Daily Desires:
Everyday Geographies Of Bisexual Men

by

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Daily Desires: Everyday Geographies of Bisexual Men

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ABSTRACT

Geographies of sexualities have largely ignored bisexual men and women. Academic literature in bisexual geographies continues along theoretical axes neglecting material experiences of bisexual men and women as they negotiate desire across multiple terrains. This research is a direct response to calls from scholars for a study of the particularity and specificity of bisexual men's everyday perceptions and experiences of identity, space, and community. Drawing from a feminist perspective highlighting situated and localized knowledge, I examine how the everyday spatial behaviours of bisexual men relate to their sexuality. I re-present the experiences of twelve bisexual men in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires undertaken in 2002 and 2003. I illustrate the concept of 'definitional incoherence' as I trace multiple definitions of bisexuality and argue bisexual men live a serialized existence, with no shared identity but rather a commonality located in how they are positioned among and within heteronormative power relations. By focusing on social spaces created through work, friends, and family, I analyze bisexual men's shifting identities as they manage multiple relationships and expectations of others. In this way, I reveal that bisexual men live compartmentalized lives, some through no choice of their own, and others as a spatialized strategy to facilitate their lifestyle. I offer a preliminary mapping of locations used to meet men and women for sexual encounters and social support. I present men's expectations and experiences of being bisexual in gay, straight, and bisexual contexts revealing both a sense of frustration and optimism in imagining bisexual space.
DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this thesis to the unheard voices and the untold stories of bisexual men wherever and however they live their lives. Silence is not their choice to make.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Most importantly, I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to my partner Yvette Marleau who was there at the beginning of my program, remained a patient and invaluable source of support, both academically and emotionally, and who somehow managed to come out at the end still sane and still beside me.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A lesbian friend, who has had admittedly joyous, orgasmic sex with both male and female partners, confronted me recently with, “Sure, I understand bisexuality as a concept, but how would it work on a day to day basis?” I had no answer, but thought, “Buy a good daily planner” (Hall 1996, 12)!

Introduction

Precisely. How does bisexuality work for men on a daily basis given societies’ reluctance to embrace difference in general, and alternative sexualities more specifically? Bisexual men navigate not only an undulating terrain of personal relationships but also a daily life within a society strongly governed by notions of fixed heterosexual or homosexual identities, a society morally obsessed with monogamy, and a society still reeling from the AIDS pandemic. How do closeted men, deeply entrenched and indeed implicated in heterosexual hegemony, create space for sexual encounters or relationships with other men, or other men and women, for that matter? How do these places figure in their imaginations, and how do they compare in reality? In what context is bisexuality open allowing men to come out of hiding? What does it mean to be a bisexual man in a society that has little regard for those who ‘can’t commit’ either to one mode of sexuality or to one partner? Does space created in gay and lesbian communities include bisexual men? Are there bisexual spaces or communities in which bisexual men may find solace, support, or someone who is like-minded to ease any sense of isolation or loneliness? These questions, and more, lie at the heart of this
I begin a process of understanding and move toward an acceptance of those lives that are not neatly and simply defined, organized, and lived. This project provides an intriguing exploration of the everyday geographies of bisexual men.

**Research Question**

It has been frustrating to pose a question that does justice to the web of social and sexual relations of bisexual men and the spaces through which these might be realized. It is a difficult task given a society so intensely structured and limited by binary conceptions of gender, sex, and sexuality. Often, this makes it even difficult to talk about bisexuality for a lack of vocabulary that satisfactorily expresses desires and identities that lie somewhere outside of the binary. Long before I interviewed anyone for this study I decided upon the following question:

*How are the everyday spatial behaviours of bisexual men related to their sexuality?*

At the time I defended my proposal, I was aware of some limitations of the question, but by the end of the project, I think it becomes much more clear that the question does not satisfy the inquiries made. In order to fully take advantage of the question with which I began, I want tease apart its components further to reveal my approach to such a complex issue and stretch the boundaries of the research question.

What is meant by spatial behaviours? How is being bisexual both enabling and constraining? Bisexuality may be expressed through desire, acts, or identities and in multiple spaces that need not be limited to locations or places but that may also exist, and sometimes co-exist with idealized spaces, imagined spaces, and cyber-spaces of technology, such as the Internet. Space can be separated out into discrete categories, but more often it is a web or matrix of multiple spatial relations. A closer look at where my research fits within the discipline will further clarify my full intention of the research question.
Situating My Research

An increasing number of journal publications and books, across disciplines, is dedicated to identities of alternate sexualities, including but not limited to, gay, lesbian, transgender, and transsexual, as well as, sex trade workers. Recent attention by geographers has wedged the discipline open creating spaces for geographical work in and on gay and lesbian communities, spaces, and places. Social geographers have also paid increasing attention to sex trade workers, prostitution, and 'sex zones' within cities around the world. Bisexuality does not go unnoticed, but attention is generally limited to disciplines of psychology and sociology. Within geography, however, it is a subject only peripherally and tangentially analysed. There is a paucity of empirically-based research on bisexual spaces. Much of the research recently published on bisexual geographies remains largely theoretical as geographers formulate ways in which to theorize bisexuality. Moreover, the majority of work focuses on bisexual women, whether this is a result of a more developed discourse about sexuality within feminist geography or a tradition within to take on subjects concerning women that have long been ignored within academia, is something outside the scope of my work here. This focus on women and a concomitant lack of substantial work on bisexual men indicates a growing need for research in this area. Where studies have been undertaken on bisexual men, it has been largely within the context of HIV/AIDS research implicating bisexual men as the vector of disease transmission between homosexual and heterosexual communities.

My research seeks to provide a spatialized and materially grounded counterpart to some theoretical debates surrounding bisexuality by examining the activities of bisexual men in their daily lives. This project does not conflate individual experiences of bisexual men into representative data set for the purposes of generalization. I seek, however, to make connections between sexuality, space, and the everyday geographies and activities of a diverse collective of bisexual men. My approach examines the impact of heteronormative power relations on the lived reality of these bisexual men.
Another key void within geography and concerning bisexuality relates to methodology. Very little empirical work has been done on the daily lives of bisexual men in terms of their experiences and perceptions of the spaces through which they negotiate their bisexuality. Although some large scale projects have been undertaken, they have been accomplished through lengthy, structured surveys which have done little to expose the experiences of bisexual men, the reality of day-to-day living, or complexities inherent in negotiating more fluid or multiple relations (see Weinberg et al. 1994). Few researchers in geography have taken advantage of interviewing for more experiential knowledge of living as a bisexual man, and thus, the voice of a specific series of individuals has been silenced within the discipline. My research begins to address this silence.

**Research Objectives**

At the most practical level, and as a way to begin constructing a cartographic imaginary or an experiential map of bisexual men’s lives, one objective is to locate sites where bisexual men express their sexuality. This is an objective well answered, perhaps, in studies focusing on the nefarious sexual underground of cities, public sex in parks, or sex at highway rest stops (Rodriguez Rust 2000f; Weinberg et al. 1994). More recently, the Internet and telephone chat lines emerge as new sites where bisexual men are able to connect without the fear of exposure (Peterson 2001). This project contributes to an understanding of the sites where bisexual men connect with others.

Revealing the sites in which bisexual men express aspects of their sexuality is not enough to provide an understanding of their geographies. Knowledge of choices and decisions made by men as they create social and spatial space is important in terms of theorizing or forming bisexual communities, or at least fostering an understanding of the difficulty of managing multiple identities across time and space. Therefore, a second objective is to explore meanings and emotions bisexual men imbue and invest in these sites.
A third objective works toward understanding how sexuality affects bisexual men’s daily life patterns. For actively bisexual men attempting to connect or maintain relationships with both men and women, sexuality may be an important factor in considering when, where, and how such relationships materialize. As such, I suggest that sexuality can be very important in terms of the daily life patterns of bisexual men.

A fourth objective examines how bisexual men’s daily life patterns may be facilitated or restricted by their sexuality. This objective focuses on connections between sexuality and space in a material sense. At this point, I suggest that heterosexual identities might facilitate social and spatial activities with women yet hinder expressions of sexuality with men. Conversely, homosexual identities might facilitate social and spatial activities with men, yet hinder expressions of sexuality with women. How might bisexual identities facilitate or restrict these same social and spatial activities with both men and women?

My fifth objective assesses the importance of sexuality in the everyday lives of bisexual men. The literature shows that for gay and lesbian people sexuality has been a critical force having contributed to formations of lesbian and gay spaces and communities (See Bell & Valentine 1995; Brown 2000; Ingram, Bouthillette, & Retter 1997; Myslik 1996; Rothenberg 1995 for example). I posit bisexuality is similarly important, possibly detrimental, to the formation of spaces and the construction of any kind of community for bisexuels, and that this is evident in the lives of bisexual men.

Lastly, I identify the degree to which wider social processes shape bisexual men’s daily life. This objective focuses on making the link between scale and broader issues of sexuality, space, and communities. In Myslik’s (1996) study of gay men in Dupont Circle, Washington D.C., the author describes how wider social processes such as homophobic violence, discrimination, and marginalization have resulted in the spatial organization of a gay community.
oriented around safety. What broader issues might be implicated in the daily lives of bisexual men as they negotiate their desires across time and space?

**Justification**

I illustrate that bisexuality remains an understudied expression of sexuality within empirically-grounded research across disciplines. The goal of my research is to contribute to a growing body of work on geographies of sexuality and theories that have thus far considered bisexuality as either an add-on category to gay and lesbian identities or as a subject position in and of itself in only tangential terms. Given dynamic debates within the literature, I consider my contribution as a valuable piece of an incomplete puzzle.

I aim to excavate links between expressions of sexuality, visible and invisible sites of this expression, and the daily geographies of bisexual men. In other words, I examine the daily experiences of bisexual men as a way to apply some of the theoretical debates around bisexuality, as well as understand social and spatial processes that shape these experiences. In this way, I contribute to the geographic literature a spatial study of bisexual men that treads the uneasy waters of experience and perception of spaces. In this way I provide the signposts for further research of questions remaining unanswered at the conclusion on this project.

**Looking Ahead**

Chapter two reviews the literature on bisexuals and bisexuality, charting a path across several disciplines. My goal is to illustrate an empirical gap in the literature regarding bisexual men, thereby, opening up a space in which my research can contribute to our geographical understandings of sexuality. I analyse the spatiality of some existing research and discuss the limited research on bisexual geographies as I position my research as a contribution to the existing gap in understanding. In Chapter three I provide a reflexive discussion of my research methodology. I consider my uneasy role as researcher and put
forth an argument moving away from conceptualizing participants in my study as a group and toward diverse and multiple contexts in which bisexuality exists in seriality. I present my framework for contacting participants, delivering the survey and interview, and analysing the data. I introduce participants and explore multiple definitions of bisexuality in chapter four. I further examine the mobility of bisexual subjectivity across various spaces and indicate ways that identities get fixed but also shift across time and space. In chapter five I begin a mapping of bisexual bodies, places, and communities. I search for the places where bisexual men meet others for sexual encounters or relationships. I aim to understand how these men place themselves within gay and straight communities as well as connections they may have with bisexual communities. I examine the ideal or imagined spatiality of bisexual men's lives as well as the experiences or reality of these spaces. I conclude in chapter six by assessing my research through the objectives laid out in chapter one. Specifically I connect my findings with the literature illustrating similarity and exposing new understandings. This project is limited in scope, thus I chart a course for future geographic research and link them to a discussion of the implications of the research.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have introduced my research question and noted the importance of my approach given the paucity of empirical work presenting the lives of bisexual men in their words. I have also provided a basic outline of my methodological approach, as well as an outline of the remainder of the thesis. Building upon this foundation, the next chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature as I illustrate the invisibility of bisexuality in social sciences research, as well as expose the gap within geography. Thus, I create a space in which I move forward with the research assured of its place within the discipline.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Many scholars agree there exists a lack of empirical exploration into the material lives of bisexual men (Fox 1996; Gindorf & Warran 1998; Lever et al. 2000; MacDonald 2000; Queen 1996; Rodriguez Rust 2000a; Steinman & Beemyn 2001). Large-scale research projects have focused on describing bisexuality in terms of negotiating multiple identities over one’s lifespan (D'Augelli & Garnets 1995; Haeberle & Gindorf 1998; Klein 1993; Klein & Wolf 1995; Lever et al. 2000; Malone 1980; Weinberg et al. 1994). This research seeks to understand the dimensions and instabilities of sexual, emotional, and relational characteristics of bisexuals, and to examine how bisexuality is situated in regards to a binary framework privileging heterosexuality over its dyadic opposite, homosexuality. While these encompassing projects provide a composite picture of a bisexual population, it is drawn through generalizations and conflation of statistics, and hence, has erased diversity among bisexual lives (Rodriguez Rust 2000h). These projects risk reification of a socially constructed identity. Counting the frequency and describing the kinds of interactions bisexual people engage in provides only some pieces of the overall picture. Carol Queen (1995) argues that reifying bisexuality is dangerous because it encourages disregard for bisexual diversity. Research is lacking on the individual bisexual life and the quality of that life across time and space (Paul 2000; Rodriguez Rust 2000h). The absence of studies and research on bisexual men, specifically, is even more
disconcerting. In a review of literature on male bisexuality written between 1986 and 1996 in the United States, only eight out of 166 articles were specific to bisexual men, though most positioned 'bisexual' with 'gay' in a single category (Kennedy & Doll 2001).

Across disciplines, a paucity of research exists focusing on the intersection of bisexuality and space. The majority of work is theoretical; formulating spaces in which to theorize bisexuality, bisexual spaces, and bisexual communities (Hall & Pramaggiore 1996; Hemmings 1993; Hemmings 1995; Hemmings 1997; Hemmings 2002; Tucker et al. 1995; Weise 1992). Recent work in geography is forging an empirical route through bisexual terrains, yet often only considers relationship and community ideals rather than lived experience of bisexuals through time and across space (Rust 2001).

In reviewing literature on bisexuals and bisexuality, I chart a path through the social sciences in which bisexuality has been marginalized and rendered invisible. My goal is to illustrate an empirical gap in the literature regarding bisexual men specifically. My intention is to create a space in which my research on everyday geographies of bisexual men contributes to geographical knowledge on space and sexuality. I begin by discussing various definitions of bisexuality employed in research, different frameworks for understanding bisexuality, and the ways in which bisexual men specifically, are rendered invisible within empirically based research. The growing body of knowledge in the social sciences on bisexuality, within psychology and sociology for example, surface potential geographic concerns. I then focus on the spatiality of existing research findings in a way that highlights missed opportunities to address the material and spatial lives of bisexuals. There has been, in recent years, work in geography on bisexuality and bisexual men focusing on how they create and interact with gay, lesbian, heterosexual and bisexual communities. The penultimate section discusses this limited research on bisexual geographies. To conclude, I discuss the research gap and position my research as one piece of the space and sexuality puzzle.
Who is Bisexual and Where Did They All Go?

A particularly vexing problem in doing research on bisexuality is one of “definitional incoherence” (Eadie 1993, 140). There is no single definition in place and a single definition cannot be placed upon bisexuality without excluding many of those it seeks to define (Hemmings 1993). Notwithstanding historical and psychomedical discursive and biological dialogues surrounding bisexuality, I locate my discussion within contemporary notions of the ways people self-identify as bisexual (for a thorough discussion on the genealogy of bisexuality see Angelides 2001). Is the definition as simple as bisexuality consists of an erotic interest for both sexes? For some, this is an adequate definition of bisexuality (Fox 1996; Tan 1995). One must consider, however, at what level (psychological, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, behavioural, etc.) this erotic interest is expressed (Gindorf & Warran 1998). Erotic interest may be expressed for members of both sexes solely at the level of fantasy. Does this qualify as being bisexual? Erotic interest in men and women may be purely sexual with no emotional or romantic feelings. Is this bisexuality? Perhaps, one is sexually interested in either men or women but shares emotional bonds solely with one sex or the other. Conversely, if deep emotional and romantic feelings extend to both men and women, yet sexual activity is maintained with one particular sex consistently or if one is in a long-term monogamous relationship, can one claim a bisexual identity? Given the myriad configurations of a bisexual identity, Beth Firestein (1996) argues bisexuality must include a person’s experience of erotic, emotional, and sexual attraction. Donaldson (1995) argues a broad definition deriving from the bisexual liberation movement in the 1970’s. For Donaldson, bisexuality is an ability to respond erotically and/or emotionally or romantically to either gender. This may mean having simultaneous multiple attractions or serial attractions only to men at one time and to women at another time, but not necessarily in equal amounts.

Easier said than done. To problematize the process further, many people who behave bisexually do not identify as a bisexual person, do not claim bisexual
identity (Firestein 1996; Leland et al. 2000; Weinberg et al. 1994). Several studies specifically focus on the behaviourally bisexual, or what is sometimes called situational homosexuality (Kirkham 2000; McCaghy & Skipper Jr. 2000; Rodriguez Rust 2000d). In prisons, heterosexual men often engage in homosexual behaviour for sexual gratification but do not adopt bisexual identities (Gagnon et al. 1998). In most cases these encounters and the act of sexual penetration parallel the outside heterosexual world for the stronger more dominant prisoner. In this way, he is able to maintain sexual continuity, at least on a symbolic level. Most of these men do not identify as bisexual, and certainly not as homosexual.

Studies of male prostitutes whose behaviour may reflect bisexuality reveal the absence of bisexual identification (Rodriguez Rust 2000e). For some male prostitutes, sex with men for money is necessary and overshadows their heterosexual identity. They may imagine their male sex partners are women in order to cope with the dissonance caused by identifying heterosexually, yet behaving homosexually. Rodriguez Rust (2000e) reviewed a number of male prostitution studies and concludes that up to forty percent actually self identify as bisexual. That leaves at least sixty percent of male prostitutes who are behaviourally bisexual who do not adopt the label. It is apparent that behaviour is not sufficient to warrant acquiring a new sexual identity for some of these men (Gagnon et al. 1998).

If time or stage of life is added to the definition, bisexual identification becomes more problematic. Many heterosexually identified men engage in homoerotic experimentation during adolescence. Gagnon et al. (1998) note that a large number of people who have had sex with both men and women did so in their adolescent years. Though many young people are able to develop passionate relationships with both sexes that may or may not include sex, it is unclear how many make a full life commitment to what might be termed bisexuality (Gagnon et al. 1998; van Naerssen 1998). Whether or not any of these individuals might be considered bisexual depends on the particular way bisexuality is defined
I offer no ready solution to the definitional incoherence encountered through researching bisexuality, indeed, I work very hard throughout this project to avoid conceptualising bisexuality in any fixed and salient form beyond self-declaration. I recognize, however, some or all of these factors have of course, shaped that self-declaration of sexual identity to a large degree.

**Frameworks in Research for Rating Bisexuality**

Rodriguez Rust (2000b) provides a useful summary of various frameworks used by researchers to define bisexuality. Likely the best-known framework for defining bisexuality is the Kinsey scale developed by Alfred C. Kinsey. While the seven point scale allowed for a diversity among sexualities, from 0 (exclusive heterosexuality) to 6 (exclusive homosexuality), it was often misused in research in that everyone from 2-5 were lumped with either heterosexuals or homosexuals, or conversely, excluded entirely from the study. Bell and Weinberg (1978) modified the Kinsey scale, using the same seven-point scale, but also asked participants to rate both their sexual behaviour and sexual feelings. In a later study, Weinberg et al. (1994) rated participants on three scales that included sexual feelings, sexual behaviour, and romantic feelings. In 1985, Fritz Klein, Barry Sepekoff, and Timothy J. Wolf complicated the definition process further. Their rating of participants included sexual attraction, behaviour and fantasies; emotional and social preference; self-identification; and sexual lifestyle (Rodriguez Rust 2000b). Moreover, this Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) included the dimension of time, with participants scaling themselves according to past, present, and ideal positions. As such, this approach acknowledged that sexuality is not consistent and stable across time. Rodriguez Rust (2000b) emphasizes that the importance of which model is correct or most accurate is not the focus. Rather, each model should be recognized for its strengths and application of multiple models may provide a more complete picture of sexuality.
Bisexuality, it may be argued, encompasses so much diversity it is impossible to form any kind of politic based on it as an identity (Malone 1980). Rhoads (1997), however, outlines three basic perspectives on bisexuality brought to the fore in her research: bisexuality as transition, bisexuality as biological given, bisexuality is a distinct third sexuality. First, sexuality is flowing and bisexuality represents a transition from heterosexuality to homosexuality or vice versa. Indeed, I agree that sexuality is flowing, however, there is very little evidence supporting the notion that bisexuality is merely a transitional stage in the process of 'becoming' gay or straight (Armstrong 1995; Matteson 1996). In research by D’Augelli & Garnet (1995) between ten and fifteen percent of bisexual men and women consistently define themselves as bisexual. Thus, for some men bisexuality is not a state of transition. Similarly, Weinberg et al. (1994) state that three quarters of the self identified bisexual men and women in their study were not in transition toward either heterosexuality or homosexuality. In a longitudinal study of bisexual men, sixty-five percent of men who claimed bisexual activity at least five years prior to the study period continued reporting same-sex and other-sex relations within the six-month period previous to the study (Stokes, J. et al. 1997). While bisexual behaviour may be a transitional identity for some as part of a coming out process, for others it represents a more consistent position of self-identification (See also Lever et al. 2000).

A second perspective revealed in Rhoads’ (1997) study argues everyone is bisexual, a line of thinking undoubtedly extrapolated from the writings of Freud and research undertaken by Alfred C. Kinsey (MacDonald 2000; Paul 2000; Rodriguez Rust 2000b; Zinik 2000). Freud argued that men and women have an innate biological bisexual potential. Bisexual behaviour, however, was seen as an inversion and, ironically, the normal course of psycho-sexual development was to a full adulthood heterosexuality (Fox 1996; Paul 2000; Zinik 2000). Kinsey, though he has not gone unchallenged, concluded that nearly half of men and about a quarter of women in his study were neither exclusively heterosexual nor homosexual, sexually or behaviourally (Weinberg et al. 1994). Many participants in the study completed by Weinberg et al. (1994) indicated that they
believed everyone is bisexual to a degree. Moreover, in formulating a framework for a theory on sexual preference, Weinberg et al. (1994) conclude that everyone appears to have a bisexual potential. Weinberg also concedes that such a statement is untestable (Leland et al. 2000). More recent and more radical theorizing on bisexuality as fluid and unfixed calls for an understanding that everyone is bisexual, echoing Freud's bisexual potentiality (Board 1995). In this argument, if everyone is capable of a fluid range of possible sexualities it becomes possible to break down the walls between identities, deconstruct exclusionary communities, and create a new, inclusive, dynamic, and amorphous framework of human sexuality. Drawing from this perspective, however, denies the reality of those individuals who never develop any feelings outside of an either/or framework. Simply claiming that everyone is really bisexual does not make it a material and corporeal reality.

Rhoads' (1997) third perspective brought forth in her study suggests bisexuality as a fixed position discrete from both heterosexuality and homosexuality (See also Kaplan 1995). Liz Highleyman (1995b) notes that despite some similarities bisexuals are not the same as gay and lesbians, and bisexuals should to be recognized for their unique sexual identity. Fox (1996) concedes that indeed bisexuality was once seen as a transitional phase, but it is most often regarded in contemporary circles as a distinct sexual identity. Carol Queen (1996) notes that bisexuality is unique as a position outside of a monosexual framework, thus separating it from both homosexuality and heterosexuality. Monosexuality refers to people whose erotic interest is directed consistently at only one gender (Hutchins 1996; Queen 1996). In this way, homosexuality and heterosexuality are aligned in that each has as its object choice a single gender over time. Greta Christina argues that bisexual identity is unified and unique and is "an entirely different way of being, unlike hetero- or homo- sexuality" (1995). While this position has political implications, in terms of community building, it simply replaces a binary model with a trinary model, potentially constructing a hierarchy of sexualities in which bisexuals become the marginalized ‘other’ (Kaplan 1995).
**Leading Invisible Lives: Bisexual Invisibility in Research**

Throughout social science, research on bisexual people's daily lives has been a neglected area of study. Bisexuality has been written out of social science research through a process of biphobia. For Kathleen Bennett (1992), biphobia is the “denigration of bisexuality” (207) as a legitimate identity, which in turn denies the existence of bisexuals. Biphobia is rooted in a dichotomous way of thinking and seeing sexuality as either/or, gay/straight (Blasingame 1992). Biphobia becomes relatively invisible as a result of a culture, which thinks in binaries; whereby bisexuality creates discomfort and anxiety for those who cannot easily and readily discern a person's sexual categorization (Ochs 1996). In the case of Kenneth Z. Altshuler's 1984 claim, the Kinsey Scale, which illustrates the notion of sexuality as a continuum, was used to 'prove' the non-existence of bisexuals (Rodriguez Rust 2000b). He argued that because in twenty-five years of clinical practice he was not convinced by one person to be a perfect Kinsey-3 'bisexual', bisexuality did not exist and those claiming the identity were lying.

Bisexual experience is obscured and rendered invisible when bisexuality as a category is conflated with homosexuality (Fox 1996). In these instances bisexuality is lumped into homosexuality or seen as a position in denial of ones 'real' homosexuality. After reviewing several studies, Rodriguez Rust (2000c; 2000e) concludes that a significant number of individuals in studies of gay and lesbian people could actually lay claim to the title bisexual (See also: Fox 1996). Furthermore, a closer look at D'Augelli and Garnets (1995) chapter entitled "Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Communities" reveals the unquestioning conflation of bisexuality into homosexual categories. Throughout the chapter, the authors unproblematically discuss 'lesbian, gay, and bisexual' people and communities. They claim 'lesbian, gay, and bisexual' communities “are premised on a shared identity derived from sexual orientation” (D'Augelli & Garnets 1995, 299). I concede contemporary gay and lesbian communities, through a politics of identity, are constructed in relation to similarities rather than difference, I argue
bisexual subjectivities are more problematic for such community construction. Similarly, their discussion of powerful barriers ‘lesbian, gay, and bisexual’ people face in order to free themselves of a confining closet, does not specifically consider bisexuality. Given the notion of a ‘double closet’ (or more likely a multiple one) for bisexuals, one in the heterosexual world, and also one in the homosexual world, might we not expect a discussion of the multiple barriers bisexuals face in coming out (Lourea 1985; Young 1997)? The assumptions made here fail to take into account the multiple realities of bisexual subjects who defy the notion of a stable, unified, coherent identity across time and space (Beemyn & Steinman 2001; Hemmings 1995; Hemmings 1997; Paul 1983; Queen 1995; Young 1997). This practice, albeit increasingly avoided, results in a lack of knowledge of bisexuality, and produces what might be a misleading literature on homosexuality (MacDonald 2000). If bisexuals are included in such studies, the results can no longer claim to be based solely on the experiences and lived realities of gay men. As such, we must begin to question the accuracy of past studies that have conflated bisexual participants into homosexual categories and which obfuscate the intended purpose of the study (See also Rodriguez Rust 2000g for a discussion of this issue in AIDS studies).

In addition to the general erasing of bisexuality from social science research, most work concerning bisexuality comes from academics focusing on the experiences of bisexual women (Highleyman 1995b). Steinman and Beemyn (2001) draw attention to the body of work on bisexual women in order to reveal the absence of a specific discussion of bisexual men. They argue for research that does not merely include bisexual men as an add-on category but rather interrogates them in their own right (See also: Ault 1999; Esterberg 1997; Garber 1996; Hall & Pramaggiore 1996; Rust 1995; Weise 1992). Steinman (2001) posits that the relative visibility of bisexual women in research has stemmed from reactions to a lesbian feminist construction of staunch boundaries to the exclusion of bisexual women. Conversely, bisexual men have not been as excluded as bisexual women from the broader homoerotic community and thus have been less stigmatized. Bisexual men, it is argued, have had less of a need
to bring forth their stories of marginalization and stigmatization in any forum. Highleyman (1995b) notes that bisexual men, though they have not contributed to the theoretical and political writings on bisexuality to the same extent as women, have contributed to the literature on gay men's writings.

**Breaking Ground: Toward a Bisexual Geography**

Research compiled by authors mentioned thus far have provided sign posts toward an understanding of bisexual geographies (See also Rodriguez Rust 2000f for a comprehensive review of pioneering work). While there are few geographical perspectives on bisexual men specifically (Beemyn & Steinman 2001), there has been a great deal of work in geographies of sexualities more generally (See Binnie & Valentine 1999 for a review of this literature). Recent attention by geographers wedges open the discipline allowing geographical studies of gay and lesbian communities, spaces, and places. Geographies of gay men and lesbians include the mapping of neighbourhoods (Bouthillette 1997; Levine 1998; Nash 2001; Retter 1997; Rothenberg 1995; Wolfe 1997 for example) and examining links between sexual identity, capitalism, tourism, and consumption (Binnie 1995; Knopp 1998; Puar 2002, for example). Explorations into everyday geographies include the work of Gill Valentine (1993, 1996) who excavates the heterosexual hegemony of the workplace and the street subsequently revealing constraints on and also resistances by lesbian bodies in space.

