning Preconference: Thinking Matters: Critical Thinking, Active Listening, and Evidence-Based Writing. Completed at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in Montreal, Quebec. August 11.
2016	Preparing Future Faculty Certification. Completed at the North Central Sociological Association/Midwest Sociological Society Joint Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL. March 23-26.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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2014-2015 Research Assistant and Sociology Lab Manager, Professor Celeste Campos-Castillo, Department of Sociology, UWM.

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

Journal Manuscript Reviewer**:** *Sociology Compass, Qualitative Health Research*

Presider: Paper Session: LGBQT Contexts. Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 23, 2018.

Presider**:** Paper Session: Heteronormativity and Gender Conformity. Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Chicago, March 26, 2016.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY SERVICE

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

2018-2019 Committee Member, Chancellor's Advisory Committee for LGBT+ Advocacy

2016-2019 Committee Member, Department of Sociology Undergraduate Committee

2016-2019 Committee Member, LGBT+ Studies Advisory Council

2016-2019 Committee Member, LGBT+ Undergraduate Scholarship Committee

2015 Judge, University of Wisconsin System Symposium for Undergraduate Research

North Dakota State University

2013 Committee Member, Department of Sociology Hiring Committee

EXTRACURRICULAR UNIVERSITY SERVICE

University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

2016-2018 Treasurer, Graduate Students Sociology Association.

2015-2017 Organizer, Sociology of Sex and Gender's "Gender & Sexual Inequality Awareness Fair."

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/AFFILIATIONS

2014-Present American Sociological Association

www.manaraa.com

*Section Memberships: Teaching and Learning, Sexualities, Sex and Gender, Family

2014-Present Society for the Study of Social Problems

2015-Present Midwest Sociological Society

2012-2014 Great Plains Sociological Association

www.manaraa.com