A proliferation of work in geography has stemmed from the AIDS epidemic. Most recent work has moved away from tracing the trajectory and spread of the disease implicating the gay body as vector and toward a repositioning of the gay body as transmitter of knowledge in terms of prevention education (Brown 1995a; Brown 1995b; Woodhead 1995). Thus geographers turn away from disease and back toward people as the analytic focus.

Heterosexuality has undergone interrogation of its essentiality in an article seeking to uncover the ways in which it creates and justifies oppression in the
city (Hubbard 2000). Hubbard also examines how prostitutes are situated as 'others' within a hegemonic heteronormative matrix positioning them near the bottom of a sexual hierarchy, but also a process that spatially marginalizes them into 'red-light districts' (Hubbard 1998). It is because of these studies and their inattention to bisexual lives, that allows me to go forth and expand our understandings of sexuality and space.

There has been some research on the lives of bisexual people, though most studies merely touch upon spatial issues that warrant further exploration. In an early study, Malone (1980) interviews a discrete married businessman “torn between two contradictory impulses” (172) who has organized his life enabling him to fulfil his other-sex and same-sex desires. He keeps his same-sex activity separate and secret from his wife, engages in same sex only when away from home, and thus, chooses a job allowing him to travel often in order to connect with men for sex. Although, Malone does not provide a geographical analysis per se, this does allude to the spatial implications of bisexual behaviour, if not bisexual identity.

Some bisexuals, who experience pressures of homophobia and biphobia, may lead a bifurcated life (Leland et al. 2000). That is to say, they separate their life between their gay and straight social worlds (Brownfain 1995; Paul 1983). This may include spatial implications in the daily geographies of such men. For those who are in non-monogamous, other-sex relationships, time and space must be negotiated in order to make same-sex connections.

Rodriguez Rust (2000e) maintains that many conflicts arise for married bisexual men around maintaining the security of the heterosexual family unit and the lifestyle attached to having a male lover. She states that among a group of sixty married bisexual men, many discussed the difficulty maintaining public heterosexual identities and secret same-sex relationships. This was especially difficult for men whose wives were unaware of their activity. Again, these men
find great difficulty in negotiating their desires at different times given different social terrains.

This problem of negotiating time, energy, and space in managing multiple realities of bisexual people, is a central concern often brought forth in counselling (Matteson 1996). Matteson (1996) acknowledges the difficult balancing act bisexuals perform on a daily basis; however, there is no mention of the spatial implications of such a seemingly precarious lifestyle. Similarly, Rust (1996) acknowledges the issue of managing multiple relationships, and how they might be organized. Clearly there are spatial implications here, too. Where and how do bisexual men locate suitable same-sex partners? Where do their liaisons occur? At what time of the day are these desires negotiated? Do married bisexual men have strategies to cope with managing multiple relationships in terms of timing and locales? Rust does not take us down that road. Instead she discusses primary versus secondary relationships, open relationships, ‘group’ marriages, and ‘swinging’ relationships. Once again, some very geographical concerns arise but are not explored in any real spatial sense.

In one of the most comprehensive studies on male bisexuality, Weinberg et al. (1994), make similar omissions in terms of spatializing the social realm of bisexuality. My point that there is a line of inquiry into the spatiality of bisexual lives is reinforced in the first chapter of Dual Attraction: Understanding Bisexuality (Weinberg et al. 1994). The authors contend many bisexuals have been confronted with feelings of confusion and uncertainty through the course of their lives. This has meant that, for many, ‘becoming’ bisexual has been a process, a journey that crosses social boundaries. As such, the authors state bisexuality is inseparable from social environments or locales that provide the setting for bisexual social interaction. This kind of geographical exploration of bisexuality, through time and across space is alluded to in many chapters of this book, but a critical interrogation of it is lacking.
In chapter seven, “Sexual Activities,” Weinberg et al. (1994) posit some geographical questions but fail to provide an in-depth analysis of the processes which constrain or facilitate the multiple and diverse nature of some bisexual lives. Their goal is to understand meanings attached to sexual behaviours. They examine the “incidence and frequency of particular sex acts” (66) to reveal limits of male bisexual eroticism. They also briefly discuss certain locales known as part of the nefarious sexual underground (bath houses, sex clubs, movie theatres, etc.). Furthermore, they pose this question: “How do bisexuals divide their sexuality between the two sexes; what kind of heterosexual/homosexual mix occurs?” (67). Disregarding the definitional problem of bisexuality as a mix of heterosexuality and homosexuality, the answers certainly include a spatial analysis of daily movement patterns, networks that are formed, and strategies used by men to negotiate multiple desires. Unfortunately, the remainder of the chapter includes a discussion on the number of partners men have, the frequency of multiple partners, the standard listing of underground sex sites, and a cursory discussion of difficulties men have with finding sexual partners. What remains to be answered is how bisexual men use time and space to access partners and sex sites, how sexuality is divided into heterosexual family life and homosexual acts outside of the home, and the implications of the precarious balancing act bisexual men endure on a daily basis.

Similar problems are found in the chapter, “Significant Others” (Weinberg et al. 1994). It includes a discussion on ideal relationships and actual relationships of bisexual men. But again, no analysis of how these relationships are worked out over time and space. The authors pose this question; “Where did [bisexuals] most often meet their casual sex partners?” (89). It is answered only with a short list of the usual suspects, most mentioning conventional locations (work, school) over the sexual underground (bars, sex-related clubs). A discussion of how men proceed to locate casual partners, where they meet, at what times they meet, and how significant locale is to the social interaction that takes place, are all important questions that speak to the use of time and space in negotiating
multiple sexual identities. These questions remain unanswered in this particular study.

On a final note, in Chapter Ten, "Jealousy" (Weinberg et al. 1994), another missed opportunity reveals itself. The authors explore the issue of time, and boundary setting between partners. They discover that many couples plan out their time, often using calendars, in order to manage time spent with primary and secondary partners. This indicates a conscious use of time and space to manage diverse desires within such relationships. Such an analysis of daily time use patterns and spatial locales of bisexual men is one that is left unexplored here, as it is many studies.

**Laying the Foundation: Bisexual Geographies**

A recent contribution to geographical knowledge on bisexual men has come in the form of an anthology entitled, *Bisexuality in the Lives of Men: Facts and Fictions* edited by Brett Beemyn and Erich Steinman (2001). In this collection, Larry W. Peterson's (2001) article, "The Married Man On-Line" discusses the impact of the Internet on bisexual men and the idea of a community. Peterson analyses messages posted by 350 married bisexual men on various Internet discussion lists. He discovers that the Internet has created a safe space for married bisexual men to come out of the closet in a way that will not unsettled and possibly destroy their married lives. He also notes that men who use these sites consider them 'virtual' communities serving a critical social function for men who previously had felt isolated because of their sexuality. Peterson argues bisexual chat groups on the Internet allow for compression, or more appropriately a collapse, of time as it creates space. He argues that for bisexuals who reside outside of urban centres in which bisexual communities may be established, the Internet provides opportunity and access, or time and space, in which to meet other men like themselves. Geographers' research on 'cyberspaces' has been rather limited and focuses primarily on developing theoretical perspectives (Kitchin 1998; Dodge & Kitchin 2001). Thus, not only must research in
geography take an empirical turn toward the social production of ‘cyberspace’ more generally, but a specific undertaking of the ways in which bisexual men and women, for example, are navigating these spaces is ripe for research.

Also in Beemyn and Steinman’s anthology is Paula C. Rust’s (2001) article entitled, “Make Me a Map: Bisexual Men’s Images of Bisexual Community.” Rust asks the question, “If geographic proximity and overlapping social and economic networks no longer define most people’s experiences of community, what are the modern bases of community, and do bisexual have them?” (50). Her overall study is based on the responses of over 900 men and women who described their bisexual communities, or lack of them, both verbally and by drawing a map. This article draws from 200 respondents born male and considering themselves to be bisexual in some way, shape, or form. Three main themes developed out of the responses. First, does a bisexual community even exist? Second, what does this community look like and who belongs there? Third, although the question asked participants to map the bisexual community and then add the gay, lesbian, and heterosexual community in relation, many added other communities as well. Rust provides geographers with a window into bisexual men’s lives, how they think of their sexuality in relation to a wider network or community of bisexuals, and how they situate themselves within the myriad communities premised on sexuality. This study, however, does not explore the daily lives or the material lives of bisexual men, rather it explores their perceptions of community. Research on the grounded lived experience, materiality, and corporeality of bisexual men is still required in order to provide an understanding of how sexuality and space interconnect in relation to bisexuality.

Two geographic anthologies, Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities (Bell & Valentine 1995) and Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance (Ingram et al. 1997) illustrate the need for more empirical work on the lives of both bisexual men and women. Each book provides a limited discussion of bisexuality but primarily on a theoretical level and in each case by the same author, Clare Hemmings. Hemmings’ contributions to these books are valuable
in that they create the theoretical mindset to allow a discussion of a sexuality that defies our binary conceptual framework. She raises important questions as to how bisexuality can be situated in terms of lesbian politics and queer theory. Moreover, she contributes to an idea of bisexuality, not in terms of identity politics and community building, but as a composite of desires, acts, and bodies. Thus, for Hemmings', a politics of identity is replaced with a politics of location for the purposes of interrogating bisexuality.

Clare Hemmings' most recent book on bisexual geographies, *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Gender and Sexuality* (2002) is the culmination of more than a decade of research and theorizing of bisexuality. Hemmings teases apart the intricate disconnections between sex, gender, and sexuality as she carefully thinks through bisexuality as a middle ground of fluid desire. Like much of her work, the book rests upon theoretical play that sets out to form and reform ways of conceptualizing the spaces of bisexuality. Working through these concepts in an empirically based scheme, setting out to illuminate the lives lived in bisexual spaces, underpins my current research.

A final consideration here is concerned with the possibilities opening up in geography, among other disciplines, through queer theory. Queer theory, and bisexuality as I have positioned it in my research, have some shared qualities. Annamarie Jagose (1996) provides a useful contextualization of the contentious imaginings of queer theory. Jagose pursues the "mobility" of the queer "zone of possibilities" (Jagose 1996, 2, 131). She argues that "queer locates and exploits the incoherencies" and unstable categorizations of sex, gender and sexuality opting for a "figuring of identity as a constellation of multiple and unstable positions" (Jagose 1996, 3). As identity, queer, like bisexual, assumes no fixed, coherent, or universal subjectivity, and rather presents a "non-identity" or a critique of identity in a state of "permanent becoming" (Jagose 1996, 130-131). As Butler notes, if "queer is to be the site of collective contestation...it will have to remain...in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, [and] queered" (Butler 1997, 14). Queer as an identity must remain an
ambiguous label referring to nothing in particular, or as Jagose calls it, an "identity without an essence" (Jagose 1996, 96). Bisexuality, with all its disparate definitions and identifications, can also be considered an identity without essence.

Butler (1997) notes that there are competing uses of the term 'queer', deployed by different people for different means, or what she calls a "set of overlapping divisions" (15). As my participants will illustrate, bisexuality is similarly employed and deployed in different ways and for different means resulting in overlapping and exclusionary identities. For Butler, the competing uses and critiques of the deployment of queer, and I argue bisexual, could point to its usefulness in theory. Butler argues that queer "ought to be revised, dispelled, rendered obsolete to the extent that it yields to the demands which resist the term precisely because of the exclusions by which it is mobilized" (ibid). In such a process, she hopes we might consider how and at what expense terms like gay, lesbian, (and as I put forth bisexual) or queer are used, and the relations of power that inform such identities. Jagose and Butler argue the very contestations of queer are what maintain it as a useful theoretical framework. For some, queer remains locked within academia charged by some to be an elitist and inaccessible institutional realm (Jagose 1996). As such, it seems to be apolitical and lacking a connection to those subjects with who it is concerned. Queer has also been charged with being an "oxymoronic community of difference" (Sloan in Jagose 1996, 112). In that it claims an inclusive membership it simultaneously erases difference, which could lead to the production of a new closet in which all specific self-identifications will reside (Jagose 1996). More often, queer is simply invoked as an inclusive term but continues to refer to and describe prevailing gay and lesbian identities, spaces, and communities (Ingram et al. 1997, for example). Therefore, although queer certainly occupies a space within my own framework of knowledge, I do not explicitly employ it directly within my study (for a better example of applying queer theory in geographic work see Kitchin & Lysaght 2003). Taking my cue from participants, who but for one exception did not themselves use the term queer, I have tried to employ it in ways that further an
understanding of the multiplicity of bisexual possibilities as expressed in interviews.

**Conclusion**

If we imagine the epistemology of sexuality and space as an enormous jigsaw puzzle having no discrete edges to guide our way, this chapter has considered only a few of its pieces. I have explored a few of the most common definitions of bisexuality, methods of conceptualising or framing discussions of bisexuality, and presented various types of bisexuality as highlighted by other researchers. I have also discussed, through a review of the literature, ways in which bisexuality has gone unseen, or unnoticed in the social sciences and in the field of geography. There has been an increasing literature on bisexuality, especially in psychology and sociology, but also in geography, to which I also referred as I charted my way toward an understanding of bisexual geographies. The purpose of this review was to highlight the current work being done, but also to reveal the gaps within the literature, to indicate that there is a line of inquiry to be made into the spatiality of bisexuality. I have shown that there remains a great deal of empirical work to do on bisexuality, and more specifically, on bisexual men. It is my hope that my proposed research, my piece of the puzzle, on the everyday geographies of bisexual men will contribute to an increasing understanding of the puzzle.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Thus far, I have highlighted how bisexuality is either erased from social science research in general, or more specifically, goes largely unnoticed within the discipline of geography. I respond to these omissions by focusing on bisexual men and by examining relationships between bisexuality and the use and experience of space and place. In addition to details about my methodological philosophy, this chapter lays out my framework for contacting participants, delivering the survey and interview, and analysing data.

I begin by calling attention to my position as a researcher, foreground a research philosophy rooted in feminist thought, and offer insight into my uneasiness in doing research. I move forward by presenting Iris Marion Young’s (1994) work on re-thinking the category ‘women,’ not as a group in common but as a serial collectivity. I stretch Young’s theory to include conceptualizing bisexuality as seriality and thus, move away from considering participants in my study as constituting a group and toward an understanding the diverse contexts in which bisexuality exists. It is my goal here to rethink my subject of study, resist fixing identity, and refuse claims that my research is representative of bisexual lives more generally. In other words, I want my research to speak about bisexual people but not for bisexual men. I continue with an outline of my approaches for contacting participants. I examine the justification for the use of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview and present my method of data
analysis, focusing attention on working with and through interview transcripts. I conclude with a discussion of some limitations and difficulties encountered as I contacted participants, conducted interviews, and worked through transcripts.

**Doing ‘Good Research’**

I approach the notion of being a researcher with trepidation, in so far as, my issues with the claim of representing others’ stories and, more importantly, with [mis]appropriating the voices of those in the study. Thus, I borrow my approaches from those rooted in anti-positivist, and more specifically, feminist notions of research where particular focus has been paid to some of these methodological dilemmas.

I set myself against positivist ways of knowing, repositioning myself always within the research rather than outside and around it (Powell 1996). Within traditional, positivist academic study, ‘good’ research is characterized by the following statements. First, to do good research one must remain emotionless and objective (Powell 1996; Teitelbaum 1989). Secondly, research is that which “recognizes hard data, quantification, laboratory experiment, social indicators, isolation and control of variables and statistical tests of significance” (Powell 1996: 4). Thirdly, a researcher works with a “detached disinterest in any consequences emanating from [your] research” (Powell 1996:4). Moreover, this detachment operates to sharply separate the subjects of knowing and the objects of study (Kong et al. 2002). At the heart of this position is the scientific tradition. As Ley has argued, this

formal style can aid understanding...because you are writing in a scientific tradition and the formal style has been in place in that tradition for over two centuries. As a result it is embedded in the scientific community. It also has the advantage of ensuring [logic, structure, clarity, and precision] (Ley as cited in Butler 2001: 265).

These statements resonate against much work in feminist and poststructuralist geography which seeks to dismantle masculinist frameworks of study, challenge the universality of the ‘master subject’ and his ‘tools’ for undertaking research,
and problematize the disembodiment and separation of the researcher from the
field and object of study (Berg & Mansvelt 2000; Haraway 1991; Hyndman 2001;
Jaggar 1989; Rose 1993, for example). I argue here, as others have done (See
Harding 1987; Linton 1989; Powell 1996 for example) that there is no single set
of principles, neatly defined, that constitute a feminist methodology. There are,
however, a set of tools from which I draw that have developed specifically
through the ongoing interaction among and between feminists and feminisms.

One way I avoid disembodiment, as researcher, is to acknowledge my position
within the subject matter (Smith 2001). That is, as a mark of good qualitative
research, I implicate myself within the research as a member in seriality with the
men I was studying. That is, the false separation between researcher and the
subject of research, or the vast distance between my everyday self and the ‘field’
is exposed (Hyndman 2001). This does not mean that I embody the results of
the research. It does mean that I value my participants’ input in an authentically
(a word I use with some caution) interested manner in which the rapport is
neither phoney nor exploitive. I do not argue that I take advantage of an ‘insider’
status as point of entry, for in seriality there is no inside (a position more fully
explained in the following section). Rather I recognize that I am immersed within
the research (Smith 2001). My relationship with the research is more than a
disinterested search for the ‘truth’ and more a sincere course towards
understanding.

On the second point, that good research can only be justifyingly called so if it is a
process of control, I direct attention to my data collection methods (Powell 1996).
One tool used in maintaining control in research is the employment of a
standardized surveying or interviewing technique (Lindsay 1997). Subsequently,
and in far greater detail, I will elaborate my use of dynamic, semi-structured but
informal interviews, which were designed to get at particularities of each
individuals’ life experience rather than strive to fit diverse socio-sexual patterns of
bisexual men into an a priori framework of hypothesized patterns (Eyles 1988).
Rather than understand participants as in relation to a controlled variable, my
attention turned to multiple and diverse ways in which bisexual men created and used spaces recursively. In doing so, I move beyond mere idiosyncratic description and toward an understanding of socio-spatial networks of power in which bisexual men find themselves contextually and contingently situated. Hence, this move to specificity is simply an alternate strategy that differs from the “grand theorizing of the conceptualizers, the wide-ranging generalizations of the quantifiers, and the abstracted descriptions of the idiographers” (Eyles 1988: 3). Therefore, a measure of objectivity is found “not through distance, impartiality, and universality, but through contextuality, partiality and positionality” (Berg & Mansvelt 2000: 168).

Finally, that as a researcher I must remain disinterested and removed from any consequences of my research, I say this: The following sections of my methodology speak to my passionate attempt to create and maintain safe spaces for which my research can be undertaken. Moreover, the safety and confidentiality of the participant’s were foregrounded throughout the project. I am well aware of the consequences of ‘outing’ people in my research and, thus, the contact and meetings between participants and myself were painfully orchestrated. In addition, follow-up contact was made with some participants to see how attitudes or perceptions changed after meeting with me and to evaluate some of the consequences of the interview.

**Bisexuality as Seriality**

I adopt the role of the feminist researcher, as I advance a creative but highly useful conceptualisation of bisexuality in which the conventions of academic study are rethought. When I began this project, I set my standards high in terms of keeping my focus on those individuals who identify on some level as bisexual, while making no claim to the ontological integrity of bisexual identity. Because of this goal I did not approach local bisexual organizations looking for participants. Having done so might have resulted in a significant number of interviews, especially with people comfortable enough in their sexuality to divulge
information about being bisexual. It would also, however, result in a paper that focuses on a more politicized identity; a very specific type or group of bisexuals that would limit my ability to discuss a wider array of bisexual lives.

In order to refuse pressures to conform to accepted understandings of the ‘study group’ in academic research, I require a methodological tool enabling me to interview a number of bisexual individuals while simultaneously avoiding claiming or reifying a bisexual identity as a result. This truly is a lofty goal but one worth striving for as I move away from identity as the commonality between participants. My goal is not to conflate the individual relationship between self and sexuality or sexual identity into a generalized discussion on the lives of bisexual men as has been done in many studies. Rather, it was to understand how, as a way of sexual expression, being bisexual is implicated in their daily geographies. In order to achieve this goal, I turn to Iris Marion Young’s theoretical work on gender as seriality (Young 1994).

In her article, “Gender as Seriality: Thinking about Women as a Social Collective,” Young opens the door to theorizing seriality beyond gender to other categories, such as race and nationality (Young 1994, 731). Young argues “groupings of women will always be partial in relation to the series” (Young 1994, 737). To conceptualize women as a group, therefore, leads to normalization and exclusion. Rather, Young postulates women as a collective without common identity, as a series. I want to stretch Young’s theorization of women as a series and draw comparisons to bisexuality to create space for working through geographies of men that concomitantly avoids claiming a universal, categorical, and knowable bisexual identity. I argue bisexuality as seriality makes theoretical sense, in a similar way that Young argues gender does, because bisexuals are also a “reasonable social category expressing a certain kind of social unity. At the same time, conceptualizing gender [or sexuality] as a serial collectivity avoids the problems that emerge from saying that women [or bisexuals] are a single group” (728).
I draw from two sources in terms of supporting the theory with the perspectives of bisexual men. The first is Fritz Klein's and Thomas Schwartz's (2001) book entitled *Bisexual and Gay Husbands: Their Stories, Their Words*. This book is an edited collection of emails posted to a list serve between 1998 and 1999. The authors are clear: "[e]ach email must be interpreted by the reader with the understanding that it is only one man's feelings, thoughts, or comments on a specific topic at a specific moment in time" (Klein & Schwartz 2001, 3). They also note the fleeting nature of truth in emails, and that, therein lays the weakness but also the greatest strength of this media. While opinions, thoughts, and feelings may change from day to day, once the act of hitting the enter button is complete, the action is irreversible. The information is recorded; the speaker is accountable. Unlike the structured interview process, these men have not been guided into topic areas or probed for more, and perhaps more appropriate, information. And yet, the information and insight gained might indeed be more true, if only in some ephemeral sense of 'truth in the moment.' The data presented in this book is akin to a kind of discursive participant observation where what we read is interpreted and reinterpreted similar to transcripts of an interview or notes from an ethnographic study.

The second source of supporting evidence comes from my research with bisexual men in British Columbia. The information presented has been collected through semi-structured dialogues and self-administered questionnaires that pay particular attention to the relationships between sexuality and spaces of the everyday. I return to the methodological issues concerning this data in greater detail in the latter part of this chapter.

**The Problem with Identity-Based Groups**

Notwithstanding the strategic utility of group identity, the limits of identity politics and the notion of community in terms of sexual identity are well established (Hemmings 1995; Hemmings 1997; Highleyman 1995a; Queen 1995; Woodhead 1995; Young 1990; Young 1995; Young 1997). It is prudent, however, to provide
an overview of these limits so I can move toward problems associated with thinking of bisexuals as a community.

Within identity-based groups, members are expected to share "a common set of assumptions about the relationships between identity, ideology, and behaviour, political commitment and trustworthiness" (Young 1997, 54). Groups can be defined as a "collection of persons who recognize themselves and one another as in a unified relation with one another" they "mutually acknowledge that together they undertake a common project" (Young 1994, 723-724). One of my participants noted,

Sexuality is something so difficult to really base a community on...it's like saying 'let's have a community of men (laugh), let's have a community of women;' it's such a broad thing...I think people in the gay community choose to identify themselves as being gay to have a community because they face a lot of...it allows them to have something in common to work for (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Gay and lesbian movements and communities are grounded in identity politics (Highleyman 1995a), built around "generalized ideologies and a unitary vision of sexual minorities" (Ingram, Bouthillette, & Retter 1997, 5). While there is a political usefulness to naming, categorizing, and claiming a group identity, doing so is a simultaneous process of exclusion and normalization (Young 1994). The result of identity-based movements in this case has been a separate space excluding a wide range of individuals because of their "inability to structure their lives around the clearly defined and limited tenets" of a gay or lesbian identity (Woodhead 1995, 240). Much research homogenizes diversity situating bisexuals under an umbrella of homosexuality, not out of ignorance, but because lesbian and gay communities have invested time and energy promoting solidarity through a unified identity-based movement constructed in opposition to the hegemony of heteronormativity (Board 1995; Highleyman 1995a; Rhoads 1997). Identity politics in gay communities lends to a claim of an essential gay identity, a
notion that "sexuality is inherent, fixed, [and] unchangeable" which strikes false for bisexuality (Highleyman 1995a, 90).

**Gender as Seriality**

After much feminist debate concerning the ontological validity of the category 'woman' (See Bannerji 1995; Mohanty, Russo, & Torres 1991; Parpart 1993; Rose 1993; Spelman 1990; Yuval-Davis 1997, for example), Iris Marion Young (1994) advances a methodological tool with which 'woman' can be conceptualized without falsely essentializing and at the same time maintaining political integrity. Thinking about women as a series allows a move past group identity and universal 'sisterhood' toward thinking of women as a collective without a common identity. Young submits that a series is "a social collective whose members are unified passively" (724) and who derive their unity from "the way that individuals pursue their own individual ends [negotiate time and space] with respect to structures that have been created by the unintended collective result of past actions" (724). Members are “isolated but not alone” (725) in a series which is “anonymous...[and] amorphous, without determinate limits, attributes, or intentions” (728). We can begin to see here a theoretical shift from identity as essential to identity as relational. More specifically Young notes that “[t]he meanings, rules, practices, and assumptions of institutionalized heterosexuality constitute the series women, as in a relation of potential appropriation by men” (Young 1994, 729). For Young, ‘woman’ is always already a constituted relational identity formed by and through a structure of enforced heterosexuality. The category woman is not defined or determined by the structures of heterosexuality but it is enabled and constrained by and through them. There is, then, "no concept of the series, no specific set of attributes that form the sufficient conditions for membership in" a group one might call ‘women’ (727) because “membership is defined not by something they are but rather by the fact that in their diverse existences and actions they are oriented around the same objects" or power relations (728).
A series can, however, form into a group as a reaction to the very structures that isolate and render members in the series anonymous (Young 1994). That is to say, groups institutionalize or "they disperse back into seriality" (735). Myriad examples include women's groups that form as strategic sites of resistance against heteropatriarchal powers of oppression: rape crisis centres, on-line support networks for victims of domestic abuse, etc. Thus, a strategic use of identity, whereby a group lays claim to identity at a particular time and/or place where it is important for political reasons to do so. So identity gets fixed, but only ephemerally, in specific places at certain times.

**Bisexuality as a Series: Thinking Outside of the Group**

I argue that bisexuality should also be thought of as seriality. Bisexuality is not defined and determined by structures of the hetero/homo binary, but certainly enabled and constrained by it, perhaps wedging bisexuality into some fluid middle ground (Hemmings 2002). If a series is an amorphous, anonymous, and isolated collective of which Young speaks, perhaps David Lourea, famous bisexual activist from the Bay Area, characterized this isolation best in 1992:

> One of the problems for bisexual people is that they lead enormously isolated lives where no one else knows who they are...[s]o we have enormous diversity...it's unrealistic to expect any one group to meet the needs of all these different people, which adds difficulty to organizing bisexual communities. We are not homogenous (Tucker 1995, 52, 53).

Can bisexuals form a group to "recognize themselves and one another as in a unified relation with one another" (Young 1994; 723-724)? Is it possible to base a group on some notion of a stable bisexual identity? If it is possible, do bisexuals want to erect boundaries around this identity to the exclusion of others who fall outside of them, and work toward some common goal or project? Grounding community in identity politics rests upon some common characteristic, in essence, a definition of who constitutes a legitimate bisexual. This entails constructing bisexual identity as a unique and coherent whole. This in turn forces out diversity and "leave[s] out the wonderful, difficult complexity of
acknowledging the diverse spectrum of identities that may constitute bisexuality (Queen 1995, 158). An alternative way of thinking through connections among and between bisexuals can avoid this limited vision of community.

I want to problematize any easy grouping of bisexual people, to challenge the notion that any single variation within bisexuality could form the base or set of assumptions upon which a bisexual grouping can be built (Queen 1995). When identity is taken as foundation, Judith Butler (1992) argues identity will never result in the "solidifying ground of a feminist movement," that it necessarily produces factions grounded in exclusion (15). Furthermore, Butler argues, If feminism presupposes that "women" designates an undesignatable field of differences, one that cannot be totalized or summarized by a descriptive identity category, then the very term becomes a site of permanent openness and resignifiability (Butler 1992, 16).

This is important to my argument, in terms of methodology, in that I cannot claim to be studying a 'group' of bisexual men. If Young's theory can travel from gender to sexuality, I posit that bisexuality is that 'undesignatable field of difference', indeed, a 'site of openness and resignifiability.' Under a framework of identity politics, bisexuality as a group is problematic because it "cannot be structurally produced or endorsed through gender of sexual object choice, gendered subject position, or chronology of sexual identity" (Hemmings 2002, 27). Self-identification of one's bisexuality is not enough to "ensure agreement or conformity - [bisexuals] are too diverse in every way" (Queen 1995, 157). Bisexuality is the "epitome of identity as temporary and shifting" (Hemmings 1995, 49) to the extent that there can be no claim to any unified, stable bisexual identity from which "bisexual subjects might position themselves" (51) in order to form a group. In the end, groups "based on, or grounded in, any sort of common sexual identity are full of people with secrets" (Queen 1995, 158).

The possible combinations, locations, and permutations of bisexuality truly are endless, especially when including alternative gender identities or gender
players, such as cross-dressers, transgendered, and transsexuals, or include those who derive their bisexual identity through fantasy (Queen 1995). Among the various bodies, acts, and desires, how is it possible to find a common agenda to unite them through identity or a single basis on which to form a group or community (Highleyman 1995a)?

In Fritz Klein and Thomas Schwartz’s (2001) collection of electronically posted messages between gay and bisexual married men, the opprobrium of fixing a single and coherent bisexual identity is pervasive:

I know from my own experience with so many men in this group who have shared aspects of their journeys at our various gatherings is that we are a very rich group in the variety of our marriages, attitudes, and priorities (Message from James in Klein & Schwartz 2001, 86).

My understanding...supports that some people find the sexual part of their (bisexual) personality will be expressed serially (in sequence) and will vacillate between male and female but not necessarily both at the same time. Others will find equal attraction at all times to both genders at once. Yet others will hover (within a range) at some point between...I haven't seen much evidence that would support there's one "universally" correct or normal way to be bisexual (Message from Dale in Klein & Schwartz 2001, 95).

Every combination is possible: there are men who find one partner and stay with them and not act on the attraction to the other gender, people who have sex with both concurrently, people whose attractions to change over time (even short periods), etc. No fast rules apply (Message from Fritz in Klein & Schwartz 2001, 100).

There are as many expressions of sexuality as there are men on the list [about 350 men]. Some of us have trouble finding a term to adequately identify our sexuality (Message from Gripp in Klein & Schwartz 2001, 134).

I should note here that this collection of messages is from married gay and bisexual men. That is, even when there is some agreement that attraction, desire, and sexuality crosses gender divisions; many men may adopt a gay identity, perhaps for political alignment. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain which
messages are from men claiming bisexuality as identity or as a behavioural practice. For my purposes, the distinction is not necessarily important.

Drawing from my own research, I quote at length from one participant because I think it reflects, not only the difficulty of conceptualising bisexuality forming an identity-based group, but also the problematic conceptualization of the self as bisexual:

There are lots of different ways of being gay. I would assume there would be just as many, maybe more ways of being bisexual, and that it would be very idiosyncratic how an individual decided [on their sexuality]...I'm just trying to imagine the full range of variation there would be. And, something, tells me that the kind of accommodation the individual comes up with is likely to be different from person to person, which would be another reason why it's kind of hard to come up with an identity, you know, you meet with people and you expect to be a group when they're all like you and it turns...they seem to be living in different worlds. And you just don't expect to find too many people who are exactly like you. Which is I presume something that straight people never deal with (personal communication, Darren 2003).

Bisexuality proves problematic as an identity-based movement because there is no single commonality to unite this group without creating chasms of exclusion. Not even a common oppression exists to unite bisexuals in some oppositional stance. Lesbian and gay communities organized in opposition to constructions of heteronormativity and in response to increasing homophobia. Because bisexuals are not necessarily fixed into any one particular identity, they may or may not experience homophobia, heterosexism, biphobia, etc. at any given time or in any given space. Bisexual people may battle all or none of these oppressions depending on when, where, and how they express their sexuality. There is a way to re-think the category ‘bisexual men’ for my research that steers away from fixing identity and making claims on a ‘group’. Social life is fractured by numerous categories, including but not limited to race, class, nationality, and
ethnicity, in which women are dispersed (Young 1994). I argue that bisexuals are also dispersed across these categories further denying the ability to think of it as a group that shares a common set of anything.

Conceptualizing bisexuality as a series avoids stereotypical constructions of bisexuality, moves past rigid definitions, and focuses attention not only on individuals, but also on how bisexuality is positioned in and by processes of heteronormative powers. It also centers on how bisexuals are constrained and enabled by, for example, the heterо/homo binary. As stated, there is a social and political usefulness to group formations. Many bisexuals, however wary they may be of identity-based groups, acknowledge the "flawed but temporarily useful transitional strategy" (Highleyman 1995a, 91) that identity-based group formations allow.

From Series to Group and Back Again: Shifting Locations of Bisexuality

I want to elaborate on a previously mentioned notion that groups arise from seriality in an effort to resolve some issue common to a given series. I want to keep in mind that this phenomenon is like the ebb and flow of the tides, and that the group may disperse back into a series once the goal is achieved or issue is resolved. Udis-Kessler (1995) notes that in the 1980's women's bisexual support groups were forming in response to attacks from lesbian feminist groups and out of a sense of "absence of separate space" (26) from what they saw developing for bisexual men. Thus, the "latent potential of this series to organize itself as a group...[became] manifest" (Young 1994, 725) as a response to the constraining structures that enforced invisibility. The tensions that arose within these new formations, between feminist, lesbian-feminist, and bisexual feminist perspectives, for some, proved too intense to stay its course. In what follows, I illustrate with some well-documented examples of series that have risen to a group only to disperse back into the series.

Hemmings (2002) and Young (1995) discuss several of these series-to-group-to-series processes in the context of Northampton, Massachusetts and the now
infamous bisexual inclusion/exclusion debates surrounding the Pride celebrations that first erupted in 1989. Strong opposition was brought forth by the lesbian community in Northampton in response to the inclusion of 'bisexual' in the title of the annual Pride March. Once called the "Lesbian and Gay Liberation March," the "Northampton Lesbian and Gay Pride March" in 1989 added 'bisexual' to its title (Young 1995, 220). In the ongoing debates, there surfaced resentment toward the bisexual community as lesbians charged bisexual women with attempting to render the lesbian community invisible (Hemmings 2002; Young 1995). Young notes that "the logical and political difficulties inherent in the attempt to conceptualise women as a single group with a set of common attributes and shared identity appear to be insurmountable" (Young 1994, 719). And so it appears with several bisexual groupings. Hemmings (2002) points to several women's groups such as the Northampton bisexual women's group active in the early 1990's and the Amherst–based Valley Bisexual Network which she notes were active communities until internal division dispersed their numbers. Of the latter she writes, "the Valley Bisexual Women's Support Group was formed...in Autumn 1993. This group collapsed six months later due to internal conflicts over confidentiality and political location that proved impossible to resolve" (Hemmings 2002, 65).

In 1976, the San Francisco Bisexual Centre opened as a community centre offering social and support services to Bay Area bisexuals (Raymond & Highleyman 1995). This long running centre closed its doors in 1984 as "people gradually stopped using the service; its organizers eventually decided that the need for the centre no longer existed within the community" (Hemmings 2002, 158). As in other cases, Hemmings (2002) notes that unresolved internal disputes were, at least, one factor in the centres' demise.

I spoke with a self-identified bisexual man who throughout the 1990's had been involved in the bisexual community in the Vancouver area. He notes that in 1995 he "got involved in organizing that community, or trying to organize that community...but the weakness was...all the energy was geared toward one
conference a year; to get people together” (personal communication, Evan 2003). This is a great example of a series of bisexual men who, for the purpose of a bisexual conference, form a group only insofar as it is necessary to put on the conference. He further notes that internal disputes about location of meetings, over-representation of men’s issues, inclusion/exclusion of transsexual and transgendered people in the groups that were formed during that year of conference organizing led to the implosion of the group. Beyond the goal of putting on the bisexual conference, unity and coherence as a group failed in the face of extreme diversity and differing day-to-day needs and issues. He and others attempted to re-organize in the summer of 2002, but as he states, “trying to bring bisexuals together is like herding cats” (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Klein and Schwartz’s (2001) project is an example of a series of bisexual men coming together in group-formation through the Internet in order to discuss common issues surrounding their sexuality and being married. In their book, Bisexual and Gay Husbands: Their Stories, Their Lives, and perhaps for the first time, a wide variety of bisexual men in marriages were able to “share their stories safely and anonymously” (Klein & Schwartz 2001, 5). These men reside in all regions of the world, cross-cut class positioning and social status, and vary considerably as to the degree they remain shackled to the invisible walls of the closet (Klein & Schwartz 2001). In these ways, and probably many more, the common thread that has drawn these men together is not identity, nor relationship status, but rather a desire and need to speak, to create a social space which does not exist for them as a collective; a desire to ‘download’ their problems and seek support. The book itself becomes a material expression of the virtual grouping, a group that is fluid and amorphous, changing its shape every time someone logs on or logs off.

I contend that fixing a methodological conception of bisexuality to a necessarily unfixed notion of a series that draws from Young’s theorizing of women as a series is crucial. If the point of my research on the geographies of bisexual men
is, in part, to resist fixing a male bisexual identity, to discourage an imag(in)ing of ‘the’ bisexual subject of which my research attempts to speak, then I must conceptualize bisexual men in my study, not as a group with unifying commonalities, but rather as a series of individuals who, for the purpose of the study, have come together and form a group. I have discussed ways that groups premised on common identity are exclusionary by drawing links between women as a series and bisexual people as a series. Furthermore, I have drawn from my research as well as the established work of others in order to forge a concept of bisexuality as seriality. Having firmly established a way to think through the complications and limitations of sexual identity, I move forward in my efforts to make the connections between sexuality and space in relation to the bisexual men in my study series.

**Do We Have Contact?**

As others note in studies of sexual minorities (Blumstein & Schwartz 2000, for example), I concede it is not possible to draw a random sample of the bisexual male population in the Lower Mainland. My intention, however, was to speak to as many bisexual men as possible to explore the socio-spatial themes I have discussed in relation to their sexuality. Therefore, a variety of avenues were pursued in order to contact men who, to varying degrees, consider themselves bisexual.

My project received approval from the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University on April 24, 2002 (Appendix I). Once I defended my proposal at the colloquium on May 22, 2002, I launched my research with a call for participants. I placed several newspaper advertisements distributed throughout the Lower Mainland (Vancouver, North Shore, Tri-Cities). These newspapers include The Georgia Straight, a popular and thoroughly read ‘alternative’ weekly, available free across the Lower Mainland and xtrawest!, Vancouver’s Gay and Lesbian bi-weekly. I placed ads in fourteen community newspapers with coverage of the Greater Vancouver Regional District as well as an additional advertisement in the
Advertisements were also placed in university newspapers several times during the course of research. In addition to paid newspaper advertisements, I posted flyer advertisements in several locations within the gay community of Vancouver’s West End. (Appendix II). The first set of ads began to run in June 2002, with a second run beginning in May 2003 (Appendix III). Due to a range in cost, advertisements differed somewhat depending on the publication (Appendix IV).

As argued in my discussion of seriality, it is important to resist accessing participants through a bisexual organization or club. I believe this route may yield an adequate number of individuals for my study, but a focus on the identity-based, politicised ‘bisexual’ would detract from my focus on how, as an orientation, bisexuality relates to the experience and use of space and place. I sought to throw the net wider than those individuals who have developed a keen sense (at least keen enough that they are meeting with other bisexuals to discuss their bisexuality) of what bisexuality means for them. I wanted to attract a diverse collection of positions, contexts, and identities in order to resist reproducing ‘bisexuality’ in men as some knowable, delineated phenomenon, and instead focus on how the position of bisexuality is integral to thinking about the experience and use of space and place. I did, however, have to attract participants in the first place. To this end I recognize that words are ‘loaded’ and that by employing words like ‘bisexual’ in my call for participants I, of course, structure the study group by attracting certain respondents. As Christina argues, “that everyone has a right to define and name her- or himself, and if that means that there are four hundred million bisexuals with four hundred million definitions of the word, then we’ll just have to live with that” (Christine 1997, 29). My position echoes Christina’s and so I have put faith in the diversity that is represented by the term ‘bisexual.’ And yet, can it be dismissed so easily? I don’t think so, but nor do I think it possible to focus one’s research without exclusion. I used in my advertisements, both the words ‘bisexual’ and ‘men who have sex with both men and women.’ In this way, I strive to speak to those with an awareness, acceptance, and/or identification with bisexuality.
Who may have been excluded from participating given my call for participants? Certainly, anyone whose own situation or context is overwhelmingly structured by heteronormative expectations and/or homophobia would not respond, regardless of my wording in advertisements. For some the risk is too great. The word ‘bisexual’ might also exclude those individuals who primarily or entirely identify as ‘gay’ on a day-to-day basis and in relatively stable terms over time. Also, undoubtedly men who identify as straight and who do not recognize or identify with bisexuality at all would be unlikely to respond. One of my participants, however, does identify as heterosexual and does not identify wholly with bisexuality and yet the advertisement ‘spoke’ to him in some way that he was inclined to respond. The politics of naming is always a process of inclusion/exclusion, especially when the name is under such debate and contention as is ‘bisexual.’

Another primary concern was creating and maintaining a system of contact between participants and myself without breaching confidentiality. I wanted to offer the safest and easiest methods of contact possible. I established an e-mail account, a phone number with voice mailbox, and purchased a post office box at my local mailbox business. After viewing the advertisements, those interested could send me an e-mail message, call my voice box, or mail me a note of interest. The e-mail route was the easiest and most efficient in terms of setting things in motion quickly. I immediately responded with an information letter providing information on the project allowing them to maintain relative anonymity at this point (Appendix V). Contacting me through the voice box or postal box only facilitated contact insofar as they could leave a telephone number for me to respond to with information. I made the assumption that those who were interested and contacted me from the advertisements, would also be willing to meet in person for interviews. For many, it seems, calling the voice box marked the end of the journey, unwilling or unable to leave a message with contact information. I return to this issue in the final section regarding methodological difficulties in the project.
Initial telephone contact allowed me to fully explain the project and arrange an interview. Absolute confidentiality was ensured and scheduling of the interview, where possible, was determined by the participants' wishes. At no time were the names of participants used on interview notes, surveys, tapes, or transcripts. Instead, a simple three-digit code is assigned to each participant and all materials associated with that participant for the purposes of analysis. In writing up the thesis I assigned pseudonyms to each participant to facilitate a more personal and fluid text for the reader.

**Tell Me All About Yourself**

My methods are qualitative and I employ tools that best allow me to uncover a multiplicity of meanings and perceptions underlying spaces created and used by bisexual men (Smith 2001). I developed and employed a basic questionnaire as part of the methodological regime for two reasons. First, the questionnaire generates some collapsible data that may or may not provide some general information on the participants as a collective. Second, the questionnaire allowed me to devise an interview guideline that was specific and coherent for each individual interview. This provided for a more open and appropriate discussion paying particular interest to what participants had to say rather than the my appropriation of their voice.

The second tool is the semi-structured interview. I approach interviews as less a 'masculinist' interrogation or rote questioning, and more like a conversation-style dialogue, creating a comfortable space in which to engage with participants regarding their bisexuality (Kong et al. 2002). All participants received an orientation package including a statement of introduction (Appendix V), questionnaire information and consent form Appendix VI and Appendix VII), questionnaire (Appendix VIII) interview information and consent form (Appendix IX and Appendix X), checklist for returning documents (Appendix XI), and a bisexual support information sheet (Appendix XII).
Questionnaire

My first method of gaining insight into participants' lives is a self-administered questionnaire comprised of core questions developed from the interview guideline following my research objectives. In terms of data collected here, unlike that derived from in-depth interviews, it has been collapsed in order to detect patterns and/or regularities. This was an attempt to provide information within a quantifiable framework and draw inferences about the participants in this study (Lindsay 1997). Given the relatively small number of questionnaires completed, these data are best used as supplemental to interviews. Thus, the specificity of each questionnaire and the multiple perspectives of the various participants are considered in the overall methodological regime (Fontana & Frey 2001). The questionnaire is a small component of the project, but it did yield some very useful information that was then used to conduct more appropriate interviews.

Interviews

To elicit meaningful information conveying some aspects of bisexual men's lives, I incorporate information obtained through semi-structured, informal interviews. Interviews are an important tool when attempting to fill in the gaps left in the wake of other methods; especially relevant regarding a population like bisexual men, where census data and other more quantitative measures often render bisexuals invisible. Moreover, interviews are used to explore the multiple realities of bisexual men, gain insight into diverse opinions of what is a very heterogeneous group of men, and empower this group by including their own voice as opposed to a more strict ethnographic observation of their lives (Dunn 2000; Smith 2001). This is not to say, however, that because I employ the interview process I may offer a claim to representation or legitimation outright. I have where possible included substantially lengthy quotations from transcripts in hopes of maintaining the integrity of participants' context, and thus avoiding a misrepresentation of their words (Butler 2001; Kong et al. 2002). Furthermore, in approaching participants as members in seriality with a full recognition of
multiple, fragmented, and mobile subjectivities therein, I cogently resist urges to conflate, compress, and/or contest what I consider to be the sites of localized knowledge (Kong et al. 2002).

The interviews, however, are not without direction. Each interview is constructed upon a core set of questions and, hence, the process is to some degree directive (Appendix XIII). Based upon the specific information participants' offer on the questionnaire, individual interview guidelines develop through a dynamic interview process (Dunn 2000; Eyles 1988). Each subsequent interview guideline is constructed in consultation with previous interview transcripts. I review interviews that elicited informative discussions of particular interest to the overall thesis as I develop the interview guideline for the next interview. This is critical because it simply would not make sense to ask the same questions through structured interviews for both a closeted married bisexual and an open bisexual in multiple or polyamorous relationships, for example. Moreover, it never makes sense to ask questions that simply do not work or do not facilitate a discussion informative to your research (Dunn 2000; Eyles 1988). Approaching interviews in this way allows me a course of specificity through each participant's story and to build off successes of previous interviews while avoiding earlier mistakes (See Appendix XIV-XX for individual interview guides in chronological order of interview). Thus, each interview is participant oriented for relevancy and in order to maintain their 'voice' in the record (Gamson 2001). Questions focus on foregrounding experiences of participants and seek to uncover connections between bisexual men, their sexuality, and the meanings and practices attached to spaces they use. I approach interviews in this manner, allowing people to tell their own stories as a way for them to reclaim a subjectivity that has thus far been empirically ignored (Gamson 2001). All participants agreed to have the conversation tape recorded for transcribing facilitating a more accurate representation of their thoughts.

My approach favours qualitative over quantitative methods, although I use a mixed approach to add a certain amount of rigour, legitimacy, and statistical
evidence to help show my research is something more than merely idiosyncratic. It should be noted here that questionnaires resulted primarily in descriptive data regarding participants and were most valuable, as mentioned, in terms of formulating interview guidelines.

**Forging Connections: Data Analysis**

To analyze the interviews, I transcribed the audiotapes diligently, acknowledging pauses and other notations of disposition; an arduous task at best. Despite consultation with some texts on this process (Dunn 2000; Kitchin & Tate 2000), the best approach of analysis for me, given time constraints and the scope of the project, was to work through transcripts without the aid of a software package such as NUD-IST. While I believe such software can be a valuable tool, especially when large amounts of data are to be considered, I have concerns with losing control of the data, and losing much in terms of the context of the meaning and intent of my participants.

I rely on Jackson (2001) for my approach to transcribed interviews. I began by highlighting key words and phrases in the text, noting more technical keywords or concepts based on my field of knowledge. My next step involved listening to the taped interviews once more as I did a second reading of the transcriptions, making notations on emphasis, tone, disposition of the speaker and general context of the interview as it moved forward. I summarized each interview by extracting the notated fragments of conversation. This by no means was intended as the platform on which my analysis would be based, but it was a way to make large amounts of text manageable as I made initial connections within and across interviews. These connections, as well as disparities, were teased out during a third reading of the transcripts and summaries, paying as much attention to the silences as were paid to the verbal text.
The Messiness of Research: Difficulties Overcome

One problem in doing this research was finding and making contact with bisexual men willing and able to participate. During my first summer of 'field work' I spoke with less than twenty men, collected surveys from five, and completed a mere three interviews. A quick survey of local chat lines, chat rooms, and newspaper advertisements is indicative that there are not insignificant numbers of bisexual men in the Vancouver area. The problem, however, begins with definitional incoherence (Eadie 1993). First, for some men the connection is not made between their discreet sexual encounters with men and the label bisexual. Second, bisexual men in relationships are often, but not always, closeted, making it difficult and possibly dangerous to respond to my call for participants. Third, and more pragmatic, my approach to access men outside of politically or socially formed bisexual groups meant that I needed to cast a wide net and, in a large way, hope for the best. Having gone through this process and the frustration of a poor response, I maintain that this was the best approach for my study, given my skills and resources. As Klein & Schwartz (2001) have shown in a recent study the Internet can be a valuable tool for collecting data from those identities not readily and visibly located or accessible. This, however, is a tool I am ill-prepared to make advantage of in this particular research design.

During the second summer of research, I used a cell phone for the project, doing away with the underused postal box and inefficient voice mailbox. Only one person had made use of the postal address, and more often than not, the voice mailbox recorded hang-ups or crank calls. Getting the cell phone coincided with another wave of advertisements, in addition to posted flyers, and the improved contact was immediately noticed. While it took six months during the first attempt to garner eight participants, it took less than six weeks to get an additional four. Having the cell phone on hand, and being able to immediately talk with those interested enough to call, meant I was able to set up immediate meetings and subsequent interviews, minimizing chances of people losing interest and also minimizing the time commitment for men to the project.
Conclusion

The goal of this chapter is to provide a foundation upon which my thesis can firmly be built. It outlines my feminist-inspired philosophy and details the framework of methods used in this project. Borrowing ideas from Iris Marion Young, I establish a way to think through some complications and limitations of sexual identity by fixing a methodological conception of bisexuality to an unfixed concept of a series. I outline my approach to calls for participants, as well as the difficulties I experience in contacting individuals for this project. Particular attention is paid in this chapter to the design and implementation of the questionnaire and interview as the core methods of data collection. Moreover, I chart the very practical approach taken as I analyze the transcripts. Lastly, I discuss some of the problems encountered in my methodology and how I overcome these issues.
CHAPTER FOUR: BISEXUALITIES

Introduction

I begin this chapter with ‘biographies’ to offer a glimpse into each participant’s individual life. I illuminate the context of their perspectives to reveal points of connection as well as points of divergence across their experience. I explore ways participants define themselves as bisexuals and highlight difficulties in the process of ‘becoming’ bisexual. The mobility of identity is explored in terms of social spaces of work, friends, and family allowing me to expand on how bisexuality is both fixed and shifting in and across time and space. The goal of this chapter is to introduce participants, examine myriad definitions and identities that are expressed in this study, and to begin to understand that bisexuality is positionality. That is to say, whatever being bisexual may mean to the individual it largely is defined, identified with, and expressed through relations with other people, spaces, and relations of heteronormativity.

Biographies

This research brings together a series of men whose connection lies in their relation to others and to social contexts given their choice of sexual partners at particular times and in particular spaces. I provide a brief biography of each participant to further expose the internal incoherence and inconsistencies of my study group. This prevents me from conflating participants’ experiences into a single, coherent body of data and supports my efforts to understand connections
and dissonance between and among participants. Furthermore, it provides an introduction to a crucial part of this chapter on multiple definitions of bisexuality.

The Series

There are some personal characteristics I want to present in aggregate terms outside of individual biographies. Diversity characterizes the group in terms of age, education level, socio-economic status, and ethnicity, among other things such as each individual's own definitions of bisexuality to which I soon turn. Respondents' age ranges from eighteen to forty-seven while eight of the twelve participants were aged thirty and over (Appendix XXI). I found age to be important in terms of an individual's amount of experience and his ability to communicate feelings about sexuality. Individuals over thirty were more articulate and likely had significant numbers of experiences from which to draw. Diverse education levels had some influence on expression but not necessarily experience (Appendix XXII). Three men have graduate degrees and three were in the process of completing or had partially completed an undergraduate degree. These men better communicated their experiences and seemed more self-reflexive when answering questions. Individuals who had attained lower levels of formal education provided a great depth of information, but during interviews required more prompts when answering questions. Measuring socio-economic status according to income level and type of employment, a range of class positions were present in the data (Appendix XXIII). Three men, all students, are in the lowest income-earning group earning less than $10,000 per year. Five men are in the highest income group earning over $50,000 per year. There is less diversity in terms of ethnicity, yet participants come originally from South America, Central America, the Middle East, and the United States, as well as Canada.

The Individuals

Andrew is an eighteen-year-old university student originally from Colombia who works part time as a server in a restaurant. The youngest in the series, Andrew
is much more comfortable with ambiguity than with identity categories and seeks a variety of relationships with both genders, although his encounters with men are primarily for sexual purposes.

Lewis, originally from Ontario, is a forty-seven year old professor at a Canadian university, now living in the Victoria area of British Columbia. Recently divorced, he has found for himself social support and contacts largely within the gay community of Victoria. He admits that his desires for men and women are qualitatively different but that the majority of his sexual relationships for the past six years have been with men.

Kevin is forty-one years old: Originally from Lebanon, he holds a graduate degree at the Masters level and works full time in a consulting firm. Although he is open about his bisexuality to certain friends he notes that he does not know any other bisexual people and that his connections are with gay men and straight women. He feels no connection to the gay and lesbian community and no connection to other bisexuals or bisexual communities.

Evan is forty-seven years old and was born in Montreal. He is an artist and entrepreneur, working full time in his own business as a computer network administrator. After being married and raising a family for many years, his bisexuality surfaced in ways he was unable to make room for in his life at that time. Evan has been active in the queer community and in attempts to develop a bisexual community in Vancouver. Increasingly he finds himself requiring less and less from any community, instead seeking support from within his own social circle.

Jeff is twenty-nine years old, originally from Saskatchewan, and self-employed in computer repair and web design. Jeff enjoys his bisexuality as it allows him a more open life and more options for sexual partners as well as when searching for long-term relationships. Between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-eight Jeff lived an almost entirely gay lifestyle developing close ties with the gay and lesbian community.
Garret, also from Saskatchewan but now living in the interior of British Columbia, is thirty-nine years old working full time as a residential building manager. He is married and makes regular contact with other men for sex, but finds it particularly difficult finding a community of any kind that fully accepts him as bisexual.

Twenty-six year old Ramone recently immigrated to Vancouver from Mexico. He is currently an unemployed student about to complete his final year of university. Ramone came to Vancouver's West End precisely to integrate the 'two lives' he had been leading in Mexico. He notes that the gay community and the larger straight community in Vancouver seem to be more accepting of his bisexuality. To what degree he will be able to integrate his 'gay' side and 'straight' side into a bisexual identity, he admits, remains to be seen.

Brian, also a university student, is twenty-two years old, and was born in Ontario. His ideal bisexual lifestyle resides in polyamory, that is, having relationships built upon multiple partners of either sex, an ideal to which he still aspires. He has had significant exposure to the gay community (his mothers are lesbian), yet he does not feel strong connections to it, finding most of his social support within a circle of bisexual friends.

Chris is thirty-nine years old, was born in the Vancouver area, and works full time in the insurance field. Chris has been married for fourteen years and with the exception of a male friend with whom he meets for occasional sexual encounters, no one, including his wife, knows he is bisexual. Imagining himself as being bisexual is difficult for Chris given his outward heterosexual lifestyle and the desires for men he keeps secret. Rather, he often refers to himself as being a straight guy who occasionally likes to have sex with men.

Darren is a forty-one year old professor at a Canadian university, originally from the New England region of the United States. He is currently in a monogamous, same-sex relationship though he does not live with his current partner. Sexuality for Darren is a very private issue and even within the relationship, he is more
likely to identify as gay than bisexual because it easier for others to understand and less complicated to explain.

Born in the Vancouver area, thirty-five year old Paul works full time in construction. In his early twenties, Paul engaged in sex with men he met while frequenting gay bars. More recently, he began a relationship with a woman but still connects with men through personal ads in the newspaper. He is increasingly becoming comfortable with his sexuality maintaining that it is an evolving process and not something that has been set in stone for him his whole life.

Lastly, Mike is thirty-four years old and from the interior of British Columbia. He works full time in the hospitality industry, typically at the front desk of a hotel. He has been in an eleven-year heterosexual partnership, and though his partner and a couple of close friends know of Mike’s desires, he maintains a heterosexual identity throughout the majority of his life.

What unites the experiences of this diverse group of men? As individuals, they crosscut age levels, educational backgrounds, socio-economic status, employment, and ethnicity. Moreover, they position themselves differently in relation to various communities and social networks. If a series is a diverse, amorphous, and ambiguous collective of individuals with no essential commonality on which to base identity then the bisexual men I have spoken with can be characterized as such: A series that, for this project has come together to share experiences and to further understand the relations that situate bisexuality in particular times and in different places. Exploring incoherent definitions of bisexuality will support this notion, a task to which I now turn.

**By Definition... Am I Bisexual?**

Twelve men considered themselves bisexual enough to answer my call for participants. Nonetheless, these men certainly present various definitions not
only of bisexuality, but also of what bisexuality means for them in their own lives. For some bisexuality describes an attraction to both men and women:

For me bisexuality is the attraction to both sexes not necessarily that you have been, ya know, sexually involved with both of them, but just the fact that you are attracted to both and you recognize that. I think that qualifies you as being bisexual (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

In this example, bisexuality is defined as an attraction but not necessarily one that needs to be acted upon. Brian also sees bisexuality as attraction as opposed to identity, especially as he considers his heterosexual identity:

Bisexuality for me is an attraction, not necessarily equal to both of the genders. And this can include love, this can include wanting to have sex...I'm wondering if I'm not, in fact, heterosexual, although I would continue to seek out relations with both genders (personal communication, Brian 2002).

As an attraction, bisexuality makes sense to Brian. His primary heterosexual relationship, however, adds a layer of complexity to claiming it as an identity.

Bisexuality can be more practically connected to physical and sexual encounters by others:

What is bisexual? I think it; I think it's somebody that enjoys having sex with either partner. With either sex, I mean (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Having to be bisexual for me is trying to carefully and basically play around between being in a relationship with a female and also being physical with a male, or being intimate with a male (personal communication, Mike, 2003).

In both cases, bisexuality goes beyond attraction to forge a relationship to physical, sexual encounters but not necessarily as far as to include social and emotional relationships. Similarly, Paul connects bisexuality to the physical
desire for men and women but also reveals the difficulties it can pose in terms of maintaining relationships:

What it means for me? It means it's tough being in a relationship with one person or another. You know, I guess, what it says is what it means, being like bisexual you like having sex with men and women. And I find it difficult to be in a relationship with one sex (personal communication, Paul 2003).

Paul recognizes that what bisexuality is for him goes deeper than any definition can claim to express. His bisexuality is central to forming relationships of all kinds but is vexing when developing more long-term intimate ones.

Bisexuality can also be thought of as an identity or part of one's larger identity. As Lewis describes,

For me, bisexuality is an identity, and while some may be curious to know what it feels like to identify as bisexual, if we are talking about behaviour, then what distinguishes bisexual from heterosexual identity is an admitted/happily accepted/eagerly avowed capacity for being with men and for being with women (personal communication, Lewis 2002).

Evan, too, strongly identifies with being bisexual, but also recognizes it as only one aspect of his identity that also includes polyamory:

What I realized was, was not only was I bisexual but I'm a non-monogamous person. And it's taken me quite a bit of time to come to the understanding and thinking that, that's not part of my bisexuality, that's just a part of my sexuality, or who I am, is that I need different partners, and I explore different relationships with different people. And I like that. Um, so, and I had to become okay with that (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Bisexual identity, for Evan, is part of a larger sexual identity requiring multiple partners. Multiple partners, however, are not a corollary of his bisexuality.
Bisexuality may figure less as a stable identity and more as a position in relation to externalities that must constantly be negotiated:

It is something that has to be negotiated individually because there would be too many problems in the larger identity, seeming to other people to imply certain things. I think bisexual identity is one that is especially prone to be constructed by other people or construed by other people in ways that you don't get to participate in as the subject, [laughs] as the bisexual subject, and this is one of the frustrations (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

One aspect of this ‘definition by others’ is identification based on the sex of your partner. That is, others see you with an opposite-sex partner and assume you’re heterosexual or see your same-sex partner and assume you’re homosexual.

Adopting an identity label and, thus, defining oneself according to available categories despite their inaccuracies, may come with some reluctance:

I remember when I was first grappling with the notion of well, my sexuality is not the same as most of the people I work with, and this would have been my early twenties. And discovering that when I did try to come up with a label, first, it wasn’t accurate and didn’t really describe me, most of the ones that were available (personal communication, Darren 2003).

When I prompted Darren to take a stand, as so many are often forced to do, and tell me how he identified or defined himself when people asked him, he replied,

It depends on the context, and if the people are asking me are gay, then I say that I’m gay enough. Other groups don’t tend to ask, or feel much more constrained about asking...sometimes I give a kind of long, a paragraph long answer saying, well you know, my history is X and Y and so, the labels available to me are bisexual, gay, straight and the first one is the most accurate but it’s not the most satisfactory, and there really aren’t that many satisfactory labels that I’ve come across so
far... if I have to come up with a sexual orientation label, bisexual seems to fit about as well as any of the ones that are out there (personal communication, Darren 2003).

Darren’s discomfort of available labels to describe him as either gay or bisexual indicates the difficulty of fixing a label to what has, for him, been a shifting identity for several years. He is, nonetheless, very clear on one label that does not fit:

I never, ever thought of myself as straight. I wasn’t quite sure that what I was thinking of myself, that it was in those terms of sexual identity or orientation, but I was quite sure I wasn’t straight (personal communication, Darren 2003).

A single, uncomplicated definition of bisexuality is not to be found here. Rather, several positions begin to reveal themselves. I argue these positions are negotiated in spaces and at particular times, and that they may be temporary and shifting, depending on the context of the individual, relationship, or event.

**Im/mobile Subjectivites**

I’m out to my parents, I’m out to my friends, I would be more out, it’s just that, I don’t, it’s like not an issue which goes to people, I would tell anybody I think (personal communication, Brian 2002).

Brian represents an atypical position among those with whom I spoke. He may represent a new generation of an open and more savvy position on sexuality. Given Brian’s primary heterosexual relationship and lack of experience with male relationships, he may be expressing a naïve ideal. His frankness and open attitude is related to the alternative family in which he was raised: Brian has two mothers in a lesbian relationship. Choosing a straight, gay, or bisexual identity label, however, is intricately connected to the degree to which individuals remained restricted or closeted in any given context or space. In those instances where the men in my study were isolated, closeted by secrecy, a heterosexual or straight identity was negotiated within most if not all spaces. For those whose bisexuality was less restricted, by a heterosexual marriage for example, in more
spaces a bisexual self-identification was evident. I examine the spaces of work, of friends, and of the family in order to reveal the complexities of choosing a bisexual identity, living a bisexual life, or hiding one’s bisexuality.

**Work Spaces and Colleague Networks**

In the more formal, less personal and likely public spaces (as opposed to private spaces of family friends) in which we work, the meaning of workspaces varies among participants in relation to their sexuality. The workplace can become another place where homophobia prohibits discussion of sexuality:

> I'm in construction, all the people at work, you know construction, totally different, you know what I mean, homophobes [laughs]. No, they don't know [about my sexuality] (personal communication, Paul 2003).

Masculinity and heterosexuality merge in such clarity in the context of this working space that Paul recognizes that and distinguishes it from other spaces where his sexuality might be made known.

Darren’s experience working within a university setting is not entirely different. Although he experiences an inability to disclose his sexual identity, he neither directly implicates homophobia (except for his use of ‘don’t ask don’t tell,’ a phrase borrowed from homophobic American military policy), nor does he necessarily feel this is something that disproportionately affects his daily work experiences:

> I generally treat the work place as don't ask don't tell...with work it's that, somehow [sexuality] isn't necessarily part of a professional life...[so] I don't fully disclose...I have the sense that in some ways I'm not able to fully disclose, but I'm also pretty convinced that that's internal to me...I kind of feel like, you know, they're quite capable of hearing this new bit of information, should I choose to disclose it, in a non-prejudicial way, and still treating me the same as before...I think...we don't disclose as much as, as straight people do, bringing in pictures
of the kids or something, and ya know, how many of us bring our partners to department events, it obviously does affect our behaviour, you can sort of see it in the numbers. But I don't have a sense of feeling that as kind of a weight or blockage or problem in my life. Either I have so completely internalized it that I live with it everyday and it's just part of who I am or there's always the possibility of denial, I suppose [laugh]

(personal communication, Darren 2003).

He admits that on an individual scale some people within his department, or within the university more generally, may be homophobic, and furthermore, may not be against using information about his sexuality against him and his career.

On the other hand, Lewis, who also works in a university setting, is coming out at work. This is an especially difficult task considering his now ex-wife works within the same university:

The one place where my expression of my sexuality is still tentative is at the university, where I work... The process of coming out on campus is very complicated because when I started [work here] I was married to someone who teaches in the same department and what, what I've done is come out to specific people at specific times... I've a good friend in [another department] who came out as gay about the time I was coming out as bisexual and, we met at one of the men's forums and in a sense became good friends. His situation is different from mine, but it's been very valuable to be able to talk to someone else on campus who knows the space (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

Because Lewis is willing and, to some degree, able to reveal aspects of his sexuality at work, he has been able to connect with other individuals at work to share experiences as well as, receive and offer support:

The workplace need not be a confining place where individuals are forced to compartmentalize identity in order to feel accepted. At this stage of his life, Evan actively seeks out a space where he can express his identity:
I wanted to look for a job where I could be myself. I wanted an environment where it was okay to be bisexual. So I started looking any place that had a network, like a queer network of computers, that I could work on...So I started looking at arts organizations as well, cause I'm an artist. And I'm still not finding anything there. Anyway it turns out that I'm applying at this job at the Out on Screen film festival and, wow, it's all queer. And they have computers, so, I might be able to do, and fit my whole self, into this place. So I've been steering away from anything that is just too hetero for me...I play up more the queer part when I'm applying for something that I know that they're going to be open and accepting of me being at least queer (personal communication, Evan 2003).

I visited Evan six months after the first interview in order to ask a few more questions and get an update on how life was going. Although he did not get the job at the film festival, he continues to search for a work environment that won't force him entirely into the closet.

**Friendships**

Nearly all participants had at least one friend who knew about their bisexuality but most have revealed their bisexuality to a small and close network of friends. Paul is careful about whom he reveals his bisexuality to, first judging people's likely acceptance:

I'm not like open about it, you know what I mean, I don't like tell everybody...I got some close friends who know, that's it...A couple, like one of my friends for like forever, he was just like shocked, really, and then he kind of thought about it, and said, oh I can see that, totally, now that I think about it [laughs], Yeah most people, and then another person said, I figured that, a girl that I know said I figured that...none of it's been negative...because I'm pretty, I wouldn't tell anyone who I didn't think, who I was somewhat close with, you know what I mean, and who I had already read and, you know, could tell, they
wouldn’t, they’re not like that, you know what I mean (personal communication, Paul 2003)?

In Mexico, Ramone divided his gay and straight social groups because homophobia was commonplace; only his closest friends knew he was bisexual:

I never try to put my gay friends together with my straight friends, because of the homophobia...I’m bisexual but if my friends ask me I don’t say openly yeah I’m bisexual or yeah I’m straight or I’m gay. I’d just say well, now I’m dating with a girl. And if my gay friends ask me so you are gay or what, I’d say well in this moment I’m dating with a guy and, I never openly say bisexual just my closest friends...My gay friends they know [I’m bisexual], my straight friends...they never ask, I never told them because for them it’s very hard to understand so I just share with my gay friends, yes I’m bisexual or yes I’m dating with girls and boys at the same time...I share with them that I was dating with girls and boys because they are more open, open-minded (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

Ramone finds a more open space within gay social networks than he does with straight friends. He calls this living ‘two lives’ and he moved to Vancouver in hopes of leaving this arrangement behind. Though he has only been in Canada for a few months, he has already found that his bisexuality can be expressed more openly and that he can adopt a bisexual identity in both gay and straight social contexts:

Cause here [in Vancouver]. I feel that like people accept more of this, they understand these things even if they do not agree. They just say, okay you’re bisexual, no problem. And when I say it’s different it’s because the girl that I’m dating, already she asked me.... She asked me, have you ever had another encounters with guys? And I told her the truth, I said yeah (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

This kind of openness was not possible for Ramone in Mexico, but it also doesn’t exactly make things easier either:
I just told [my girlfriend] the truth... yeah I’m dating with more guys... And she says, I cannot stand your behaviour, because it’s not safe for me, and also it’s not safe for you. And I said well, for me it’s okay but if it’s not for you then I can stop this. But if I'm not going to have my freedom at all... because I’m enjoying this situation, I’m feeling under pressure, because you know, in Mexico I have the control... I can date with a girl and if I have sexual encounters [with men outside of that], these girls never know about it. But this girl, she always wants to know what’s going on in my life, she always wants to know if I'm at home, or I'm at friends', or I'm studying or what I am [doing]. She just wants to know where I am and what I am doing. And I don’t like this. Maybe she can't understand and cannot accept my bisexuality but I don't want her to be 100% on me. And this is really hard for me (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

In Mexico, Ramone could control each part of his life, maintaining aspects of his life in separate compartments. He now tries to negotiate bisexuality in all parts of his life, including his current other-sex relationship. This is something he has not had to do before, something he thought he wanted, and something that is proving more difficult than imagined.

Having access to a social network of friends has benefits in terms of offering support and easing isolation regardless of sexual orientation or identity. If one is concealing aspects of their sexuality in different spaces and in different times of life, the benefit of having friends to talk to and be open with could be invaluable. Mike’s long-term partnership with a woman has meant that others identify him as heterosexual and he maintains this identity on a day-to-day basis. Simultaneously, however, he explores his physical and sexual desires and attractions to men and to other women outside of his relationship. Mike communicates the crucial importance of having friends on the inside of your circle of secrets:

Two or three good friends, or who I consider would be good friends [know I'm bisexual]... but I've sort of held back on a lot
of information...I sort of tried to find out where the common ground was and what I could talk to them about...It was important, it made me feel better because, ya know, for the longest time I was fighting it between my girlfriend and I, and nobody else, I felt like I had nobody else to open up to...And it opened up, I was like, wow, that took a whole load off my shoulders. It was just like the whole weight of the world was lifted off, it was just like, ya know what, I felt good telling you. It made me feel better that I know I can come to you now and say what I'm feeling (personal communication, Mike 2003).

The bisexual men I spoke with were as likely to identify as heterosexual as bisexual within social spaces of friendship networks. The ability to be open about sexuality within those spaces very much depends on other aspects of life such as commitment to a partner. As previously mentioned, Chris is completely closeted: his bisexuality a secret even to his wife. Aside from the one male friend with whom he occasionally meets for a sexual encounter no one knows he is bisexual. In another case, however, Mike has begun to make room in his relationship for bisexual desires, and this has facilitated his ability to open his secret world to an expanding circle of friends for support.

**All (or not) in the Family**

In terms of self-identification, the respondents were divided between 'straight' and 'bisexual' in terms of the categories they employ in family spaces. With one exception, self-identification in a variety of social spaces, never includes identifying as 'gay.' The exception comes from Ramone’s experience in terms of a gay identity within family spaces. At the age of twenty-three:

I told my family, they [think] that I am gay, but they still consider the chance that I will get married with a girl and I will have a beautiful family...I told them, the exact words that I used were, 'Mom, Dad, I like guys.' So there is the implicit situation that they believe I'm gay, or homosexual, because, for them it's really difficult to learn about gay culture, so they think I'm just maybe homosexual but I just used the words, "I
like guys.' Because in that particular moment I was also like fighting inside of me with the idea to be dating with girls and boys, because I always feel attracted by both sexes (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

He tells me that in Mexico bisexuality is hidden, locked away in a closet, and kept secret. Allowing his parents to think his is gay is easier for Ramone than having to explain his bisexuality. He also felt that in not using the term 'homosexual' when he came out to his parents, he was avoiding locking himself into an identity he was not prepared to adopt.

Concealing one's bisexuality and identifying as heterosexual are much more common within families than in other social spaces. For some respondents, hiding their bisexuality is a response to silence as the dominant mode of family socialization surrounding sexuality:

I came from a family where none of that [different sexualities] was talked about, spoken about in my family (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Similarly, Darren notes:

With my family members it's um, kind of like a, shared agreement, why-why do you talk about such things if it's not necessary...I mean, the thing about sexuality is, in the context I grew up, you never mention it (personal communication, Darren 2003).

He further explains how this makes him feel when he is home for family visits:

In fact it does make me feel, not like a whole person, when I go back to my mother's house. Which is one of the reasons I never stay there longer than five days. There's a family half-life to be respected with great care (personal communication, Darren 2003).
In some families the need for secrecy goes well beyond the embarrassment of talking about sexuality, and is a necessity given strains of homophobia within the family:

No I haven't told family members [that I'm bisexual]... because of the way I was brought up, you know, the way I was brought up was total anti-homosexual for sure (personal communication, Paul 2003).

For a child growing up in homophobic environments, the boundaries of acceptable sexuality are well established. Later in life these boundaries continue to be maintained and preclude, for many people, the possibility of coming out.

For Chris, spaces of interaction within family are at the fore as he negotiates his sexual desires with men. As previously noted, Chris is married and maintains a heterosexual identity:

My female partner does not know about my male partners I see for sex, nor do I want her to know (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Chris keeps his secret for self-preservation, but also to preserve his family. He cannot imagine creating a space for his bisexuality openly without destroying the family:

Some people might be honest enough to tell their partner, but then again your relationship would most likely be over...So I would have to say that that part of my life would be over and I don't want it to be. And I'd actually end up being nowhere, because I don't want to live with a man and have a relationship with a man...I would have to say that at some time I am going to have to choose, either basically stop the behaviour with-with men...and still not tell my wife and just, let's just concentrate on this marriage. Or be completely honest and tell her, but then as I said before, ya know, who knows what's going to happen. Now, of course, I'm the one that caused it, but that doesn't
mean that a person, you know, a person doesn't look forward to having their life crumble (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Bisexuality is a necessary secret for Chris. Keeping the secret is the only way he can visualize holding his life together as a whole. Without it, he believes that is life would crumble to pieces leaving him in a state of placelessness; not gay and not straight, but not entirely bisexual either (as I will explore in the following section).

Andrew may not share Chris's fear of a life in shambles, but he does indicate another aspect at the heart of disclosing one's bisexuality:

[Although] it depends on the family member...within the family it's more fear of disapproval...I think even if my parents asked me though, I wouldn't lie to them (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

The fear of disapproval or disappointment may be quite strong. Indeed, Andrew told me that the topic of his sexuality had come up several times in conversation, coming close to the point where he could have told his parents, but he managed to avoid doing so by changing topics.

Despite difficulties, a few participants maintain bisexual identities to varying degrees of openness but not without a certain amount of uneasiness within spaces of family. Ironically, Evan, who maintains a relatively open bisexual lifestyle, and who has been active in the bisexual community, does not maintain close contact with his children (though they do know he is bisexual). There is emotional and social distancing of his family facilitated by the physical distance of several thousand kilometres. Although his family is "neither here nor there" (personal communication, Evan 2003) in terms of his sexuality, Evan does fully identify as bisexual within his other-sex relationship:

I think to be bisexual and be in an open relationship, ya know, is not an easy thing, anymore easy than being in the closet. It
just means that you have to manage the expectations of your partner, um, rather than manage what you're hiding (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Like Evan, there is some distance within Lewis’s family but it is more closely related to the physical distance between the West Coast and Ontario:

Oh, I suppose I'm out [as bisexual] to my family but they live in Ontario, all of them, where I grew up, and I don't really push the issue...if I had more contact with them I think things would have developed in this area in different ways (personal communication, Lewis, 2003).

In Mike’s case, working out what bisexuality means for him, is taking place within his current other-sex relationship, where his partner is not entirely encouraging:

[My bisexuality is] still something we have to be careful of, or be more leery of if you will, in the sense of I have to sort of choose and judge and watch words, what I'm doing...I've always had to be sort of be on egg shells around her so to speak, where I am, what I'm doing, what I'm saying, it's been really hard to open up to her as far as talking sexuality (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Several factors affect whether one adopts an open bisexual identity with respect to family interactions but often these spaces are constraining in terms of identity. For those adopting a heterosexual identity in family interactions, aspects of their selves are partitioned off from what can be the most intimate of spaces. Even for those who reveal their bisexuality within the family, the now ‘open secret’ may disrupt and unsettle the family space. One might have to ‘walk on egg shells’ or have social order ‘crumble’ before you. Or, if fortunate, negotiating sexual identity in the family becomes a process of managing your relationships rather than managing your closets.

The social spaces examined thus far have presented us with the intricate reality of fixing and shifting identities across time and space. Many of the men with
whom I spoke with manage multiple identities across space and maintain relatively fixed identities in others. Bisexuality may be better linked to a sense of ‘becoming’ or as a process rather than as identity, while at other times and in different spaces, it gets lost as normative identities prevail.

**Fixing Identities**

I want to examine the way identities may become spatially and temporally fixed, not only through processes of self-identity, but also by others and as a result of intimate or sexual relationships. For Chris, fixing a heterosexual identity is a choice directly connected to his refusal of a gay identity and to his marriage:

> Like anybody does, you go through life and then you meet someone and you are attracted to them. And for me, I got married, and basically I had put that past behind me. I kind of attributed it to, cause I never thought through high school that I was gay, it never crossed my mind. I just thought that it was available to be and my friends by sleepovers and things just kind of lead to another. And it was never, ya know, major sex or anything like that, so that when I met my wife and got married, I basically, I didn't tell her about fooling around in my teenage years, and I just kind of left it aside (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Chris is unable to make room in his life for a bisexual identity given his marriage, and would rather deny his bisexuality for a heterosexual identity:

> I'd rather be just married and with my wife. Because that's my life, that's what I picked, I have a family and I, I, like that life (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Furthermore, fixing identity as gay or straight, is the only way Chris can imagine a space created for bisexuals to have long-term relationships:

> It's more like, you're either one or the other [gay or straight] and how can you have a relationship. And the way I did it the
first fifteen years [of my marriage], you put one aside and you pick. If you want to have a steady relationship with someone, you sacrifice. I think that’s the only way that a bisexual person could have a long term relationship with someone, is to sacrifice, take your pick and choose which side you think you feel more comfortable you’re with, and stay with it (personal communication, Chris 2002).

For most respondents, fixing identity was something external from them, that is, other people make assumptions about their identity based on with whom they are partnered. Lewis notes that others may not identify him as bisexual because,

[they identify you based on] the assumption that you will turn out to be something else, and that behaviour can be read as evidence of you turning out this way [gay or straight depending on who you are with visibly] (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

From Darren’s perspective, bisexuality isn’t an identity but rather a behaviour. Bisexuality is transitory or fleeting, and as an identity is debatable given that, as he states,

I think that the critical thing is that, patterns of bisexuality sometimes resolve themselves in kind of a single-pair relationship, monogamy, and monogamy is always with one gender, or one, physical reality regardless of the identity the person might be. Which means that if you resolve yourself into something that’s fairly longstanding and stable, then it’s probably going to be one or the other (personal communication, Darren 2003).

Darren reveals here societal importance on monogamy. Bisexuals are perceived to be non-monogamous by definitions, but in reality serial monogamy may be a more realistic characterization. How other people fix bisexual men’s identity as either gay or straight may also include those with whom they are having a relationship. Darren is in a long-term homosexual partnership and he describes
how his identity gets fixed as gay, not simply by the community surrounding their partnership, but in fact because of his partner:

I'm in a long-term relationship with a man now, if I constantly and regularly refer to myself as bisexual in his presence, he would be threatened. It's not to say that he would have to be or something, but, but, realistically, I would fear that he might be and so I wouldn't, I wouldn't do that to him. As long as I am around him, I feel it's important for his sake that I should be as, that I should be gay enough, as far as he is concerned (personal communication, Darren 2003).

These examples indicate that identity most often gets fixed by and through others but that it might also be a conscious choice that bisexual men make as they manage relationships and desires. As bisexual men go through life, however, identity can become cumbersome if fixed across time and space, and thus, they manage multiple, and perhaps, shifting identities.

**Shifting Identities**

I argue that bisexual identity is not fixed or stable and that in different spaces and at different times, bisexual men develop and maintain various identities. Being bisexual may have less to do with deciding on identity and more to do with a process of managing these identities. I begin by examining how bisexual men shift back and forth or experience identities with more ambiguity. I then illustrate the ways that bisexuality is a process, in a sense, bisexuality as 'becoming.'

That bisexual men have a difficulty expressing their identity to the point that adopting a gay or straight one is easier than what might be one's actual lived reality is illustrative of the power of binary thinking. Participants noted that sexuality is viewed as "a pretty black and white issue" (personal communication, Andrew 2002) or that sexual identity is "either gay or straight ...[that] there's no sort of in-between...there's no grey area...or sitting on the fence" (personal communication, Mike 2003). As Evan states:
My place in society [as a bisexual] is still not there. I mean I don't have a place per se. I've kind of gone full circle from living in two divergent groups [gay and straight], in the closet...[to being]...out of the closet and I have a choice of...bringing them together and living as myself. But I think, it's too much energy. It takes too much from me to do that. So I've chosen instead, to allow them to exist as separate worlds, rather than try to make them one world, or, I realize that I would have to explain myself too much. So, in effect, I'm worn out, before I could live in that world. There's just too much to have to explain. So, it's way more easier to, um, now, that I'm okay with who I am, because that's the important thing, I mean, to be able to go ahead with my life as, okay when I'm in this community I'll act this way, and do this, and that's what they expect, and...it may still come out that I'm bisexual, but I don't go out of my way...just because I don't want to have to explain it all (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Evan's situation is ironically interesting when we juxtapose Ramone's perspective:

[In Mexico], if I'm dating with guys and girls at the same time or different periods that means I'm bisexual more than gay or straight. I'm bisexual but I behave very straight with girls all the time or my life in that particular moment [when I was dating a girl] was only straight and then when I have contact with gay community in Mexico, when I started going out to dance clubs, gay dance clubs and I meet [gay] friends then I have like, in Mexico, we say, we have two lives. But it was just my life, because I share my time with straight people and gay people. But I put [my gay life and my straight life] apart all the time, because it's very difficult to put them together (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

Because identity is often determined by others based on the gender status of one's partner, bisexual men who engage in sequential relationships with men and women, that is, at different times, will participate in and access different
communities and different spaces, given the gender status of their partner. As Evan describes:

I mean, I hear this: I'm going out with guys now, so I'm really living in the gay lifestyle, so I'm gay. So that sort of flinking back and forth between men and women, which [determines or helps] you find the society that you can live in... They'll go and date a man for a while, and well, ya know, I'm living a queer life here... And then, maybe it isn't until sometime down the road that you go, I'm missing something... or I'm missing a female lover. And then, I just feel like I'm not totally satisfied so, then, I may do an about face. And I see that all the time. And I think what's the important thing, is that, who you are inside so affects who, where you work and play (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Brian indicates another way that identity can shift for bisexual men. His identity shifts are subtler but still depend on the gender of his partners:

In fact only my male partner was aware of the fact of even having a formal girlfriend, whereas my girlfriends were only aware of me having [male] friends (personal communication, Brian 2002).

The shift in identity is from monogamous bisexual to his girlfriend to non-monogamous bisexual to his male partners. In this case, bisexuality finds a space for expression only outside of monogamy and at the cost of leading a compartmentalized life. Monogamy is a rarely questioned norm imbricated with heteronormativity. But when the issue is coupled with bisexuality, its importance is quickly revealed. Evidently Brian's heterosexual relationship does not allow space for the expression of bisexuality and so he engages in same-sex encounters secretly. Within his same-sex encounters, however, there is an acknowledgement of his heterosexual life. The assumption of monogamy within heterosexual relationships and the assumption of non-monogamy of bisexuality both enable and constrain Brian as he shifts back and forth between genders.
Although Chris does not see his bisexuality as an identity, he admits that it is a separate part of him, and though he maintains a fixed heterosexual identity he does experience bisexuality as a shifting:

I probably feel majority heterosexual, [my] beliefs, life, people that you hang around with, the things that you do. And then it's like, crossing over to the other side for, ya know, a bit of, taboo excitement, I suppose you could say, and then going back. That's what I would say is my experience. I'm not like on the other side going, boy I wish I could just get rid of my wife and stay with you for the rest of my life, or, it's not there (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Gender and sexuality have been constructed through a binary system embedded in our language and social frameworks. For Chris, therefore, bisexuality is experienced as a shifting back and forth because he views sexuality as black and white; that sexuality is represented only by gay and straight. A lack of bisexual visibility lends to this, especially considering Chris has no social support from family or friends because his sexuality remains a secret.

The experience of shifting identities based on the gender status of one's current partner and the development of identifying as bisexual is well described by Darren's recollection of his twenties:

[My] first gay experience was twenty or twenty-one. Anyway, at that point I then assumed I was gay for three years. Falling in love with a women, certainly interrupted that, then I say well okay, that's the bisexual part of it, swinging back to the other side for three-four years, maybe til twenty-eight, twenty-nine. I met Lisa when I was, 1990, so that would have been twenty-nine. But it was during that relationship that, that I became convinced that although I had swung back on some side of the pendulum, that both sides were part of me. Afterwards I was pretty sure that whatever labels I might adopt for consumption of my audience, that I was sure my own reality was a little more complicated. So the twenties were very definitely the kind of
maturity, sorting out and I would say that included at least
three years when I was just gay and at least two years when I
was more straight than gay (personal communication, Darren
2003).

Paul also experiences a shifting back and forth from identifying as straight to
consideration of a gay identity, but more recently is moving towards accepting
bisexuality:

> When I was younger...when I met people in gay bars...I didn't
even really identify myself as bisexual...I just kind of said, well
when I drink and party I like to have sex with men. You know
what I mean? I didn't really identify myself as that, but as I
got older and older, I started thinking well maybe I'm
gay...[coming to accept bisexuality though]...wasn't that easy at
all, it's been a total process, really... I love women too much to
say that I'm gay. I'm attracted to women...sometimes I'm more
attracted to women, it goes back and forth for me. So, over
the last few years I've kind of said I'm bi, you know? Before I
didn't really think of it in those terms either...and I kind of just
put it aside, you know what I mean? I think it's still evolving for
me...Cause when I was drinking and using drugs, I was not really
in touch with myself...so the last four or five years, I've really
been more clear, whereas before it was just a big sex thing, and
I would blow it off as just a sex thing, even though deep down
inside I think I knew there was way more to it (personal
communication, Paul 2003).

Evident in Paul's statement is the process of rethinking his sexual identity from
just sex-with-men as experimental or as behaviour separate from identity to
considering his desires as his identity. Others also initially felt that they were
"experimenting" (personal communication, Evan 2003), in an adolescent phase
(personal communication, Chris 2003), or as Mike put it a "doing [their] teenage
thing" (personal communication, Mike 2003). At some point, all of these men
realized that their experiences amounted to more than a temporary phase and
are all now in different stages of managing their desires.
I have illustrated the ways in which identities can be both fixed and shifting in different spaces and at different times. Often these shifts are facilitated by gender status of partners forcing bisexual men to oscillate between identities. Shifts in identities can also be understood at a greater temporal scale, or perhaps as a process of life stage. Often men have denied bisexual identity believing it to be an immature phase of life that would subside. As this may be the case for some young men, I spoke with those who are in varying stages of negotiating and managing desires in a number of contexts.

**Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter has been to introduce bisexualities as positioned by and through definitions, identifications, and expressions as they relate to other people, spaces, and heteronormativity. The variety of definitions presented by participants in terms of how their own bisexuality on a day-to-day basis supports the 'definitional incoherency' of bisexuality as argued by Eadie (1993). There was no single notion of what bisexuality means or whom it should or should not include under its guise. Importantly, I have indicated the ways that defining bisexuality is as much an internal definitional problem as it is an external one. That is, participants indicated their specific ways of thinking and being bisexual but also indicated that they are often defined from outside as well. This external definitional incoherency is marked by the way that others define bisexual men given their intimate partnerships with either gender and which fix their identities as either gay or straight. Furthermore, external definitions can come from one’s own partner or partners where there may be pressure to accept or at least identify as either gay or straight for the sake of their partners own identity.

The participants in this study indicate that identity is more likely to be something that shifts across time and space rather than something that is experienced as more fluid or ambiguous. In some cases, fixing identity is a response to a code of silence that often surrounds issues of sexuality or a more salient threat induced by homophobia. As respondents move between workspaces, social
friendship networks, and spaces linked to the family they are likely to identify in different ways. These shifts in identity can largely be attributed to normative expectations of heterosexuality and the imposition of monogamy. Bisexuality and non-monogamy stereotypically go hand in hand, however, there is some misguided logic here. Can bisexuals be sexually satisfied with one partner of one gender? Of course: Darren is quite fulfilled in his current same-sex relationship and characterizes his sexuality over time as one that is serially monogamous. That is, he remains sexually faithful to a partner at any given time. For Brian, bisexuality becomes a contested ground between desire for monogamy with his wife and his sexual desires satisfied though non-monogamy and his relations with men. Considering, however, that identification by others is most often based on the gender status of partners, it is only when bisexuals express multiple desires that the issue of monogamy may arise. While most in this study would certainly admit their status as non-monogamous, I hasten to add that the negative value attached to non-monogamy is one that does not stem from bisexuality per se but rather from the institution of marriage and its exclusive rights within the framework of heteronormativity. So while, heteronormativity regulates desires qualitatively, normalizing desire for the opposite sex only and monogamy regulates desire quantitatively, limiting it to one partner at any given time, the two intersect in ways that shape bisexual men’s experience and use of space. By way of identity politics, gay and lesbians construct identities in opposition to heteronormative subjects but often aspire inclusion based on claims that they are just like straight people when it comes to partnerships. Hence, an embittered struggle for and debate over gay marriages has ensued. Within such a ‘grid of intelligibility’ individuals falling under the ‘queer’ umbrella find themselves ascribing to normative monogamy (a pressure owing some debt to the spread of HIV/AIDS). Thus, even within communities of alternative sexualities there remains a thread of monogamous expectations that can affect the geographies of bisexual men. In some cases this means being further marginalized, socially and spatially, while in others, such as is the case for Evan, non-monogamy becomes the basis for further developing identity.
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDING EACH OTHER, FINDING OURSELVES

Introduction

In this chapter I move beyond the experience of individual bisexual identifications to a preliminary mapping of bisexual geographies. I trace how bisexual men find each other and themselves among a variety of spaces and communities. First, I highlight the different strategies that bisexual men consider and act upon when meeting men and women for sexual encounters and relationships. Second, I analyze specific material places these men identify throughout the city. This includes whether men's homes are places where their sexuality is hidden or fostered. I also address the extent to which cyber-spaces were accessed to connect with others. Finally, I examine respondents' experiences with heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual communities.

Making Connections

In what follows, I document the ways bisexual men locate each other and locate others for encounters or relationships. More specifically, I examine the differences bisexual men experience in meeting men versus women. Recall that Darren believes patterns of bisexuality are resolved through monogamous relationships. That is, once tied to a particular gender in a serious relationship, one's bisexuality is likely hidden. Thus, despite his self-declaration, Brian's girlfriend denies his bisexuality:
After having known me for several months...[my girlfriend] didn’t believe it was an accurate representation of myself because I was with her and because a lot of my attraction went toward females. She believed that I, in fact, was not bisexual, that my experiences in the past, which she was aware of, were simply experimental (personal communication, Brian 2002).

Bisexuality is also rendered invisible in relation to dominant binary ways of thinking. Mike further explains the placelessness of bisexuality in an either/or world:

> It’s hard to meet people because [in our society] you’re either gay or straight, and I guess people like us, like for myself, I’m having a hard time meeting people because you don’t know who is, it’s hard to find out who is bi, or who has an interest or places to meet (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Either/or thinking, of course, does not make bisexuality non-existent, but it does force bisexuality into a closet, as Ramone observes:

> I mean when people talk about homosexuality they include bisexuals. They never distinguish, okay this part [of the population] is homosexual, and this part is bisexual. No they say all these people are homosexual...So, I feel like if I want to meet bisexual friends, it’s really difficult because not all of them are going to share, yes, I’m bisexual. They will say I’m straight or I’m gay, even if these straight guys are bisexual... sometimes people can’t face there is bisexuality in the world (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

Ramone indicates that people often consider bisexuals as homosexual based upon their same-sex behaviour or that bisexuals can be hidden under a cloak of heterosexuality, which makes finding other bisexuals very difficult. Garret also notes that there is a negative stigma attached to bisexuality that aids in constructing the closet in which bisexual men hide:
Although I know there are hundreds of other bisexual men - it’s not openly admitted or acknowledged...I’ve never been able to find anyone that really understood where I was coming from...From my experience, all bisexual men are only bisexual in a discrete behind-the-scenes manner-not willing to talk or socialize with someone openly bisexual as it may reflect on them (personal communication, Garret 2002).

Garret’s comments reflect the powerful constraining force of the closet. He notes that even though he knows other men like him exist he also believes that the stigma attached to bisexual men may outweigh any benefits resulting from forming social networks.

Bisexual men connect with other men and women for relationships and for more discreet sexual encounters despite difficulties involved in identifying who is or isn’t bisexual. There is, however, a quantitative and qualitative difference in respondents’ experience of meeting women as compared to meeting men. The men I spoke with make it very clear: When looking for sex, men are easier to meet. Evan states, “I’ve even wondered sometimes if, questioned if, women are unavailable, men are always available” (personal communication, Evan 2003). He is much more savvy then other participants when it comes to knowledge of the avenues within the city where men can be found for the sole purposes of sex. Andrew elaborates further:

It’s so easy, meeting men; it’s like, the easiest thing (laugh).... Man, it’s just like, you want to have sex with a guy, so you just, go on the internet (laugh), and there’s tons of, of sites, where, it’s just for that really, it’s just for that purpose, to have sex with men (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Andrew belongs to a younger generation where the advent of the Internet lends to easy facilitation of connections with other men for sex. When I asked Andrew to compare that experience with meeting women he responds:
I guess the difference would be, they're just not planned (laugh)... They're not planned, they just happen, ya know, just everyday life kind of things, ya know, you go to parties, you go to conferences, um, and your classes, you just come across, you come across girls (laugh) and, it is more, I guess, it's still a lot more normal to be heterosexual, and it's just, also everyday normal things are the ones that just allow me to connect with girls (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

First, Andrew explains that meeting women is not something that requires planning because opportunities for meeting women in 'everyday life' are ubiquitous. That is, because social relations between men and women are 'everyday' normal activities, they are allowed to 'just happen.' Second, he implicates the heteronormativity of this landscape of desire. Andrew is fully aware that his connections with women and his ability to meet women are woven into the fabric of a dominantly heterosexual society. Echoing Andrew's observation on the normative and ubiquitous spaces for meeting women, Darren notes, "it's different [than meeting men] in the sense that there are lots and lots of straight situations which are set up [for meeting women] (personal communication, Darren 2003).

Opportunities for meeting women are not only quantitatively different from those for meeting men but are also quite different in qualitative terms. Paul tells me that it is easier to meet men for sex but that meeting women for the same reason is more difficult and requires more time and energy from him:

When I used to go to bars men [were easier to meet] for sure. It was easy to get, go out and meet a guy... I used to go, I'd go to gay bars... if I wanted to go dancing I'd go to the Odyssey and if I just wanted to get sex I'd go to Numbers. With women, it's like, I find meeting women in bars... you had to put on this fuckin' act. I'd have to almost, I don't know, like schmooze them and all that kind of crap, and there wasn't so much of that with men. I've found... in the last while... I look for women in a different way, you know, sure the sex is there but I'm kind of
looking for more than just like a quick fuck... and so I don't go to the bars anymore (personal communication, Paul 2003).

Paul suggests that there is a qualitative difference between experiences with men and women. Moreover, he indicates that these differences are not static but have changed over time as his needs have changed.

Ramone also feels that meeting men for sex is easier and requires much less effort and time when compared to meeting women:

*Guys are really easier. Because [laughs] let's say that I'm on the beach and I start talking with a guy. If I have the feeling that he's different, I feel he likes guys also, I do a kind of flirting game, and if he follows I know immediately I have open chance to have sex with him...*

*JM: And that's not the same at the beach with a woman?*

*It's not. I will have sex but maybe after one week, not in the same day or two days later...*

*JM: There's more time invested?*

*In girls, yeah. I don't know. But it's easier (personal communication, Ramone 2003).*

Importantly, Ramone makes clear that sex with men can occur within a short time frame making it easier to make male connections. More time is invested in developing relations with a woman to the point where sex is a possibility.

Lewis explains that meeting and having sex with men is much less complicated than with women. Spaces for meeting women are regulated by structures of heteronormativity and restrict his ability to meet women who are comfortable with his bisexuality. After leading much of his life as heterosexual, Lewis recently became divorced and is now exploring available sites in his city for socializing,
for information and rapport, for sexual encounters, and for what he terms 'sexual-socializing':

I don't know how typical this is, but I like the framework of group activities for what I call sexual socializing - socializing where my sexuality can be open without being an issue. It is especially nice to be able to participate in a bi-group because women are there and because the idea of meeting women in conventionally straight contexts just does not appeal...they're heteronormative, and what I don't really want is to become involved in a relationship with a woman who doesn't know that I'm bisexual, or doesn't know of my involvement with men. That would just be very problematic...I know spaces to go to where I can meet men. I know where it's possible to meet men cruising on the street. Women? It's somewhat different...I don't know, but I just don't see all that many spaces, as spaces in which to meet women, maybe that's a way of putting it (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

If bisexuality is to be an integrated and open aspect of one's life, then the constraining pressures of heteronormativity places limits on one's ability to meet and engage with women sexually and seek out spaces in which he can meet men.

Not only are there differences in meeting women and men, there are differences in terms of whether or not a same-sex relationship is as open as an other-sex relationship. Andrew reflects on his own experiences:

With guys, I mean, I guess the relationship wouldn't be so public, so I guess another degree of confidentiality. Yeah, because even when I am going out with guys, it's not like, everyone knows. I mean, certain people know, but not everyone knows...[But when dating a girl] pretty much everyone knows...[because] heterosexuality is way more inclusive than homosexuality. Ya know what I mean. It's because in a sense your family is involved; everyone's involved. Everyone is always asking you. So, yeah, it's so easy, it takes so little effort, you
can walk around holding hands, display in public, public displays of affection, whereas, with guys unless you're on Davie Street really (laugh) (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Andrew's experience in relationships differs depending on the gender status of his partner at any given time. He shares an anecdote with me illustrating the heteronormative landscape outside of typically identifiable gay areas, like that of Davie Street in Vancouver:

The other day I was in the burbs, I was in New West with my ex-boyfriend, and I'm pretty, I really don't care about what people think, for the most part, and I kissed him, in the car... and I got some dude, some bus driver fucking honk at me. And started yelling shit at me (laugh). I thought it was so funny, fuck man, that it's so justified that, ya know, [gay people] feel they have to form a ghetto in the West End (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Despite his own reluctance to include himself in Vancouver's gay communities, Andrew recognizes that expressions of his sexuality disrupts heteronormative space and that hostility toward alternate sexualities continues to justify the existence of minority communities and neighbourhoods based on sexuality.

When the goal is sex, participants note that meeting men is far easier than meeting women. Meeting men may be a planned activity, seeking out sexual partners through the Internet or personal ads, or it may be as casual as meeting someone on the street (although this is more likely to occur in a gay identified neighbourhood). There are more places to meet women; however, they may be more tacitly ruled by heteronormativity to the extent that bisexual men would need to keep their sexuality a secret. What spaces are accessed to meet men? How do they differ from those used to meet women? Are these places 'bisexual'? What are the imagined or ideal spaces of bisexual men? How does reality compare? I turn to these questions and more in the next section.
Bisexual Spaces: Mapping Desires

Thus far, I have illustrated men's experiences as they try to find each other for sex or friendship and support. I have also shown that men may need to shift the way they identify to others as they relocate in different social spaces. A man who has secret relationships with men and women outside of a primary relationship may have a more difficult time meeting partners for sex. Where does this negotiation for sex begin and end? Participants used a variety of locations to meet men; spaces that would allow for discretion and anonymity or that could be accessed with ease. Many who either hide their sexuality because of a current relationship or a homophobic society find that 'virtual spaces,' including the Internet, telepersonal ads in newspapers, and phone chat lines, were the best way to meet others. Those who may be out of the closet, at least within their intimate relationships, are more likely to visit some of the better known sites for men who have sex with other men: bathhouses, porn theatres, and gay bars. For some there is a never-crossed boundary at the front door keeping their bisexuality separate from the heterosexuality of the home. I follow an interesting discussion surrounding sexuality and the private sphere of the home. For others, the ultimate goal is to integrate multiple lives and a full expression of bisexuality within the space of the home. I explore these issues by examining participant’s experiences and perceptions of these sites to understand their importance.

Sex in the City

With nearly two million people, the Greater Vancouver Regional District is a large urban centre on Canada's West Coast with a sizable gay and lesbian population with established communities (See Brown 1995a; Bouthillette 1997; Rothenberg 1995). This includes two key areas in the city typically associated with gays and lesbians, as well as, a number of gay bars, commercial businesses, and bathhouses. In addition, there are a number of 'peep show' movie booths and adult movie theatres. Several people I spoke with have had at least one experience, and sometimes regular experiences with some or all of these sites in order to meet and have sex with other men. In my discussions with Lewis, who
resides in Victoria, many of these same locations came up as sites in which connections with other men were important. It is important to note the metrocentrism of this study (Woodhead 1995). Although an initial attempt was made to interview outside of the urban area, a lack of response resulted in a study focusing on experiences of bisexual men in an urban setting. Thus, this study is biased toward the experiences of urban bisexual men and recognizes that those in smaller centres may not have similar options available for meeting men. Mike comes from a smaller centre in British Columbia and offers some insight into the availability of sites in which his desires can be explored:

[My bisexuality] began more as a curiosity, through magazines and videos and just sort of being in Vancouver, being in a big city. Coming from a small town, all these doors open up, it's like, wow, there's all this information here, ya know...I mean I wouldn't even know where to begin. It's just all these curiosities came up and it's like, where can I, or what can I do to find myself in such a big city where all these doors open (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Quite a different geography would be exposed when examining the experiences of bisexual men in smaller cities and towns as they seek out ways to express their bisexuality. (For an overview of rural sexual geographies see Bell 1995; Bell 2000; Kramer 1995; Valentine 1995; Weston 1998).

**Gay Bars**

For heterosexually identified bisexuals, that is, those who might be married or closeted, going to a gay bar may put that identity at risk. Given stereotypes of gay bars as out-of-control parties with back-room sex, as often portrayed in popular culture, they may also be seen as places where unwanted sexual advances, aggressive sex, and unsafe sex may occur:

Especially with same-sex relationships, there's a danger of sexual diseases, even with opposite sex, you don't know who the person's slept with or what not. And so, ya know, just, for my
own safety, I'm not going to be out there gallivanting at the bars trying to pick up someone, that ya know, has had sex with six different people in six nights or something...Because your odds are pretty great that you're going to get something (personal communication, Chris 2002).

His view is based on stereotypes because Chris has never been to a gay bar. For Lewis, the gay bar is much more than a place to meet men for sex:

When you go into a gay bar, there is strangeness and familiarity. And, you realize this isn't so different as all that and then other times you think, wait a minute this is different... And of course, going to a bar, you meet people, and go home with somebody or whatever, and, just, this fuels the process of gaining experience, helps you feel, or gives some substance to an identity, or to a different way of living your life (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

The bar is a place to meet people, both socially and sexually, but it also has importance in establishing a pattern of experiences, which, Lewis states, gives shape and form to one's identity as bisexual. The particular bar of which he speaks does include bisexuals under their banner, but he notes that it primarily caters to gay men and that this may have an effect on how bisexual men experience the bar:

I think the bar is very important to the social space [of bisexual men], especially in the context where there are not a lot of other social spaces. It's more difficult for bi-men then for gay men, because it's obviously there for gay men and everything is oriented toward gay men, that is, the events, the events are very clear. What's inclusive about [the gay bar] is simply the statement of inclusion of bisexual in the statement of who the bar is for. I wouldn't say that there's been any event that I'd say particularly appeals to bisexuals. Or sought out, or addressed the bisexual part of the audience (personal communication, Lewis 2003).
Lewis suggests that this omission is linked to general perceptions people have of bisexual men. More specifically, bisexual men use the space "surreptitiously, that is, they go there to meet people without identifying with or maybe even broadly supporting the purposes for which the bar is there" (personal communication, Lewis 2003). Presumably, gay communities assume that bisexual men use the bar, and want to use the bar, secretly and that there is no need for events to be catered to bisexuals. The perception may be that bisexual men in gay bars are looking for other men for sex but not necessarily for an affirmation of their bisexuality or their identity.

**Adult Theatres and Peep-Shows**

There are sites in Vancouver that offer possibilities for meeting men for sex that are not as established and well-known as gay bars. Mike describes encounters at adult movie theatres and peep-booths at local arcades. What is interesting about these locations is that what they mean to Mike has changed over time. The first time he went to a theatre he was shocked:

I went to a movie theatre and it was like more of a curiosity, to see what these movie theatres were about...[I] found that, at the seats, there's a lot of sexual activity between men going on...it kind of struck me as gross at the time, and it was just like, oh, this goes on here?! But it was like, this doesn't interest me in the least. I just want to come and see a movie (personal communication, Mike 2003).

He further describes adult theatres in Vancouver:

The movie theatres are pretty interesting, especially the Venus. There are three movie theatres in Vancouver but I find this one is more interesting than the other two... [At] Venus they have a balcony and a lower floor. There’s all sorts of stuff going on in the balcony upstairs...The few times I've gone, I've seen maybe one [male/female] couple, maybe two at the most, otherwise it’s mainly men....I’ve seen guys wandering around
almost practically head to toe nude (personal communication, Mike 2003).

He is no longer shocked at the sexual activity in theatres and continues to go from time to time. I asked him to tell me why he decides to go to a theatre, that is, what his expectation or goal is in going there:

It usually starts off at home as, you know, watching a video or fantasizing and I have all these ideas running through my head...and then I sort of go, well maybe I will go, and try here, like a movie theatre or maybe I'll try a peep...but usually I end up, it's more of a let down, like I build myself up and let myself down, because it's totally not what I expected or what I fantasized before going

JM: So what's the let down?

That it didn't really turn out today, and I usually go home and I'm frustrated and then I guess this other feeling that maybe I shouldn't have been there anyways, like maybe it was just the wrong idea (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Mike admits that the reality of meeting men in theatres never matches his expectations, which he admits is not to have sex with men but to find someone with similar interests that could become a friend. The disappointment he feels afterwards is not because he didn't have sex, but because men he meets in theatres and peep booths are not interested in anything more than just sex:

I mean I can go back and visit some of these, you know, like these porn booths, but...I'm starting to realize that they're just outlets, you go in, you get a hard on, you get aroused or whatever, you drop your drawers and whether you get off or not, it doesn't answer the questions, it doesn't. You don't have any communication. It's just you do that, you get off, and way you go (personal communication, Mike 2003).
Mike looks for friendship at these sites illustrating a sense of isolation and a lack of social spaces in which to meet other bisexual men for something beyond sex.

**Bathhouse and Saunas**

Bathhouses and steam rooms or saunas offer another location where bisexual men may find other men for sex. For some participants, the sauna was the first space where they acted upon their bisexuality:

That's the way it started for years. I lived in a lot of apartment buildings in Ottawa, and...I would look for an apartment with a sauna in it, cause I realized very quickly that that's where gay men hung out. I didn't have to go to a gay bar; I could just go to my sauna. In fact, that became quite commonplace for me, was that I come home, my girlfriend would come over, we'd have dinner. She'd sit down and do some work, or watch TV or whatever. I'd go out and have a sauna, get a blowjob, come downstairs and make love with her (personal communication, Evan 2003).

This was a positive experience for Evan that affected the development of his bisexual identity. He frequents the bathhouses in Vancouver when he wants one-on-one sex with guys and will even bring other partners, male and female, with him for sexual encounters. One bathhouse he frequents in Vancouver is a 'co-ed' one, though mostly men attend:

I've been going there for years...it's an old bath, and it goes back quite a ways... they had it open more towards the European guy who's going to go and get his bath or sauna or whatever. The downstairs they call a public bath. 'And so, you have a public bath and, so men and women go down there?' 'No, mostly men, no just men.' 'Okay, so is it straight or is it gay?' 'Well, it's a public bath, sir.' So they wouldn't say what it was, they would just say it's a public bath. And, they won't advertise it any differently than that...you can take a party [upstairs] if you wanted to...the upstairs is working gals and their clients...and, I've been there with girlfriends and have known other people
who take their ladies there. And there's a certain thrill on the
vicariousness of hearing other people having sex (personal
communication, Evan 2003).

Mike's experience with the same bathhouse is less positive. Someone he met on
the chat line and later at a strip bar escorted him, but he had no idea that this
particular steam house included sexual activity:

I just thought it was just like a steam bath house, and I was
totally wrong...It wasn't a steam house at all... you were given a
towel... you changed in the locker bank and then you go into the
steam rooms...And there was like all sorts of sexual activity
with men going on around me in the steam room.... After a few
months went by, I sort of looked back at that, would I go back
there? Maybe. Did I enjoy it (personal communication, Mike
2003)?

Mike had a much more positive experience at a gay bathhouse in Vancouver.
He explained to me what his impressions of a gay bathhouse were before he
went to one, and how that impression greatly changed afterward:

I had heard things....It's more of a risky environment...a lot of
disease, spreading out, spreading around, AIDS and HIV being
present in that time...[this was in the] early 90's. A lot of ya
know, homosexual activity is going on, ya know, anal sex, and no
condoms being used...It wasn't actually like that at all....The
experience made me actually ask myself or question myself on
whether I had an interest in men or an interest in being
intimate or being in a relationship with another man or men for
that matter (personal communication, Mike 2003).

He further describes his experience once inside the bathhouse:

I was sort of welcomed at the door where you had to pay, and
got a couple of towels, and they said, 'do you want a locker, do
you want a room?'...And the way I see it is, as a business man,
you have all these business masks you've got to wear, and it just
felt like when you go in there and you’re changed and you’re just in your towel, it’s just, and nobody’s really hitting on you, you’re just, you can be yourself. And it was just, like all those masks sort of came off and I can be my self. I don’t have to be you know, Christian, I don’t have to be a business man, I don’t have to be have my home business...But I don’t know, I just felt like I could be myself. I felt like I was accepted there and I didn’t have to be Joe Blow in a business suit, in a three-piece suit in a downtown office (personal communication, Mike 2003).

He also tells me that most of his visits to this bathhouse are preceded by stress or an argument at home and that his intentions in going were not to have sex but to find someone with whom to socialize with and with whom he might ‘strike up’ a relationship. When this doesn’t materialize for him at the bathhouse he feels, “embarrassed and ashamed” and that she should have found a better way to escape from his stress (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Ramone indicates that past experiences play an important role in determining the kinds of places he uses to meet men and provides another perspective on meeting men at ‘the baths’. When he was younger and still living in Mexico, his experience of the baths was one of sexual aggression and unwanted advances, where older men would take advantage of his youth (personal communication, Ramone 2003). He has other reasons why he avoids the baths, even now that he is older and living in Vancouver:

I stay away from the bathhouses because I don’t feel comfortable with that situation because it reminds me when I was really young and people try to seduce me...And also because I don’t know who I’m going to be with. I don’t know his past, I don’t know his history, I don’t know if he’s HIV positive, I don’t know if he’s promiscuous, I don’t know if he’s a homo killer or bi-killer you know, so I prefer safe places...But in the case of the bathhouses I don’t like them at all (personal communication, Ramone 2003).
Each of these men interprets their experiences of the bathhouse in different ways that have had an impact on whether they continue to use that space to meet men. Evan’s experience has been positive because he intentionally organizes his life, including his ‘home space,’ in a way that integrated his desires, while Mike has had mixed experiences but typically feels ashamed of them. Lastly, Ramone cites very negative experiences in his youth, as well as, the health dangers of casual sex that, for him, render the bathhouse off limits.

*Park Strolls and Public Sex*

I want to return to my earlier comment that none of the men in the study mentioned engaging in casual, anonymous sex in public spaces, such as parks. Andrew mentioned that when he meets men from chat rooms on the Internet, they sometimes drive around and have sex parked in the car. He is adamant, however, about not having sex in public spaces such as parks:

> Park sex? Um, fuck no. I mean (laugh) I wouldn’t stoop to that level, if I ever did have park sex, it would be not on a first time basis, it would be with a partner ...because he thought it was exciting or something [otherwise] I wouldn’t do it because I feel there’s something degrading about it (laugh), it feels a bit degrading. Um, if somebody’s not willing enough to ya know, to take you to a decent, comfortable place, to have sex with you, I mean, then there’s just, I dunno, I’m not that desperate (laugh)...I think it’s just a lack of respect (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Lewis, who has had casual sex in a park, makes it clear that he doesn’t cruise the park, rather this was with someone he had met casually in the downtown bars with whom he went to the park to have sex (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

Paul, too, has had anonymous sex in the park, but he chalks it up to being a drunken fluke and definitely not something that he is interested in doing again:
I actually have ended up in Stanley Park though before by fluke met someone, that’s when I was drinking too. I don’t know if it was by fluke or not, I can’t remember [laughs]...I didn’t really know where to go. My friends lived down in the West End and I got separated from them. We were at a club and I got separated and so I was going back there and they live right near Stanley Park, you know, by...[Lost Lagoon], and I walked down the grass onto the trail down there and ran into someone [laughs]...We had sex, right there on the fucking trail [laughs] it’s crazy...He just said what are you into, and the next thing you know we were doing it [laughs]. I can’t remember exactly what was said as I said, I was drunk, you know what I mean, but I thought that was kind of crazy, man, it was nuts...I wouldn’t do that again. I think I would stay away from public places though, just for safety reasons, you know in the middle of the park, you know what I mean, it’s crazy, on the trail...I mean all you had to do is walk down and you’re there, you know what I mean. It’s like right along the main trail that goes around (personal communication, Paul 2003).

No one else had mentioned having experiences in parks, and when asked to comment on why, the reasons included safety from unprotected sex with strangers, as well as from gay bashers. It is possible that in a city the size of Vancouver there are enough outlets available for meeting men that involve less risk for the men I spoke with and thus park sex is discounted. In addition, the November 2001 murder of Aaron Webster near a Stanley Park trail frequented by men seeking anonymous sex with other men may have renewed safety issues and heightened awareness surrounding the dangers of public sex. Webster frequented the known sex stroll and was found bleeding to death steps from his car after a severe beating involving more than one individual (Keating 2003). In July 2003, one man pled guilty. In October 2003, nearly two years after his death, three more charges were laid in the murder of Aaron Webster.
Surfing For Sex

Bisexual men cite a variety of reasons for using 'virtual spaces' to connect with other men who may be bisexual. I consider 'virtual spaces' here to include not only the Internet, but also other locations where face-to-face interaction comes after initial 'virtual' conversations. This includes Internet chat rooms and message groups as well as telepersonal ads in newspapers, and telephone chat lines (Dodge & Kitchin 2001). This section is less concerned with the development of on-line bisexual communities and more with the use of the Internet for connecting less formally with men for sex and friendships. Very few respondents note the use of Internet for developing a sense of community and so I simply try to re-present the ways in which they do use the Internet. The Internet and newspaper personals may provide the most anonymous route but telephone systems add a level of distinction in that callers are able to hear the voices of others, which may be taken as cues of acceptability or unacceptability in choosing a partner. Darren explains that telephone chat lines provide anonymity and a higher level of comfort:

I'd decided that my level of comfort in that kind of virtual space was much higher than other places because you can rehearse several times before you actually leave your message. So you can get it sounding just the way you want it to sound and you also get to listen to somebody's voice a number of times, and I'm quite sensitive to the timbre of their voice, and there are certain accents that I like and certain accents I don't like. And so, it's a way of pre-screening in a way that doesn't require you to perform on the spot so we didn't actually chat, we just left messages for a while and subsequently had conversations, and I felt more comfortable with it I suppose because it's a lot of exchange of information before you get visual cues. And when you get visual cues, ah, you judge others, you will in turn be judged and, that's a high anxiety experience. I've never felt comfortable in gay bars, one I don't hear so well, two once I drink I hear worse, and three what else do you do in a bar but drink. So it's just, the whole recipe doesn't seem set up, but
the virtual spaces seem rather, actually I haven't come across Internet messages but I think that would be interesting too. But it wouldn't have the audible cues, which I find nice (personal communication, Darren 2003).

Messaging back and forth can occur over a few hours, a few days, or even months. Again, meeting women on chat lines is qualitatively different as Mike explains:

It's been more of a friendship building, ya know. We'd chat over a week, two weeks, three weeks, a month, a year... And we just sort of progressed over time, and it wasn't until, I'd say the last three or four months, we've sort of become romantically involved (personal communication, Mike 2003).

When meeting men, however, live chat can decrease the amount of time between chatting and 'hooking up' for sex while still providing the ability to negotiate desires, interests, and expectations. Mike provides a description of a typical chat with a guy on the phone line:

[We get to know a bit about each other] through idle chitchat, or experiences, or you know, 'are you on the chat line much?' or 'do you do this very often?' or 'is it something that you want to pursue long term or what exactly?'... We both sort of communicate what our interests are or if this is just one those meetings to, to, take the clothes off, to get at it, get off...

JM: Do you tell them you are bisexual?

Depends on the conversation. Most of the time it's with bisexual men, usually it's 'I have a girlfriend, I've got to be careful, when, where, and what time I meet, if we do, I only have X amount of time to hang out with you' (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Mike begins to expose the careful organization involved in meeting men outside of his heterosexual partnership, even though his partner is aware of his sexuality.
In order to get a sense of how one goes from chatting to meeting, I asked Mike to describe the last time he met a guy on the phone line:

I was at home. My roommate/girlfriend whatever, was at work and I got on the chat line and talked to a guy and made arrangements to meet and basically ended up back at his place and we got into, idle chit chat and then, it's like, 'So do you do this often?' 'Do you talk on the chat lines very much?', 'How many encounters have you had if any?' And then, it went from that to putting on a movie and we just starting taking our clothes off...I usually use the chat lines to...I don't really use it to meet people; I use it to just say I'm looking for friends. And I end up meeting someone just by luck of the draw, or they message me and say, do you want to meet? It's like, 'Well, how about coffee first?'...[but we met] at his place...It was just a spur of the moment decision, I could have met him at a coffee shop [but] it was just all dealing with time, place, and how much time we had, and I happened to be going into Vancouver that afternoon anyway, so it was sort of en route...it was kind of a risky choice...I don't usually do that on a normal basis, I usually meet people for coffee or meetings or initial face-to-face, ya know at a public location, but it was just one those times...I'm like well I'm on the way down that way anyways...It's more of a safety factor, at least for me anyways, it's just being comfortable and seeing, making sure...they've had some truth to be honest with me (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Mike also uses Internet chat sites, but not for casual sex. He finds great satisfaction logging on to sites where other bisexuals are chatting about being bisexual. His isolation is temporarily eased as he communicates with others like him, asking questions that are helping him find himself:

I go on Yahoo chat but it's mainly the regular local rooms...I'm still seeking knowledge, you know, I have questions, things I want to ask, but because I don't have a lot of friends, and I don't really have too many people I can go talk with, usually I can go into a bisexual room, it's not a sexual room...or it's not a
room if you had someone looking over your shoulder to be shamed about, it's just a chit chat room. And you know, usually it's like, I have questions because I'm thinking about it... am I weird, and it's usually the idle gossip starts from there, well no you're...and it's just like...okay, so I'm no the only one. So there are people out in this world that have or had experiences or are looking into it, like oh, I'm not the only one, I'm not the only one with all these questions...It's sort of like, it's an easy place, because you can ask a complete stranger questions but you still feel refreshed because you know you're not the only one, even if they may live in a different country or different locations, but someone out there is going through the exact same thing I am...I usually leave refreshed and thinking I'm not the only one going through this (personal communication, Mike 2003).

For Mike, the chat rooms provide a safe space for exploring questions of his sexuality and a place to connect to others like him, something he has found difficult to do in other contexts.

Andrew also uses the Internet chat rooms to meet men for sexual encounters. Most of his meetings with men have been initiated through the Internet, as it is his “most frequently used method of connecting with men for sex” (personal communication, Andrew 2002). He uses the Internet because it is easy and accessible from his home but he tries to be careful about whom he meets and where:

I think everybody knows about the websites (laugh)...I think it has just become, a kind of feature of culture, ya know, chat rooms. They're all over the place; it's hard not to be exposed to them. And even, regular chat rooms, even like MSN or whatever. I mean they have just like, a lifestyles section...gay section of the chat. You're just cruising around and you come across it, and then the whole process is like, you log in, description of yourself, possibly a picture, and then people are just cruising basically, just scan, I guess, scanning who they like, and you try to chat for a few minutes or more. Usually more, usually I try to chat a while longer, like a few days or
something. And then maybe you talk on the phone, and then you hook up. Then you hook up, and usually pick a place...depending on whom you're with. Me, I just, I like, say like I'm living with my parents, the only thing I really care about is that it's just not at my parents' place; out of consideration. And depends who they are, if they're closeted and they want someone who is very discreet and they usually suggest a park or something which I am not usually very receptive to doing (laugh). Or, even, in their own car, where they feel, they feel that nobody's going to be watching, judging them I guess. Other people that are more comfortable with their sexuality, just invite me over to their place, right, that's generally, they're openly bi, or gay, or whatever and they're like, ya know, they don't have or live with a girlfriend or whatever, so it's not a problem (personal communication, Andrew 2003).

Andrew's casual attitude about meeting men on the Internet for sex carries over to where he meets them for the first time and why:

I try to make it a meeting, it has happened, ya know, they just want to get down and dirty, but no, I feel a lot more comfortable just meeting first, and usually it happens that way. Ya know, you meet at a coffee shop or, just drive around, I guess, try to do other things...I try to make it public spaces, but not because of safety. Safety, unfortunately, it's not an issue for me. I've never felt that I could be in danger. I mean...it could happen, it could be like some gay basher...[but I prefer to meet in public] because, I feel like it's easier for me to pull out, if I am not attracted to some person. Cause if you're one on one, it's kind of uncomfortable...If it's public, I feel more comfortable making up some lie (laugh)...it's just more comfortable, yeah, comfort more than security (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

No one I spoke with related a negative experience in using 'virtual spaces' as a way to meet men. Rather these locations appear to offer safe spaces for men to connect with men for sexual encounters or for social support from other
bisexuals. After initial conversations, all participants noted a strong inclination to make first meetings in public places either as a security measure, or as a way to back out any further relationship with someone who is not acceptable upon meeting. I now turn to the physical places that most men in the study have used to meet others.

**Bringing Bisexuality Home**

The home is the last space I wish to examine as a location where participants might have sex with other men. Again, whether or not men meet or invite someone into their own home for sexual encounters depends very much on what the home means to the individual. Although Mike's partner knows he is bisexual, he does not invite other guys to his place for sex for fear of getting caught:

> Because my girlfriend may end up working different shifts or cause I live with a landlady I never know who's going to be home. Or who may walk by the, we live in a basement near a laundry room, so it's hard to know when, what time they're going to be by the door, and what if...I wouldn't want to be put in that scenario so I try to avoid it (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Chris keeps bisexuality separate from the home shared with his wife and children. For him, the home is about his heterosexuality so his secret sexual life takes place elsewhere. His encounters take place in other people's residences. For about five years, Chris has been having sex with a friend with whom he also has a social relationship. Chris tells me: “once a month, once every two months we might fool around a bit at his place” (personal communication, Chris 2002). I asked Chris what the difference was between having sex at his friend's, who also has a female partner but who does not live with him, and the possibility of meeting at his own house:

> I don't want to put myself in a situation where I could be caught...if I'm not going to tell my wife, then I'm not going to be stupid enough to have it at the house. Because, anything could
happen. Wife could come by, someone else could come by, who knows what. So that's why. It's basically keeping it a secret, so not at my place...He doesn't have a live-in partner...and it's an apartment, so you have some sort of, if something was going on, someone has to push the buzzer, ya know, there's time there, for getting yourselves' together, ah, bar somebody just barging in the door, which could happen at the house. So, it's a safer environment (personal communication, Chris 2002).

This experience differs greatly compared to several others I spoke with. Kevin and Jeff frequently have sexual encounters with both men and women at home, mainly because it provides them a comfortable and private location that is "secure" (Personal Communication, Kevin 2002). Jeff entertains both men and women in his own home for additional reasons:

I feel most comfortable and confident in my own place. I also have a large variety of sex toys at home I like to use. My place also impresses sexual contacts. I also like to use my place for privacy (personal communication, Jeff 2002).

I have already mentioned Evan, who is openly bisexual and integrating bisexuality into his daily life, including bringing it into the home:

My experience has been, the more I reveal of myself to [my partner] in the relationship, just the more love I get back and the more acceptance I get back...now, I'm in a relationship that I can actually have sex with a man with a woman [at the same time], where I couldn't before. I had to separate the two because of my own internal homophobia...I'm at a point where I can go to the sauna; nobody has any problem with it. I come home from the sauna and I can make love because it turns on the woman that I'm with, that I've been with some men. And in fact, bring them home with me, if I want to (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Evan refers to his own internal homophobia as a reason why he had difficulty integrating his life. Homophobia from external sources can have an effect on
your ability to be open to express your bisexuality safely, but this is an example of how bisexual men also internalize the shame and embarrassment that is a result of a society that denounces one's sexuality. His fear was always about how his female partner would see him, in what ways she might respond to his bisexuality in relation to his sexuality and his masculinity, fearing disapproval and judgement. Only a continual process of acceptance on the part of his partner allows him to bring his bisexuality home and to the benefit of his relationship.

None of the spaces I discuss with participants are recognized as explicitly bisexual and may not be recognized strictly as straight or gay either. Bisexuals are using gay and straight spaces as much as possible to their advantage. As Lewis notes, however,

What doesn't work [in gay and straight spaces] is the assumption that you or I am going to behave according to certain patterns and only in those ways. And, for different reasons that's what's wrong with both those kinds of space. What's good about both those kinds of space is the possibilities that they open up but that only goes so far. And, the possibilities opened up in hetero spaces, I'm not so sure about anymore (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

Lewis indicates that in both ‘gay’ and ‘straight’ spaces there are ‘rules’ and expectations. Bisexuals in gay bars, for example, are often assumed to be gay and are expected, both within the bar and by extension outside of it, to behave in certain ways. The same is true within straight spaces where norms of masculinity and heterosexuality are expectations that can be as constraining as those within gay spaces. Bisexuality obfuscates these expectations disrupting the space insofar as bisexuals themselves resist conforming to them.

If there could be a bisexual moment or connection with another person, what might it look like? I asked Andrew if he considers intimate time spent with women to be heterosexual moments and intimate time spent with men to be homosexual moments or if he considered both to be bisexual moments:
I guess it would be bisexual only if there was that ambiguity, that possibility that it wouldn't really matter if that person was a male or a female. Do you understand? Like, regardless of the actual act that might be straight or gay, if the setting, the place, and the people around it, not just me, would allow for me to be with either a guy or girl, then I guess that would make it bisexual. A bisexual place, ya know. I don't think that by virtue of the fact that I'm there that it's bisexual. I don't think that applies, there has to be more factors than that. I mean, fuck, everywhere I go would be a bisexual place (laugh) (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Andrew exposes an interesting point about the connections among space, sexuality, and identity. He certainly indicates that being bisexual in a certain place does not make that space bisexual. This is quite different from gay and lesbian claims on space and community based on the very existence of their sexualised identities. More is necessary than just the presence of his body to transform space. Andrew notes that the very absence of the importance of gender, sex, and sexuality allows for the construction of ambiguous expectations within intimate encounters.

**Bisexual Communities**

Many participants express a strong desire for spaces allowing them to meet other bisexuals. Each respondent discusses the difficulty they have conceptualizing bisexual spaces given heteronormative expectations within society. First, I draw from mens’ experiences to illustrate these expectations as a constraining force on the ability to imagine and recognize spaces as bisexual. Second, I shift focus to examine interactions men have with gay communities to understand how these spaces enable and constrain expression of bisexuality. Finally, I draw together the perspectives of bisexual men in an attempt to create an understanding about bisexual spaces and communities.
It's A Straight World After All

Most participants have a strong sense of the prevailing heteronormative expectations in society:

[I] came out in Nov. 1997...it's been hell ever since because I don't fit into the straight world in any way, shape, or form (personal communication, Garret 2002).

Andrew also recognizes that societal acceptance of bisexuality is forthcoming:

I guess it's still a lot more normal to be heterosexual (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

In terms of creating ways and spaces for openly expressing bisexuality, Chris does not see any possibilities:

[In being bisexual] the difficulty comes, because society, well first of all society is heterosexual (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Chris describes a network or matrix of societal heteronormativity that shapes his beliefs and that make it difficult for him to think outside of that matrix:

You're kind of caught in a spin cycle of what society thinks, what you're parents think, what you believe, what you used to believe to what you now kind of believe in now to what you're partner believes too. I mean it's not easy, it's very difficult (personal communication, Chris 2002).

The power structures of a heteronormative society and socialization process, intersecting with the influence of peer groups, family, and partners, constrains Chris' ability to imagine expressing sexuality beyond secret massages and occasional sexual encounters with his friend:

I couldn't see myself walking arm in arm walking down the beach [with a guy], I couldn't see myself sitting on a park bench
kissing, I couldn’t see myself bringing that person home to my parents (personal communication, Chris 2002).

Ramone also understands the ways in which a heteronormative society limits his ability to come out as bisexual:

Because of society, or because of my relationship already [with a female], or because of my work, or because of my school or whatever... there is always something who is stopping people to openly say yeah, I’m bisexual, yeah I like girls and boys at the same time, even if I’m not dating with them in the same moment (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

Ramone implicates the always salient silencing power of heteronormativity as key to constraining expression of his bisexuality regardless of his relationship status at any given time.

There is a space in the Vancouver area in which some bisexual men are finding room to explore and express their sexuality. A formal community of people who meet to exchange sexual partners and engage in group-sex known as a ‘swing’ community may provide the context for bisexual men and women to foster community and create bisexual spaces. Paul clarifies, however, that bisexuality in the swing community is likely to be accepted when associated with women only:

It’s not bisexual for men though I don’t think, really... it was more like a swapping thing, and the men were straight, do you know what I mean (personal communication, Paul 2003)?

The swing community is far from being accepting of bisexuality and can be a place where heteronormativity merges with homophobia:

[My female partner and I] are members of the swing community, and it’s really wholly made of heterosexual people and some bisexual women, or women who identify as bisexual, and that’s about as close to bisexuality, in that sexual
community, that I've ever been. There's incidences of male bisexuality but they're so hidden and under cloak that it's very difficult to find and it's something that's very difficult to validate... In that swing community they don't like to hear about bisexual men, because of the disease, the HIV, AIDS scare and also I think it's deeper than that... it is deeper than the HIV and AIDS thing. I think that it has to go back to when men would say; I'm not a fag. I'm not queer; don't touch me there. You can fuck my wife, I don't mind if you look at me screwing your wife, but don't touch my ass, don't touch anything, ya know. I mean there would be guys who would get upset if your leg was resting up against their leg, while you were both having sex with his wife, or with your wife or girlfriend; very weird (personal communication, Evan 2003).

That such an aversion to bisexuality exists in a community where multiple sexual partners is the motivation for coming together is interesting and disconcerting. The swing community appears to perpetuate a heterosexist hegemonic notion of women's sexual availability for men rather than a sexual liberation in which bisexuality may find space. Moreover, within the swing community, borders surrounding masculinity are well patrolled and defended. As in so many instances bisexuality is subsumed under the category of homosexuality and, hence, is typically unwelcome in this community. Bisexuality may permeate the 'swing' community but it remains hidden for fear of exclusion.

Normative expectations that go hand in hand with heterosexuality in society, such as masculinity for example, play an important role in shaping the experiences and spaces in which bisexual men negotiate their desires and sexuality. Lewis describes just how significant an impact this can have on his own experience and perceptions of certain spaces:

I had this experience once and I don't know if I can recreate it. I hadn't gone to any other bar downtown but a gay bar for a year, six months to a year, and I went for a drink at Swans with somebody else, it's a brew pub, and the atmosphere seemed
very strange in Swan's, and I thought, you know, this used to be so familiar to me that it didn't seem like an atmosphere. This was normal, and yet...the air was thick with [rules], but...nobody could have expressed them, except by saying what are normal relations between, what they think are normal relations between men and women. And, it just seemed different...It made me go back to prison, and gee, this seems normal again...sometimes, in the hetero world, you recognize that you're in a different space, than you've been in. And because I lived, identified with heteronormativity for so long, there are very few moments where heteronormativity is actually been strange for me. It very quickly comes to seem normal, and so everything just disappears that you'd like to be able to see (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

Lewis expresses the normative position that heterosexuality takes in our everyday world. Only after immersing himself in the gay community for a few months can he then notice this when he revisits 'straight' spaces such as the local pub. Thus, heteronormativity goes unnoticed until something or someone comes along to disrupt the space enough that it becomes exposed.

**Gay Communities**

Gay communities may offer more openings in which men can find spaces to express their bisexuality. This is not the case for all the participants as most men I spoke with felt no strong connection to gay communities in Vancouver:

I have been exposed to it and I have chosen not to be a part of it...The gay community is just not my scene (laugh)...I think it's approached like a ghetto, and it *is* a ghetto, I mean, everyone is just like, in their little world...it's like this twenty block radius or something that people just don't leave (laugh) and it's just like, up and down Davie Street, everybody knows each other. And, I think it's really fucked up. I mean there's just so many drugs going on, so much unprotected sex. I find it hard like, I guess when you're removed from that, I mean I go to school so I'm always dealing with people who come from all types of
backgrounds and who identify themselves with different things other than their sexual orientation. It's so hard to then, if I lived in the West End, go back to the West End and just be hard-core, just all about being gay. And that's what people are all about, just being gay. And I think for me it's not enough. I can't just be gay. It's not satisfying, to just pigeon hole myself in that (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

As Andrew suggests, there are other manners with which he identifies and which position him in multiple social, economic, and political contexts. Thus, sexual identity may not always and everywhere be the prevailing context with which one identifies. I asked him to discuss his experiences about being open about his bisexuality in gay spaces:

I try not to (laugh) I try not to... They're not very receptive to those ideas. So I'm just like, ya know, as long as I'm okay with it, that I'm defining myself, and that ya know, I don't need to, openly express it to other people... I mean a lot of gay people, they feel that it's either black and white, a pretty black and white issue... so do a lot of straight people, but I think the gay people are almost defensive about sexuality, they're always like, 'no you've got to be gay, gotta be gay' (laugh)... some people feel... maybe they feel that, we're just fucking everybody over by being bisexual (laugh) cause I mean, we ruin the whole order of things, I'm not really sure. I mean they feel they want to be [gay] because it's easier (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Andrew indicates that identity is important for the politics of gay communities to the extent that he feels they have become exclusive spaces in which bisexuality is perceived as a threat. If gay communities are built, in large part, upon an oppositional stance toward heteronormativity, then bisexuality may be disruptive to such a construction.

Ramone experiences some resistance to his identity by people in gay communities who question his bisexuality and try to convince him that he is gay.
(personal communication, Ramone 2003). Similarly, Garret says that he is and isn’t connected to gay communities. He says “[I have] a few very close [gay] friends but for the most part I’m viewed as being stubborn, pig-headed and not willing to be completely gay” (personal communication, Garret 2002). Not unlike heterosexual society, gay communities have a difficult time placing bisexuality, and perhaps see it merely as a transitional stop along the way to becoming gay. Lewis conveys this well:

I’ve heard expressed by more than one gay man, that bisexuality is about initiation into sex with men and is merely a step, a first time, an immature stage of what when it grows up will be full, gay male sexuality (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

Resistance to bisexuality, as Andrew points out, may come from a perception that bisexuality ‘ruins the order of things’ in that it somehow disrupts not only the idea that one must be gay or straight, but also ideas of monogamy that may have detrimental effects on the search by gay communities for acceptance from heterosexual society.

Darren echoes the sentiment that ‘you’ve got to be gay,’ that gay communities have much invested in gay identities, and that it might be beneficial, or even necessary, for them to locate bisexuality as transition:

[When] you talk to gay people; they really want to hear that you’re gay. It’s important to them to know that they’re kind of in a group of many, rather than a group of few. So there is generally speaking a fairly subtle pressure to adopt that label (personal communication, Darren 2002).

From his perspective, gay people benefit from a solid, well-defined community based on a clear and stable identity, something lacking for bisexual men, and evident in Darren’s own personal relationship:
People who are gay, and no have qualms about who they are, and know that they're gay as opposed to straight or bisexual, I think they might find themselves in an easier position than someone who is bisexual because there always is a community who is pleased to hear that they're gay and is ready and able to be supportive and is affirmed by hearing that declaration. Whereas I'm not sure that there is a community that is supportive and is affirmed by hearing that somebody's bisexual...if you're between then, do you have a kind of constituency or a home community all your own? My [gay male] partner has never felt any difficulties about that. He's been part of a community for years himself so he's kind of at home and comfortable (personal communication, Darren 2003).

He tells me that his experiences in gay communities are mostly positive, but typically limited to the events and activities of his partner. Otherwise, his only participation within gay communities takes place annually during Gay Pride festivities.

Once more, for men who are in heterosexual partnerships, participating in the gay community may be something unimaginable. Mike's perspective is that most people understand sexuality as gay or straight and that he cannot imagine himself participating in communities built around gay identity:

I don't see long term being in the community and being part of these [Gay Pride] parades you know, interacting in all these [gay] group functions (personal communication, Mike 2003).

Even Paul, who has had a lot of interaction in gay communities, through cruising in gay bars, and through long-term friendships with gay men, is disconnected from them because of his current female partner:

Well, I'm too far removed from it to be a part of it. Honestly, you know...I'm not connected to it...This is my life [with my girlfriend], my life isn't there, you know what I mean?...that's another thing I wouldn't mind checking out, you know, but I
can't be doing that when I'm in a relationship, you know, I would be crazy, you know, like oh yeah I'm going to the [gay bar tonight etc.]... you know what I mean (personal communication, Paul 2003)?

While Paul is relatively open about his bisexuality to friends, his current female partner does not know that he is bisexual and so it would be problematic for him to explain his time spent in gay communities.

Others also indicate that accessing gay communities depends on the gender status of your current partner. Bisexual men engaging in sequential relationships, switching between men and women, may only be part of gay communities when dating men. Brian tells me that some guys will move “in to and out of the gay community, depending on with whom they’re going out and that’s been the experience with a few of my friends” (personal communication, Brian 2002). Evan agrees that this can be the experience for bisexual men, but for him it has been back and forth between the bisexual community and the heterosexual community:

Some people will gravitate towards the gay or lesbian community for lack of bi resources or that they want to experience an immersion in that life or they are drawn there by a new partner—or they get bored with the limited vision of the bi community. I have jumped back and forth between the bi community and the hetero community (personal communication, Evan 2003).

When bisexual community in Vancouver is organized and offering support meetings and social functions, Evan is very involved often taking to task the organization of events. When the community begins to disperse and the organization starts to loosen, Evan tends to find similar support from the heterosexual community.

Despite some negativity in gay communities toward bisexuality, Ramone finds the gay community in the West End of Vancouver one that he turns to for
friendships, sexual encounters, and social support. He lives and hangs out in the West End, meeting people at the local coffee shop or on the sea wall. He goes to gay dance clubs and sometimes hooks up later with people he meets for sex; he attends workshops at The Centre, Vancouver’s gay and lesbian community centre (personal communication, Ramone 2003). The gay community here is one that offers valuable resources that he is able to take advantage of because he is open about his sexuality.

Lewis readily uses available gay resources where he lives. He is familiar with many of the events and activities, both in the local bar scene as well as through community centres. He participates in a group called Gay Men Read Books but he says the most important spaces for socializing and getting information comes from men’s forums where the focus of discussion is on men’s relations with other men:

I think the most important events for me have been the men’s forums, first the Men’s Outreach Program and now the Men’s Wellness Program that AIDS Vancouver Island has organized. And they’re about three or four a year. They’re somewhere downtown and, they’ve been at Open Space, they’re been at the Silver Threads community centre, and it’s usually a topic with somebody visiting whose got some expertise in...I’ve found those extremely valuable because the people who go there speak very frankly and very freely and it just, it just seems like you’re hearing who people really are. You’re hearing about things that concern people (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

The ability for men to access gay communities and their resources for meeting other men, getting information, or a sense of belonging varies greatly amongst respondents. Men living largely within the closet who maintain heterosexual identities in much of their life find it difficult, and even unimaginable, to feel connected to gay communities. The more open about bisexuality the more likely one is to have some ties to gay communities. As Brian suggests:
If it's a community as defined geographically, I don't see [a bisexual community] particularly, within a region or within a location. I mean, I'd say that, members of the bisexual community would be more inclined, if they're outed, to be within the gay community, whereas, if they're not out yet, they will remain within the heterosexual majority public (personal communication, Brian 2002).

This does not hold true for all participants because some have experienced negative reactions from members of gay communities to their bisexuality, often denying bisexuality as merely a stage in the process of coming out as gay. For these men, accessing gay communities is not necessarily something to which they aspire.

In A Bi-World: Frustrations and Possibilities in Community

There is a small formal bisexual community in Vancouver organizing and facilitating social meetings and more formal discussion groups once or twice a month, albeit irregularly over time. Almost all of the participants either had no knowledge of this community or very little interest in it if they did. There are also some different interpretations of the word ‘community’ that should be kept in mind. Some people understand it as a formal and established bisexual community to which they responded:

I do feel very connected to other bisexuals...There is not a bisexual community as there is a gay community, but rather I have a large group of friends that are predominantly bisexual and I feel very comfortable with them (personal communication, Jeff 2002).

Garret and Brian also indicate a lack of awareness of formal community and instead rely on a circle of bisexual friends as their community of support. As Brian tells me, “I have several bisexual friends, but none of us consider ourselves part of a community” (personal communication, Brian 2002). Darren and Kevin similarly respond that they have no knowledge of a bisexual community. As
Kevin puts it, “I do not know any bisexuals. All I know are gays and straights” (personal communication, Kevin 2002). Andrew acknowledges that there must be organizations out there but he does not see this as equating with community:

I have never really encountered [a bisexual community], that labelled themselves as one...I think there are probably reasons why it hasn’t become a community. Maybe there are organizations, I’m sure there are...I guess they just don’t have the same kind of presence. And I’m pretty sure there are more bisexual people then there are gay people... I don’t feel that bisexuals have really been able to identify and interact with themselves as a community in the same manner gay/lesbians have (personal communication, Andrew 2002).

Mike and Paul have had some limited experiences with the bisexual community in Vancouver, but Mike, especially, feels a real need for a better and more accessible bi-community:

It’s really hard to meet people...there must be a society where bisexuals who find an interest in both male and female to meet or have friendships, not intimate or sexual, but there must be someway or somehow or someone knows people that we can meet, or places to meet... it’s kind of hard to meet people because there’s no places or like telepersonals or there’s no extensions lines for [bisexual] people to meet (personal communication, Mike 2003).

There is value in having a community for support and friendship:

Just being able to talk to people about it, it opens the door, it kind of makes me feel like okay I’m not he only one going through it, I’ve probably said that a thousand times [laugh] but, you know there’s not many options for people like myself to go into, or to have social communities, at least I’m finding a hard time doing that (personal communication, Mike 2003).
I would like to [have a place to meet bisexuals] because then I can share more things about being bisexual. I really would like to. That's why I enjoy when people say I'm bisexual... I feel like I can have a partner to talk about... to share experiences... Because it's not the same to talk to with straight people and gay people about what are you doing sexually... [but] there's no place (personal communication, Ramone 2003).

Mike and Ramone suggest that a bisexual community would help them understand and gain confidence in their sexuality and provide an avenue to meet other bisexual people. Paul reveals that his attendance at one bisexual meeting in Vancouver reassured his sexuality:

It was interesting to hear other people speak, just have like a meeting, you can just talk, if you want to do that kind of crap, you can go meet at the social thing or whatever... but it's like trying to connect I guess, you know what I mean, and trying to figure it out at that time, I was obviously searching, when I go to something like that... I guess, all it really did was to show me that normal people are bi too, we're a bunch of normal people, you know... and it would be good to hook in with more people like me but it's hard to find (personal communication, Paul 2003).

Despite having difficulty locating bisexual meetings and attending them, his experience has been positive and important in terms of affirming bisexuality as a normal and integral component of his identity.

Thus far, I have focused on those who have little or no connection to a formalized bisexual community. Many are not aware it exists and others are not able to access despite wanting to do so. As Chris states, for example, "I am in a heterosexual relationship with heterosexual friends, so I feel isolated from the bisexual community" (personal communication, Chris 2002). I turn now to one respondent's experience in Vancouver's bisexual community. Evan has had an active role in the bi-community over the years, an experience that has left him frustrated:
I find the whole experience with bisexual community a very frustrating one. One where...the only time I ever feel at home is whenever the Binet BC people get together and have a conference and I sit in a room full of other people who are probably equally as frustrated...That's about the most comfortable I ever feel (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Evan moved to Vancouver in 1992 but didn't discover any bisexual community until 1995 when he had read in a local paper about the upcoming Bisexual Conference being held that summer:

And I thought, oh god, well, this sounds very interesting. And I went and I can still remember the excitement I had about going that day. It was probably the first thing I wasn't late for in a long time. And, I felt so much excitement and happiness and just being in a room with a hundred and fifty people who identified, didn't matter what they identified with, they were there with me, ya know, and this was what this conference was about, and isn't that wonderful (personal communication, Evan 2003).

This event marked the beginning of Evan's work in the bisexual community in a more formal sense:

They had Bi-Face and Options. And one was just like a coffee get together type of thing and the other one was more sitting around at someone's house talking about what's so frustrating about being bisexual. Or coming out to family and friends, or whatever your own personal issue was, you got to share with the group. And, ya know, it was three hours and it was fabulous. You could see other people had problems, too. Sometimes you could hear what their solutions were or just that they were afraid, ya know, as well, was wonderful to hear (personal communication, Evan 2003).
Evan was excited about the possibilities this community opened up for him, in terms of support and meeting people. For the first time in his life, he felt there was some place he belonged:

So, I got involved in organizing that community, or trying to organize that community, and, but the weakness was, it was geared towards all the energy was geared toward one conference, to get people together...[After the conference was over]...there were too few people that were willing to take the reigns. There was too much to do and, not enough people. And then, sort of, it was being split apart by...inter-arguments, or community arguments (personal communication, Evan 2003).

A number of issues came up during meetings and the organizing of social events. One issue was about the representation of both men and women in the group. Some members began to see that men were outnumbering women which affected where meetings were held and what issues might be discussed. This led to discussions of separating into male and female bisexual groups. Another issue surfaced in debates relating to transgender/transsexual issues:

We also had, some people in our group that said, 'hey what about all those transsexual people.' Ya know, we can't be exclusive, we have to be inclusive. And so there was a move to bring in transsexual people as well. And, my god there's a whole story of journeys amongst these people as well. I mean, who would have thought that a man who is now a woman is bisexual. Ya know, I mean, it was really wonderful, to be exposed to this. And at the same time, unsettling in that, what the fuck am I (personal communication, Evan 2003)?

Not only do the conflicts mentioned here serve to fragment the group, but they also call into question who the group is supposed to represent. Evan finds the diversity of the bisexual group across lines of gender and sexuality fascinating, but at the same time unsettling in that it make his identification with the group as a bisexual man less and less clear. He has, since this time, tried to get involved
again but a lack of organization and involvement resulted in his backing away from the bisexual community:

The bi-community is ever changing, growth, then stagnation and a scattering of relationships and friendships. And I think, the expression that encompasses it well is trying to bring bisexuals together is like trying to herd cats...so I do understand other communities, shall we say, frustration with the bisexual community. This get on the fence, get off the fence type of thing you hear and a lot of bisexual people resent that term. I think, they think you don't know who you want to sleep with tonight. It's far more complicated than that. It's more about just your own acceptance, what are you able to accept of yourself at any given day, at any given moment, any given situation (personal communication Evan, 2003).

Evan feels frustrated with the bisexual community for its lack of vision and with society more generally for tacitly forcing bisexuals to live compartmentalized lives (personal communication, Evan 2003). He tells me in our second interview, six months after the first, that he still realizes the importance of community; especially for those coming out of the closet, but that he no longer needs the formal bisexual community:

Let's put it this way, yeah, it is good to have a space that society recognizes to enable bisexuals to come together to compare notes or for support. I've found now, I'm at a point where I don't need a group, I'm not looking for anything that anyone can give me in terms of acceptance, I'm now at a level I feel in my own acceptance that, and I have enough in my own support group and friends, that it doesn't matter anymore...When I go to something like Bi-Vancouver, and it's a lot of the people who are just coming out of the closet for the first time, it's nice to help them, or to listen to them, type of thing. But there's no satisfaction for me...In fact, probably sitting here and talking to you, is about the most exciting bisexual thing I've done in a long time [laugh] (personal communication, Evan 2003).
His comments far from suggest that there is no need for bisexual community and support functions stemming from it, Evan notes that for bisexuals wanting to escape the closet it is important to have such a support system available. He does suggest that at this point in his life and with his acceptance of his sexuality that the bisexual community in Vancouver is no longer able to provide support beyond the basic 'coming out' meetings and social activities. Instead, he finds this support amongst his own network.

**Imagining Communities**

[Gay and lesbian youth] are, in fact, living without very much of a context. Their lives as gay and lesbian people are so invisible. Lesbian and gay young people had no sense of their past [and] their present was so tenuous and, therefore, they have a very difficult time. And I think all of us as gay and lesbian people know this experience, then in their context, or the lack of context, to imagine yourself living as a lesbian or gay person is very difficult (Memo From Church Street 1992).

This statement from the 1992 video production "Memo From Church Street" underscores how difficult imagining the possibility of living life as a gay or lesbian person can be for young gays and lesbians. For many, there is no awareness of past struggles and efforts, no awareness of community building. For others, their present existence is made tenuous because of homophobia and/or isolation such that the future is too blurry to see. This tenuousness is very much evident among the respondents in this study, resulting is contrasting optimism and pessimism in terms of bisexual spaces and community formations. Some participants share their thoughts on how they envision a bisexual community or the possibility of bisexual spaces. Participants have, of course, been socialized within a heteronormative society, learning that sexuality and gender are set up in binary pairs or opposites. The results are evident in discussions of bisexuality's place within society:

The metaphor of the fence or of a partition or even just some wavy line on the floor, still sounds like it's there and I don't know how to say it isn't, simply because it's there in my experience. I don't think that this is inherent to bisexuality.
That is, I can imagine bisexuality without it but that may be asking for a situation where, where we think differently of gender and where we think differently of sexuality, and we’re a long way from that. Or at least I’m a long way from that (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

For Lewis, bisexuality is not opening up a more fluid or ambiguous ‘middle’ ground in relation to sexuality and space, rather bisexuality continues to be enabled and constrained by the binary system that dominates our thinking about sex and gender.

Darren, too, indicates that society is not organized to allow for acceptance for alternate ways of being:

I don’t know whether one could have the ideal bisexual relationship, an ongoing relationship with both men and women, that tried to realise all parts or sides of your personality your sexuality, it’s a nice thought, I don’t think the world was set up to a support it very well (personal communication, Darren 2003).

If few spaces in society allow for expressions of bisexuality difficulties in organizing community may continue:

Bisexual men don’t have community; don’t have identity. Our sad existence of being in a compartment, in a closet, perpetuates itself, because we can’t seem to get the society, we can’t organize ourselves to get out of that. To say, here we are. To change people’s mind or even to say this is what we are, we’re many of [the stereotypes], we’re all of those things, but we’re not exclusively those things (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Participants express optimism and pessimism in terms of future bisexual spaces and communities. The problem with the bisexual community, as Evan sees it, is that it knows neither what it wants, nor what its limits are in terms of forming community:
I think because our interests are so varied...we don't know the boundaries of our communities...I don't think that what bisexuals want has been defined yet...I don't think I've ever seen, in my dealing with conferences and stuff, I've never heard an answer to what bisexuals want (personal communication, Evan 2003).

This comment reflects the theme of bisexuality as seriality discussed in my methodology chapter. Bisexual community does not congeal into a coherent whole because bisexuals are so diverse, in terms of identity and in terms of locations within sets of power relations, that common goals are elusive. The definitional boundaries are not solid and visible borders but shifting and translucent:

I think that they're still defining what the edges of bisexuality are; so what does the community look like, what are the boundaries? And I don't think any one has made a definition of that...and I think that this may have to do with some of the frustration that elements of the queer community have with bisexuals because they seem to blow in like a Chinook and they're all warm and all over you but they're not around a long time...I've had this with the [gay and lesbian] Centre for example, this problem where we've gone in and said, hey, include us, and they're all like, yes we'll include you, and then we disappear (personal communication, Evan 2003).

Evan and I have had long conversations about gay and lesbian communities in Vancouver as we have tried to think through the reasons bisexuals have difficulty following the same path to community as they have followed. In the end, Evan remains disappointed and less than optimistic:

This is I guess our time of infancy and questioning, I don't know. I can't sit here, I can't think, you know, James, I can't say in fifty years from now there's going to be anything different, I really don't have that feeling, you know? I mean, I would think as a gay person that I would be like excited that I'm moving
toward something, but I don't have that (personal communication, Evan 2003).

His reference to the gay community’s excitement about the future reflects recent approval of same-sex marriage in Ontario and more widely across Canada. Gay and lesbian communities across Canada have been fighting for marriage rights for decades and without doubt this concession will open up further possibilities in adoption and property rights among a myriad of things.

Likewise, what Lewis finds frustrating is not the inability to mobilize a bisexual community, but rather the inability to imagine, in the first place, ways to envision such communities and spaces. He does, nonetheless, remain positive about the possibilities of imagining bisexual spaces:

I don’t know how it works on the scale of the community, and that’s one of the most frustrating things about being bisexual is not being able to imagine. Now there’s an advantage in things not being imagined for you, which is good. But, in not being able to imagine it, it makes it seem less possible. And, I tend to think that just by living something you can give some shape to what doesn’t yet exist and help make it more possible. I think that whenever I’m in a situation associating with bisexually-identified people, I have a sense of possibility, it’s hard to put into words, but I feel it’s real. And I value it very much (personal communication, Lewis 2003).

Lewis alludes to comments he made earlier in our conversation about heteronormative society and how society is constructed upon binary thinking where there are gay and straight spaces and communities but a lack of recognition for bisexuality. His frustration is rooted in an inability to conceptualise outside of binary-thinking, a regulatory fiction we have all been socialized under. His optimism comes from a view that his lived reality as bisexual becomes a catalyst for possibility. It may be difficult to imagine community organized around the possibility of attraction and desire for more than one sex, but the sense of
possibility is crystallized as real when being bisexual becomes a point of connection with other bisexual people.

**Conclusion**

I have presented in this chapter a preliminary mapping of the geographies of twelve bisexual men living in the Vancouver area of British Columbia. I began with a brief discussion of positions of bisexuality. Because men are identified by others based on current partnerships and because committed partners often dismiss the ‘other side’ of their bisexual partner, men in relationships often hide or are forced to hide the fact that they are bisexual.

For these men, there are both qualitative and quantitative differences between meeting men and women. When the primary goal is sex, participants agree that there are more opportunities and spaces for meeting men. While opportunities for meeting women are ubiquitous for men, meeting women is often less about connecting for sex and typically requires more time and effort as friendships develop first. Moreover, and important here, meeting women occurs in spaces which are shaped by and through heteronormativity. This means that finding spaces for meeting women, and men for that matter, as a bisexual rather than as gay or straight is very difficult.

Respondents discussed a number of spaces within the contexts of sexual encounters and social support. Interestingly most respondents avoid stereotypical locations such as bathhouses public spaces and sex strolls in parks. For some, avoidance of these areas is linked to safety concerns in terms of possible violence and health risks, such as HIV, associated with anonymous sex. Increasingly men are using ‘virtual spaces’ to learn more about prospective partners before connecting with other men. Internet chat rooms and telephone chat lines are offering spaces in which men have more control over who they meet, where they meet, and the boundaries surrounding behaviour if and when they connect with men met on-line. This by no means provides an entirely safe
space, but 'virtual space' is perceived to be a way of avoiding the risk-potential involved in meeting men in parks and even in bars.

Virtual spaces, the Internet and chat lines, offer not only space for men to cruise and meet other men for sex but also a space for answering questions, affirming one’s sexuality, and alleviating a sense of isolation that many men noted during interviews. In terms of theatres, bars, and bathhouses, the degree to which one is open or accepting of their bisexuality relates to experiences being wither positive or negative. For example, Evan goes to all of these spaces to meet men for encounters but as a part of an overall sexual lifestyle. Mike, who also has been to each of these sites at least once, characterizes his experiences as negative often letting his expectations of those spaces far exceed their reality.

I have examined connections that bisexual men have to various communities. Many men have felt no strong connection, and some no awareness, of bisexual community in Vancouver. Overwhelmingly, men note that heteronormative expectations of society, and within their families especially, result in a difficulty for bisexual men to imagine living open lives in any other way than as heterosexual. A result of this, therefore, is the inability to make connections across sexual community lines where support might be found. Where maintaining a heterosexual identity is critical, for Chris who is married for example, forging links in the gay or bisexual communities may be impossible.

There does not seem to be a strong sense of optimism among respondents for bisexuality and bisexual spaces in the future. On a day-to-day basis their experiences are strongly motivated by the constraining effects of a heteronormative society. Homophobia is often internalized; socialization reinforces norms surrounding heterosexuality and masculinity and bisexual men find themselves managing multiple relationships and secrets. The possibility of bisexual space can be seen in a more ephemeral sense, in both discreet encounters and organized events or conferences where identities shift and bisexuality is temporary or fleeting.
CHAPTER SIX: (IN)CONCLUSIONS

If the conclusion is that bisexual space is not both gay and straight but rather neither gay nor straight, what are the implications for a positive bisexual identity or for bisexual theorising? If bisexual identity is not inclusive but rather always partial, if there are no “bisexual spaces” per se, then how do we represent bisexuality, and what is the relationship between bisexuality and space (Hemmings 1997, 147-148)?

These are the questions that Hemmings’ pondered and represent some of the questions I wish to address in this final chapter. My research is a response to scholars’ call for studies into the particularity and specificity of bisexual lives that has heretofore been absent in the literature (Hemmings 2002; Queen 1995; Rust 2000; Steinman & Beemyn 2001). Heteronormativity restricts the possibility of bisexual men leading a coherent, stable, and open life over time. Expectations of monogamy restrict the possibilities of a bisexual present and either force men into juggling acts of serial monogamy or multiple closets. There is overwhelming pressure in society to be heterosexual but there is also pressure to adopt a gay identity if you desire and are attracted to men. The hetero/homo binary leaves little or no room for bisexuality to exist in its own right and in its own space. Where allowed, bisexuality is seen as transitional, a momentary stop on the way from being straight to gay or vice versa. I have uncovered no discrete bisexual spaces here, only partial and temporary claims to and use of space. I have illustrated many ways that bisexual men access both gay and straight spaces or
take advantage of gay or straight contexts as they negotiate desire and attraction across the city. Matteson (1996) describes bisexual men's lives as balancing acts of their own sense of sexual identity and sexual needs and those of partners. Rust (1996) argues that bisexuality is about managing multiple relationships and the expectations, needs, and boundaries of partners. Neither author, however, address the spatial implications of such a balancing act nor do they explore the socio-spatial organization of bisexual men's multiple relationships, a task that my research has endeavoured to explore. Although elsewhere Rust (2001) investigates the theoretical and ideal locations of bisexuality within and among other sexual communities, she falls short of producing a geography of bisexual men grounded in everyday living.

Weinberg et al. (1994) recognize that bisexual men cross social boundaries as they navigate desires and that social environments and locales in which this occurs may be important. They provide some explanation of these locales or sites; however, where they end their discussion I begin, by delving into men's expectations, perceptions, and experiences of those sites. Others argue that bisexuals are forced to lead separated, compartmentalized lives where at any given moment and in any given space some aspect of their desires, attractions, and sexuality remains hidden within the closet (Brownfain 1995; Leland et al. 2000; Paul 1983). Though my study focuses on the particular and specific knowledge of a small number of bisexual men and, therefore, their experiences cannot be generalized, I have shown that the lives of these bisexual men are compartmentalized. Even for those men who are most open and accepting of their sexuality, their identities do not remain fixed across space and time. Bisexual men shift identities in response to the degree to which heterosexual power relations and expectations of monogamy within given spaces constrain acceptance of their bisexuality.

Many of these men indicate that they did not feel bisexuality was an important issue on a day-to-day basis. For participants' whose identity is temporarily or spatially fixed to either a heterosexual or homosexual identity, being bisexual
does not figure in the daily organization of life. Bisexuality is important, however, to the spatial organization of daily life for those whose identities are shifting. Managing multiple or shifting identities entails managing relationships spatially. Primary relationships, in most cases, are maintained within the private home whereas additional encounters, sexual partners, or relationships are segregated from the private sphere of the core relationship. This often occurs even if a bisexual man’s primary partner is aware of his bisexuality and his multiple partnerships or encounters. Boundaries are worked out, in consultation with the primary partner or not, around behaviour that places limits on the activities of bisexual men as well as the location where activities may take place. Self-imposed boundaries typically relate to safety concerns and the possibility of bringing disease into the home or the core relationship. Boundaries agreed upon with partners focus more on comfort levels of partners and the particular needs of bisexual men as they negotiate their identities and satisfy all their desires.

A common thread among participants is a sense of social connection with other bisexuals and, alternatively for some, a sense of isolation. The choices men make in terms of where to meet other men are largely constrained by their ability to be open about their sexuality in a variety of social spaces, including work, the family, and amongst friends. Men who remained closeted in the majority of these spaces are more likely to seek out connections in ways that maintain their anonymity. Thus, movie theatres and bathhouses become important sites for men seeking men for sex in a discreet fashion. Even men who are openly bisexual use these spaces but they are more likely to share this information with partners. Several men expressed safety concerns in terms of health risks and risks of violence which seem to have restricted their use of public spaces and sex strolls, or encouraged them to abandon casual anonymous sex altogether.

Interestingly, the private sphere of the home is a place where bisexuality is denied by some and for others a place in which the ultimate goal is to integrate bisexuality into all aspects of their lives. Identity is significant in determining whether a space is created for bisexuality within the home. For men who are
closeted and for whom heterosexual identity is fixed in most aspects of their life, the home is not a place where sexual encounters with men occur. They keep bisexuality separate from the intimate privacy of the heterosexualized space of the home. Men who openly identify as bisexual are much more likely to include the home as a site for encounters with other men. Thus, the private home space can be both an enabling and constraining space in terms of identity formation and expression of sexuality.

My research confirms that ‘virtual space’, for eliciting sexual encounters and social support from other bisexuals, is an increasingly important location, especially for men whose sexuality continues to be carefully guarded. Peterson (2001) notes that some bisexual men using the Internet for support “feel exhilarated and validated, and no longer feel so isolated and alone” (200). He found that men use the Internet to “receive information; establish networks, friendships, and male families; seek dates; and even find love” (207). My research reveals that the Internet as well as telephone chat lines are sites where bisexual men feel comfort and a degree of safety, security, and control over who they speak with and who they may eventually meet. In some cases, the Internet is used to join virtual bisexual communities; it is a means to feel connected to other bisexuals across Canada, and indeed, the world, and ease any sense of isolation one might feel. The Internet, then, may become the most important location on which to build bisexual communities while avoiding the trappings and exclusions that traditional communities bear (Peterson 2001; Rust 2001).

Rust (2001) found in her study of bisexuals that out of 171 respondents in her study more than one in three bisexual men said there was no bisexual community. Others indicated they did not know of a bisexual community, if it indeed existed in their area. An additional ten percent of men thought there was a bisexual community but did not know where it was or how to find it. These feelings of isolation and lack of community are echoed in my research. What complicates this is an unresolved conceptualization of community. Does bisexual community exist? It depends. It depends, among other things, on the
geographic scale of inquiry. While I found most of the participants feel no connection to a bisexual community and many are unaware of its possible existence, several have communities in the sense of ongoing support with friends. Others find a sense of community, as I noted, in the anonymity provided in ‘virtual space,’ arguably a scale of indeterminate boundaries. Among those who have been involved with formal bisexual groups and communities, experiences and perspectives vary. There is a sense of frustration, on the one hand, and anticipation on the other. The frustration may come from an inability for bisexuals to form lasting affiliations in relation to their multiple and shifting positions. It also stems from an incoherent definition of bisexuality, as well as an inconsistent sense of what may be the goals of a bisexual community.

Does bisexuality enable or constrain men’s ability to meet others for friendship, relationships, or sexual encounters? Two perspectives emerge in my discussions with participants. Ramone, for example, indicates that being bisexual can be off putting to some straight women and gay men, which has made it more difficult for him to meet partners who fully accept his sexuality. The perception is that bisexual men cannot be committed to one person and that their life is organized through lies and deception. Bisexual men continue to be seen in gay communities as not willing to commit to a gay identity. In straight communities bisexual men are often conflated into the category homosexual. On the other hand, Jeff says that being bisexual opens the doors to possibility in terms of meeting men and women for sexual encounters and for relationships. Like Evan, Jeff indicates that bisexuality is part of an overall identity that includes non-monogamy and multiple partners and relationships.

Although these men may feel a great sense of isolation given the difficulty of meeting and socializing with other bisexual men for support, their experiences are not shaped in isolation. That is, they are patterned and positioned within a matrix of heteronormative power relations. Bisexuality may then be defined as the strategies and responses to heteronormativity as people, whose desire,
attraction, and sexuality are not limited to one sex or the other, manage and organize their day-to-day lives.

**On the Horizon**

This study highlights several paths for future research in geography on bisexual men and bisexuality more generally. First, much more work is needed to understand the ways that bisexual men perceive, experience, construct, and employ a network of material, representational, and multiple real and imagined spaces across and within communities (Steinman & Beemyn 2001). While I have provided an introduction here of many of these concerns, larger scale studies in multiple geographic locations can begin to build up, in rich detailed layers, a new body of empirical knowledge within geographies of sexualities. Comparative studies on rural/urban differences might also reveal distinct spatial strategies bisexual men employ as they manage their identities and relationships in smaller communities. Understanding these discreet geographies of desire will add not only to our collective knowledge of sexuality and space, but to the available resources for men of all sexualities to lead more affirming lives.

Second, and well beyond the scope of this project, research into the everyday geographies of bisexual people can further illuminate the theoretical implications of bisexual spaces and communities. These grounded geographies can work up to the theory rather than beginning with *a priori* theoretical frameworks on bisexuality and working down toward a conceptualization of bisexual spaces and communities. I believe this approach will have stronger political implications as more and more bisexual people become involved in telling their own stories, sharing their own perspectives, and describing their own experiences of daily life across time and space. Working 'up' empirically toward the theoretical implications of bisexuality in geography seems a more practical approach if we are to avoid 'biopia' (Loftus 1996). Biopia is the "simultaneous production and suppression of bisexualities through oppositions that construct and delimit sexuality" (Pramaggiore 1996, 6). As geographies of gay men and lesbians
become increasingly visible, further grounded in everyday life and entrenched in academia, so too does the dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality, further erasing possible formations of bisexual spaces and/or communities. An ongoing process of normalization, through gay rights and same-sex marriages for example, adds legitimacy to homosexual lives as an alternative to, but not altogether different from, heterosexual lives. At the core of this process are expectations of monosexuality and monogamy.

Part of the problem bisexual people face in developing communities, groups, or even social support networks, as I have shown, lies in the inability to imagine what such communities might look like and how to begin to build them up. As Lewis poignantly noted, it may not be so important to think through how a bisexual community might work in theory and work toward applying it. Rather, he finds his sense of optimism and possibility in just living life as a bisexual. In doing so, invisibility and silence are challenged and materiality and lived experience becomes the catalyst for political motivation.

Third, sexuality research in geography intersects with a number of other analytic foci. Issues of race, class, and gender for example, crosscut sexuality and have been employed as researches interrogate space and community (Binnie 1995; Bouthillette 1997; Ingram 2001; Newman 2001, for example). Geographers must begin to address these same concerns as they intersect with bisexuality. Does race intersect with bisexuality in ways that enable or constrain the ability for bisexual people to connect sexually or socially? A recent New York Times article exposing the 'down low' culture within African American communities indicates that race intersects with sexuality in ways that redefine sexual orientation (Denizet-Lewis 2003). African American men 'on the down low' maintain heterosexual identities across time and space but in specific contexts engage in sex with other men 'on the down low.' None of these men consider themselves bisexual or homosexual, in part because of a fierce rejection of these sexualities within African American communities and specifically in black urban youth communities. How might class mitigate bisexual men's ability to manage and
maintain multiple secrets? How do bisexual men perceive, experience, construct, and employ space in different ways strategically compared to bisexual women? Does heteronormativity also play an important role in the lives of bisexual women and what are the spatial implications? Furthermore, being bisexual may also overlap with identifications that have little or nothing to do with gender or sexuality. Tan (1995) has shown in role playing venues that taking the active ‘top’ or passive ‘bottom’ role structures the space in more salient ways than does one’s gender or sexual identification. In what ways might power positions of domination and subordination, fetishes, or polyamory imbricate with bisexuality?

Fourth, geographies of AIDS have situated bisexual men as the nexus between gay and straight communities, vilifying bisexuals as vectors of disease placing heterosexual populations at risk and being denied access to prevention strategies (Donaldson 1995; du Plessis 1996; Kennedy & Doll 2001; Rodriguez Rust 2000g). A deeper understanding of bisexual men’s lives would benefit not only awareness of risk, but also the development and employment of preventative strategies which take advantage of an understanding of the spatial organization of bisexual lives. If most bisexual men have little contact with formalized gay communities in their area, how well will prevention messages work if they focus primarily on gay spaces? If prevailing expectations of heterosexuality and masculinity preclude bisexual men from escaping the confines of the closet, how can prevention strategies be deployed in an effort to reach these men?

Lastly, empirical research on geographies of ‘cyberspaces’ must be addressed where it concerns issues of sexuality, more broadly, and as it relates to the development of bisexual identities and communities. Kitchin (1998) and Dodge and Kitchin (2001) have contributed to geographical knowledge a theoretical grounding for conceptualising and working with the ‘cyberspaces’ of the Internet, virtual reality, and conventional communications, such as the telephone. Geographers understand these ‘virtual spaces’ as socially produced spaces in
which the mind can extend free of the body (Dodge & Kitchin 2001). This disembodied space is providing new places and new forms of communities where members can construct their own presentations, play with identities, and adopt roles as they interact with others (Dodge & Kitchin 2001). As previously noted, research on bisexual men who use the Internet comes from outside of geography (Peterson 2001; Klein & Schwartz 2001). These ‘cyberspaces,’ both material and social, are technologically advancing at a rapid rate providing faster and more accessible modes for bisexual men to make connections across space, regardless of scale. How are men using new technologies strategically to connect with other men; to develop a keener sense of identity, or conversely, to unmoor themselves from identity; to construct and maintain networks of support; and to foster communities, both in personal and political ways? What impact will this have on society’s awareness and acceptance of bisexuals generally?

**Middle Ground?**

I want to end my discussion by returning to the work of Clare Hemmings (2002) in *Bisexual Spaces: A Geography of Sexuality and Gender*. Hemmings argues that bisexuality as the ‘middle ground’ between heterosexuality and homosexuality has largely gone unquestioned and unexplored. She contends that this middle ground locates bisexuality in relation to prevailing discourses of gender and sexuality. The problem, as she points out, is that this is most commonly achieved as a result of “abstraction of bisexual experience rather than an engagement with its specificities” (196). Do my respondents provide a map of the bisexual middle ground? Is the middle ground a fluid terrain of desire, ambiguous and subversive? Is bisexuality poised to disrupt the binary structures of gender and sexuality?

David Bell noted that bisexuals are not tourists in gay and lesbian spaces and communities (Bell 1994). I’m not so sure. Bisexuals who are open and accepting of their sexuality, who occupy environments that enable and facilitate their sexuality, are indeed striving for bisexual spaces and communities in their
own right. The participants of this study provide a map not of fluid desire, but of an unyielding 'grid of intelligibility' centred on the heterosexual-homosexual boundary to the exclusion of bisexual possibilities (Hemmings 1993). As gay lives are legitimized, normalized, and institutionalised, are we reforming a hierarchy of sexuality that excludes, even the ability to imagine, those alternate sexualities remaining outside the new limits of acceptability? Without doubt, gay and lesbian people who reject monogamy and celebrate the possibilities of multiple partners and relationships are being repositioned in the hierarchy somewhere below the line of acceptable behaviour. Will this inevitably usher those bissexuals who have begun to leave the closet, right back in? Or will political resistance be reinvigorated with new opposition as bissexuals kick open the closet door and demand inclusion, as so many gays and lesbians of past generations have done? We shall see.
APPENDICES
April 24, 2002

Mr. James McLean  
Graduate Student  
Department of Geography  
Simon Fraser University

Dear Mr. McLean:

Re: Bisexual Geographies: (Fore)Grounding Sexuality  
In the Everyday Geographies of Bisexual Men

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced Request for Ethical Approval of Research has been approved on behalf of the Research Ethics Board. This approval is in effect for twenty-four months from the above date. Any changes in the procedures affecting interaction with human subjects should be reported to the Research Ethics Board. Significant changes will require the submission of a revised Request for Ethical Approval of Research. This approval is in effect only while you are a registered SFU student.

Best wishes for success in this research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hal Weisberg, Director  
Office of Research Ethics

c:  J. Hyndman, Supervisor  
/bjr
APPENDIX II
ADVERTISEMENT FLYER (TEAR OFF CONTACT TABS)

Studying Sexualities
Search for Interviewees
Are you a bisexual man?
Do you consider yourself neither straight nor gay?
Do you have attraction to, or encounters and/or relationships with men & women?

Graduate student in Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University is conducting interviews for project exploring ways in which sexuality relates to everyday use & experience of space & place.

Absolute confidentiality is assured.

If interested please contact James XXX-XXX-XXX, bi_geography@hotmail.com
## APPENDIX III
### SCHEDULE FOR ADVERTISING

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<td>Vannet/Courier</td>
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<td>Kelowna Capital News</td>
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APPENDIX IV
NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS

Bisexual Men Wanted: For research interview. Exploring sexuality and our environments. Confidentiality assured. Contact James at xxx-xxx-xxxx, or bi_geography@hotmail.com

Bisexual Men Wanted: To volunteer for graduate research interview for Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University. Goals include exploring sexuality and our local environments. Confidentiality assured. Contact James for information. Xxx-xxx-xxxx, or bi_geography@hotmail.com

Studying Sexuality: Are you a bisexual man? Do you have, encounters, and/or relationships with men and women? Interviewees required for project exploring sexuality and daily life. Confidentiality assured. Contact James at xxx-xxx-xxxx or bi_geography@hotmail.com

Sexuality studies: Do you have, encounters/relationships with men and women? Bi-men needed for project exploring sexuality/daily life. Confidentiality assured. Contact James 604-910-4364 or bi_geography@hotmail.com

Bisexual Men wanted for research interview Exploring sexuality/daily life. Confidential Contact James at xxx-xxx-xxxx or bi_geography@hotmail.com
APPENDIX V
INTRODUCTION LETTER

Daily Desires: Foregrounding Sexuality In the Everyday Geographies of Bisexual Men

Dear Participant:

My name is James McLean. I am currently an MA candidate in the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University. I hold an Associate of Arts degree from Langara College in Canadian Studies and a Bachelor of Arts from Simon Fraser University in Geography (Sociology Minor).

Thank you for taking the time to involve yourself in this project. In this introductory package I am including important documents that ensure your confidentiality throughout this process. Enclosed you will find the following:

1. Letter of Introduction (this document)
2. Information Sheet for Survey Participants
3. Consent Sheet for Survey Participants
4. Survey Questionnaire
5. Return addressed and postage paid envelope
6. Checklist for Returning Documents
7. Support Information Sheet

Please read all documents carefully before proceeding with any questions. Follow instructions carefully when responding to the survey questions. When you’re satisfied with your answers to the questions, follow the instructions on the “Checklist for Returning Documents.”

Once I have received your package, and verified all documents have been included, I will return a copy of the consent and information forms for your records. If you are selected for an interview and you wish to participate further you will be contacted at the earliest possible time to make arrangements.

If you have any questions or concerns, at this point you may continue to contact me at 1-XXX-XXX-XXXX, bi_geography@hotmail.com, or write me at Geography, XXX-XXXX Main Street, Vancouver, BC, XXX XXX

Once again, I thank you for your participation in this project. Your experiences and perceptions of both your own sexuality and your day-to-day environments will be invaluable.
APPENDIX VI

SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET: QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANT

Daily Desires: Foregrounding Sexuality In the Everyday Geographies of Bisexual Men

Subject Information Sheet: Questionnaire Participant

The purpose of this project is to better understand the worlds that bisexual men live in. In particular, I am interested in exploring the ways in which sexual identity is linked to specific places and practices for bisexual men.

There is a great deal of theory written on this subject but very little evidence drawn directly from bisexual men’s experiences "on the ground." Therefore, the information provided by you through this interview is very important. It is my hope that in depth interviews with you, and other men who consider themselves to be bisexual, whatever this may mean to each of you, will reveal the ways that all of you use different locales to establish various relationships in your lives, how your sexuality is ‘positioned’ in your lives, and how you might imagine a community of bisexuals to look like.

As a participant in this project, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your life in regards to your sexuality, sexual behaviour, and the kinds of places which may or may not be used as contact points for these events. In short, I would like to explore how important your bisexuality is in your daily life. I anticipate the questions could be answered during the course of an hour, but you many take as long as you like and include extra sheets of paper where questions permit.

At no time will your name be used or any identifying information directly connected to the words you use to convey your thoughts. Absolute confidentiality is assured, as I sincerely understand the importance of maintaining discretion and anonymity when discussing such intimate topics.

By reading and signing the consent form for this questionnaire, you are acknowledging your understanding of the process and you are agreeing to participate, though you are not bound by this agreement. You may at anytime discontinue your involvement and decline further participation in the project if for any reason this is your desire. At that point, any information received from you will be returned to you or destroyed and will not be included in the project.

I appreciate the time, courage, and candidness of all participants in this project. If you would be interested in obtaining the results of the research this material can and will be made available to you at the conclusion of the project. Please contact James McLean, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6 or jmclean@sfu.ca, with the subject heading ‘bi-research results’.
APPENDIX VII
CONSENT: SURVEY PARTICIPANT

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received an information document, which describes the research project, the interview process, and issues surrounding confidentiality, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. You will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on the research materials.

Having been asked by James McLean, Graduate Student and principal researcher for this project, in the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University to participate in a survey for the purposes of this project, I have read the procedures specified in the information document. I understand the process to be used in this research and the personal contribution my participation will make to the overall objectives and goals to the project. I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this project at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the project with the principal researcher named above (jmclean@sfu.ca) or with Dr. Jennifer Hyndman (hyndman@sfu.ca), research supervisor in the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University.

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion, by contacting: James McLean, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6

I have been informed that the research material will be held confidential by James Mclean.

I agree to participate in the interview as described in the information document referred to above at a location which is considered discreet, safe, and convenient to myself and in agreement with the interviewer.

NAME (please type or print legibly): ________________________________
ADDRESS: _______________________________________________________
SIGNATURE: ____________________ WITNESS: _______________________
DATE: ________________________

ONCE SIGNED, A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND A SUBJECT FEEDBACK FORM SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE SUBJECT.
APPENDIX VIII
PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Daily Desires: Foregrounding Sexuality in the Everyday Geographies of Bisexual Men

Questionnaire

Please answer all questions in the provided space. (Feel free to use additional paper to complete longer questions)

Age_____ Place of Birth_______

______________________________________________________________________________

Highest Level of Attained Education

Less than Secondary School_____ Secondary School Diploma_____ Community College Degree/Diploma_____ Bachelor’s Degree_____

Master’s Degree____ Doctoral Degree____

Current Employment Status

Full Time_____ Part Time_____ Unemployed_____

Full Time School_____ Part Time School___ Other_____

Current Occupation, if any____________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Annual Income

$0-$9,999_____ $10,000-$19,999_____ $20,000-$29,999_____

$30,000-$39,999_____ $40,000-$49,999_____ $50,000+_____ 

Please provide the nearest cross streets to your place of residence.

______________________________________________________________________________
How do you identify to friends the majority of the time?

Straight_____ Gay_____ Bisexual_____ Other ______________(specify)

How do you identify to workmates/coworkers the majority of the time?

Straight_____ Gay_____ Bisexual_____ Other ______________(specify)

How do you identify to family the majority of the time?

Straight_____ Gay_____ Bisexual_____ Other ______________(specify)

What is your partnership status?

Single_____ Heterosexual Partnership_____ Homosexual Partnership_____ Multiple Ongoing Partnerships_____ Multiple Occasional Partnerships_____ Other ______________(specify)

When and where did you last make opposite-sex sexual contact?


How often do you use this location to make sexual contacts?


What makes this location attractive to you for the purposes of making sexual contact?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

When and where did you last make same-sex sexual contact?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

How often do you use this location to make sexual contacts?

_____________________________________________________________________

What makes this location attractive to you for the purposes of making sexual contact?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

What other locations do you make use of to connect with other men for sex?

_____________________________________________________________________

Do you feel a part of the gay and lesbian community? If yes, how so?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

145
Are you connected to a bisexual community? If so, explain what that connection is for you.

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

If you do not feel connected to a bisexual community, can you explain why you feel this way?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

If there is anything you would like to convey about yourself, your sexuality, or the places in which you your sexuality is expressed, feel free to add your comments. (Use extra paper if needed)

____________________________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX IX
SUBJECT INFORMATION SHEET: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

Daily Desires: Foregrounding Sexuality In the Everyday Geographies of Bisexual Men

Subject Information Sheet: Interview Participant

The purpose of this project is to better understand the worlds that bisexual men live in. In particular, I am interested in exploring the ways in which sexual identity is linked to specific places and practices for bisexual men.

There is a great deal of theory written on this subject but very little evidence drawn directly from bisexual men's experiences "on the ground." Therefore, the information provided by you through this interview is very important. It is my hope that in depth interviews with you, and other men who consider themselves to be bisexual, whatever this may mean to each of you, will reveal the ways that all of you use different locales to establish various relationships in your lives, how your sexuality is 'positioned' in your lives, and how you might imagine a community of bisexuals to look like.

As a participant in this project, you will be asked to engage in a conversation with the interviewer about your life in regards to your sexuality, sexual behaviour, and the kinds of places which may or may not be used as contact points for these events. In short, I would like to discuss how important your bisexuality is in your daily life.

With your permission, these interviews will be tape recorded, and later transcribed. At no time will your name be used or any identifying information directly connected to the words you use to convey your thoughts. Absolute confidentiality is assured, as I sincerely understand the importance of maintaining discretion and anonymity when discussing such intimate topics.

By reading and signing the consent form, you are acknowledging your understanding of the process and you are agreeing to participate, though you are not bound by this agreement. During the interview, you may pause at any time, stop at any time, and, decline further participation in the project if for any reason this is your desire. At that point, any information received from you will be returned to you or destroyed and will not be included in the project.

I appreciate the time, courage, and candidness of all participants in this project. If you would be interested in obtaining the results of the research this material can and will be made available to you at the conclusion of the project. Please contact James McLean, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6 or jmclean@sfu.ca, with the subject heading 'bi-research results'.
APPENDIX X
CONSENT: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received an information document, which describes the research project, the interview process, and issues surrounding confidentiality, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. You will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on the research materials.

Having been asked by James McLean, Graduate Student and principal researcher for this project, in the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University to participate in an interview for the purposes of this project, I have read the procedures specified in the information document. I understand the process to be used in this research and the personal contribution my participation will make to the overall objectives and goals to the project. I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this project at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the project with the principal researcher named above (jmclean@sfu.ca) or with Dr. Jennifer Hyndman (hyndman@sfu.ca), research supervisor in the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University.

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion, by contacting: James McLean, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6.

I have been informed that the research material will be held confidential by James Mclean.

I agree to participate in the interview as described in the information document referred to above at a location which is considered discreet, safe, and convenient to myself and in agreement with the interviewer.

NAME (please type or print legibly): ________________________________

ADDRESS: _____________________________________________________

SIGNATURE: __________________ WITNESS: _______________________

DATE: ________________________________

ONCE SIGNED, A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM AND A SUBJECT FEEDBACK FORM SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE SUBJECT.
APPENDIX XI
PARTICIPANT DOCUMENT RETURN CHECKLIST

Checklist for Returning Documents

1. Double-check all forms and instructions to ensure correct completion of the package.
2. Make sure you have signed the consent form.
3. You must insert the fully completed consent form, the completed survey questionnaire, and the Checklist for Returning Documents into the addressed stamped envelope included in your package.
4. You may keep the letter of introduction, the information sheet, and the support information sheet included in your package.
5. A copy of the consent form will be mailed to you.
6. Please use the provided forms and envelope unless otherwise informed in the package.
7. Seal the envelope and return.

I have included the following documents:

☐ Consent Form
☐ Survey Questionnaire
☐ Checklist for Returning Documents

☐ I am interested in doing an interview
☐ I am not interested in doing an interview

Thank You
APPENDIX XII
PARTICIPANT SUPPORT INFORMATION SHEET

Bi-Support Information Sheet

Books:


Support Info:

BiNET BC/BiFace/Options-Box 53515-984 W. Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1K0 or 604-875-6336

Options-Social/friendship for bisexual men/women.---BiFace-Support/discussion group for bisexual men/women.----BiNET BC-Resources/networking for bi/bi-supportive people.

Crisis Centre-24hr counselling. 604-872-3311---Kamloops Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Community- Box 2071, Stn A, Kamloops, V2B 7K6 or 250-376-7311- Information and support services, social events.

Prideline BC at The Centre-1170 Bute St., Vancouver, BC, V6E 1Z6--1-800-566-1170---Information, referrals, peer support each evening 7-10pm. Toll-free for callers outside the Lower Mainland.

Some Web Sources:

Anything That Moves- Online Bisexual magazine- www.anythingthatmoves.com

Surf the internet for other sites as well. There are many non-sexual sites devoted to bisexual people, their concerns, and their issues. Many gay and lesbian sites are also useful for information on bisexuality.
APPENDIX XIII
CORE INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Daily Desires: Foregrounding Sexuality in the Everyday Geographies of Bisexual Men

Interview Guideline

Thank you for participating in this project. Before we begin, I would like to tell you a bit about myself. I am 32 years old and I self identify as bisexual. I am a Masters student in the department of Geography working under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Hyndman. I realized that I wanted to do this research when I began to ‘out’ myself as a bisexual man and it dawned on me that my life, that is the places I chose to live, the areas that I would frequent, and the communities I was involved in, had been very much linked to how I was identifying at a given point in time. For example, I would move in and out of the West End as the Gay Village depending on whether my current partner was male or female. I guess I felt safer in a gay relationship living in the West End, and safer outside of that area when I was with a woman. It was at this point that I began to see my own sexual geographies that then prompted me to look deeper into the lives of bisexual men to see how their experiences might be similar and different to my own.

Before we begin, I would like to give you the chance to ask me any questions or raise any concerns you might have at this time. I would also like you to know that you are welcome to ask questions during the interview if you need clarification and that if you need to stop the interview for any reason, you must feel free to do so.

Have you always lived in this area Vancouver, Burnaby, Kelowna, for example?

If No--Where do you originally come from?

What prompted the move to your current locale?

Is place of residence significant to you as someone who identifies as bisexual?

What are some of the factors that help you decide where to live?

What have been some of the factors in determining where you will work?

You are participating in this research because you self identify as bisexual.

What does bisexual mean to you? [prompts--sexual activity, behaviour, emotional, psychological, central to identity, etc.]
Describe your relations to members of the opposite sex? If married or partnered with a female.....How do you describe or characterize your current relationship?

Do you also engage in sex with other men?

If Yes----How would you describe these relationships?

Where do they take place? Where do you meet?

How did you find out when and where to meet men for sex?

What kinds of activities do you do?

If No----But you still consider yourself bisexual? Tell me then, why you consider yourself bisexual?

(If you have a partner) Does your partner know you identify as bisexual?

If No----Do you make an effort to hide it? Is it an issue?

If Yes----Do you openly discuss it within your primary relationship?

How do you integrate your sexuality into your relationship?

How does it influence your relationship? Make it easier/harder?

Is being bisexual something you consider on a daily basis?

If Yes----Is it something that influences daily decisions? How?

If No----How often does your sexuality contribute or affect your life?

When does your sexuality become an important concern?

How is your sexuality included in your current relationship/marriage/home?

Do you think a Bisexual community exists?

If No----Why not?

Do you desire the presence of a bisexual community?

If No----Why not?

If Yes----Describe what that community might look like.

Who would be included?
How are connections made?
What would its purpose be?
How does this community fit in relation to the Gay and Lesbian communities?
If Yes----Describe that community?
Who is included?
How and where are connections made?
What is its purpose?
How does this community fit in relation to the Gay and Lesbian communities?
Do you include yourself as a member of a bisexual community?
If No----Why not?
If Yes----Describe that community?
Who is included?
How and where are connections made?
What is its purpose?
How does this community fit in relation to the Gay and Lesbian communities?
How big a part of your life do you consider your sexuality to be?
Name all of the places where you engage in sex with other men.
How did you find out about these places?
Which places are most comfortable for you, where you feel the safest?
Which places do you use even though you recognize some kind of risk?
What are the risks associated with some of these locations?
APPENDIX XIV
INTERVIEW GUIDE: ANDREW

1. Can you tell me what being bisexual means to you?
2. Why do you think bisexual people have been unable to form spaces, places, and communities like gay and lesbian people?
   a. Is that something that you would desire? Why/not?
3. You note your exposure to the gay and lesbian community. Can you tell me about this experience for you?
   a. Why have you chosen not to participate?
4. How important do you think identifying as a bisexual might be on a day to day basis, in terms of things like going to school, choosing a place to live, finding ways to meet men and women?
5. You mention that within a variety of social circles, and indeed spaces in more formal settings such as school, work, and within the family, that you maintain different identities, that is, bisexual or straight. My first question is simple, is there ever a time within any context that you identify as gay? Tell me about that.
   a. My second question is broader, but can you tell me about some of the reasons you maintain these various identities?
   b. You also mention that if asked you will identify as bisexual. Is there ever a situation or context in which you would identify as straight? Tell me about that.
6. I get the sense from the survey that you consider both the spaces in which you connect with men and women for sex and, indeed the connections themselves to be very different from one another.
   a. First then, can you give an idea of your connections with women?
   b. That is where they take place, in what context, how often, how you feel about these connections?
   c. Do they develop into relationships beyond one night?
   d. Do they know you are bisexual?
   e. Or at what point might you consider telling them about your bisexuality?
7. You mention that meeting men is less complicated than meeting women, so, tell me about the connections you have with men (why are they less complicated) in terms of where they occur, in what context, how often, and how you feel about these connections?
   a. Do they ever develop beyond one night?
   b. Do they know you are bisexual?
   c. Or at what point might you tell them about your bisexuality?—internet, safety, connecting for reasons other than sex—always gay men, bi men, straight men?
8. I would like to know more about this friend with whom you meet regularly for sex. Can you characterize the relationship?
   a. When and where you meet.
   b. Is this a secret relationship or is it also part of other aspects of your life?
   c. If separate why and how do you keep it separate?
9. Can you tell me more about the values you mention that are important when meeting men—confidentiality, discretion, trust, comfort—why are these important to you? Are they also important when connecting with women?

10. In the survey you refer to connections with men as homosexual, and you talk about straight clubs and environments.
   a. Do you ever consider a place as bisexual?
   b. And at what point might you consider a relation, connection for sex, ongoing relationship, etc, to be bisexual?

11. A return to the broad again, you noted in the survey how you are more comfortable in different areas of the city in terms of your sexuality?
   a. Can you tell me more about why that is so and in what areas specifically?

12. In what ways do you express being bisexual or can one express being bisexual without having to say it? For example, gay men can express it by holding hands in public.
APPENDIX XV
INTERVIEW GUIDE: DARREN

1. I would like to start with something you mentioned in the survey, about labels. Can you tell me more about why you avoid labels and why that is important for you?
2. While labels are not important to you, they are to many if not most people, the help further the political agenda for rights, for example. So, how do you identify when put into the position to do so? Does this differ across space?
3. Notwithstanding the use of the label, what does being bisexual mean to you?
4. Does your bisexuality ever make you feel restricted in what you can say, do, or be involved with? Or do you sometimes simply refer to yourself as either gay or straight? To make things easier?
5. Do you ever feel you must keep your sexuality a secret? In some of these different spaces I mentioned earlier?
6. You mentioned no visible bisexual community, that it is more behaviour patterns than identity. Can you tell me more about why you see it this way?
7. What makes bisexuality a behaviour versus homosexuality as identity? Is it only a matter of time?
8. Can you tell me about your relationship or interaction with the gay and lesbian community generally?
9. Can you tell me about your experiences or interactions with the gay community in terms of being bisexual? Are they important places to be for you?
10. Is bisexuality somewhere within this gay community?
11. Are you comfortable expressing bisexuality within gay and lesbian spaces?
12. What have been your experiences in gay spaces or the gay community, be it a bar or other social spaces, in terms of meeting people, especially as a bisexual person?
13. Regardless of your 'bisexuality' you are in a homosexual relationship. Is there space within that relationship for your bisexuality?
14. Do you have ways of expressing your bisexuality?
15. Is there a need to express it?
16. Where or how do your other-sex attractions/desires get expressed or placed?
17. How do you, if you do, respond to your assumed homosexuality, as we are often labelled based on the gender of our partners?
18. Does your current relationship status get expressed in all spaces of your life-home, work, public, social?
19. Or is it closeted in some or all of these areas?
20. What part[s] of your sexuality remains closeted an in which spaces?
21. Can you tell me about your relationship, the other-sex one that ended in 1998?
22. At that time did you consider yourself bisexual? Was that partner aware of your sexuality?
23. Can you compare that relationship to the one you are in now, and think about how the day-to-day might be different in each one?
24. In comparison to your current relationship, was the other-sex one more open in terms of work and social spaces?
25. You mentioned in your survey two spaces in which you have met partners. One was the bridge club and one was the online/cyber space of Manline.
26. Can you tell me more about how your bridge club comes to be a space of intimacy in the sense that it allows for contact and expression of desire?
27. You met your current partner through Manline, and that generally your first meetings with men were through the phone or letter. Can you tell me what made this method appealing enough to you to use?
28. Have you used similar routes in order to meet women? Why/not?
29. In moving from a partner of one sex to a partner of another sex, in what ways does that alter the way you interact with your life spaces-social, work, etc. People ask questions, right, and so does your day-to-day life change at all depending on the sex of your partner?
30. Do you feel that your life is organized somewhat differently when you are partnered with an other-sex than with same-sex?
APPENDIX XVI
INTERVIEW GUIDE: EVAN

1. From your survey, I get the sense that you are almost if not entirely 'out' when it comes to being bisexual. Can you tell me a bit about how you see your bisexuality?
2. Have you always been fully out? Tell me about that.
3. Can you talk about any exceptions to the rule, that is are there any spaces or places, whether they are physical, representational, social, in which you keep your bisexuality to yourself?
4. Are there times and place where you will identify as either gay or straight?
5. Can you tell me about your current relationship pattern, how it fits with your bisexuality, or how your bisexuality fits in with it?
6. If you had to list certain places that were either part of being bisexual or part of being in your relationship could you do that?
7. Can you tell me about the various palaces you hook up with men, both for sexual, and perhaps for social reasons, connected to your bisexuality?
8. What are the differences between the two spaces?
9. Is there full disclosure in your relationship in terms of your same-sex relations?
10. You seem to have a lot of interaction within the gay community as well as the bisexual community. Can you tell me first what you consider the gay community to be?
11. And the bisexual community?
12. What did you mean about the limited vision of the bisexual community?
13. Can you tell me about the problems you have had in terms of finding spaces in which to be bisexual or express your bisexuality?
14. What do you mean by the queer community?
15. Does this include you and your current partner?
16. I would like it, if you will, if you would talk about they way you compartmentalize your life.
17. Can you tell me more about why you see the different parts of your life diverging and not converging?
18. Can you talk about what you noted as the movement back and forth between the gay and straight community and what that has meant for you in terms of organizing your life?
APPENDIX XVII
INTERVIEW GUIDE: PAUL

1. Can we begin with you telling me what being bisexual means for you?
2. Are you aware of a bisexual community in Vancouver?
3. Do you feel connected to a bisexual community? Would you like to feel a part of a community? Why or why not?
4. What about the gay community in Vancouver, can you tell me about your relationship with the gay community?
5. Can you tell me your relationships history, say over the last ten years or so.
6. Is there a difference between your relationships with men and women?
7. What is important to you in terms of meeting women, in terms of where you meet or have sex with them?
8. What is important in terms of meeting men?
9. Where do you go when you want to have a sexual encounter with men?
10. Why is this the place you go?
11. Do you go other places to hook up with men or women?
12. Your questionnaire states that you identify as either bisexual or straight depending on who or where you are. Can you tell me about that.
13. Have you ever identified one way and received a negative response from the other person?
14. Why do you choose to identify certain ways in certain places?
15. Do you ever identify as gay? Say in clubs or bars? Why?
APPENDIX XVIII
INTERVIEW GUIDE: MIKE

1. Can you tell me what being bisexual means to you?
2. How is being bisexual making your daily life different from someone who is gay or straight?
3. Can you tell me about how you fit your bisexuality into your daily life in terms of your current relationship (heterosexual)?
4. You note in your questionnaire that you identify as straight to friends, colleagues, and family. Does anyone know you consider yourself bisexual?
5. Who knows and why do they know? If no one knows, how does that make life easier or more difficult?
6. Outside of your marriage, do you have encounters with women? Or do you try to have additional encounters with women? If yes, when, where, how? What is different in terms of how you do this versus finding men? If you do not seek other women, why not?
7. Do you think there is room in your current relationship for your bisexuality, either as desire/fantasy or as behaviour/practice? Explain.
8. Can you tell me what places are available for you to explore your bisexuality? Again, either as desire/practice?
9. Why do you use [a place] over [an other place]?
10. Do you consider activities in such places as acts of bisexuality or homosexuality? Or does it matter to you?
11. Any other places we can talk about? Theatres? Public places? Do you go to gay bars?
12. Do you see yourself as included in a larger gay/lesbian community? Explain.
13. Can you tell me how you situate/position yourself in relation to the bi-community or other bisexuals?
14. Do you have any 'rules' or 'limits' on yourself in terms of behaviours, acts, partners, places you will meet, etc. Why/not?
15. When you have encounters with men, how do you identify to them, if they ask?
16. Can you tell me about using cyber spaces—chat rooms, Internet, phone lines? How did you find them?
17. Your current working schedule is opposite to your partners, can you tell me how this makes life easier or more difficult on a daily basis given your sexual desires?
18. Is your sexuality an important daily concern/issue in your life? Tell me more.
19. Are there places or areas in the city you think are particularly suited for developing a bisexual identity or lifestyle?
20. One final question, a chance for you to say in your words, or summarize your feelings more generally, Can you tell me about the difficulties in day-to-day living that being bisexual poses for you?
APPENDIX XIX
INTERVIEW GUIDE: RAMONE

1. Can we begin with you telling what being bisexual means to you? Do you see yourself in transition to becoming gay?
2. How do you think it affects your daily life?
3. How is being bisexual making your daily life different from someone who is gay or straight?
4. Does your bisexuality ever make you feel restricted in what you can say, do, or who you can be involved with, when, and where?
5. Do you ever identify as gay/straight in different social contexts?
6. Can you tell me about why you identify gay in family context, straight in work/colleague?
7. Do you feel connected to a bisexual community, or to other bisexual people more generally?
8. Where is the bi-community in Vancouver, or in general?
9. Can you tell me where you see yourself fitting within the gay and lesbian community?
10. What experiences have you had as bisexual in the gay and lesbian community? Acceptance, questions, hostility?
11. Are their parts of you sexuality that are closeted in different contexts and out of the closet in others?
12. Do you think there is room in your current relationship for your bisexuality, either as desire/fantasy or as behaviour/practice? Explain.
13. Can you tell me about how you fit your bisexuality into your daily life in terms of your current relationship (heterosexual)?
14. Do you also make connections with women outside of your relationship?
15. How are your relationships different between men and women?
16. What things are important, or what is an ideal context for you to find women to have sex with?
17. What things are important, or what is an ideal context for you to find men to have sex with?
18. Can you tell me what ways you use to manage these different relationships? Is it carefully planned?
19. Do your partners, of either sex, get involved in your whole life, or are they just sexual partners?
20. Can you tell me about some places you meet women...where do you go if you want to meet a woman for possible sexual contact? Why?
21. Can you tell me about the places that you find ideal for finding men for sex? Why do you use these spaces?
22. Are there different reasons you would use different places?
23. Have you ever used public sex sites, bathhouses, sex clubs/circuit parties?
24. How do your relations with men differ from women?
25. Can you tell me about some issues or concerns you have as a bisexual person?
26. Is meeting other bisexuals important for you?
APPENDIX XX
INTERVIEW GUIDE: EVAN (SECOND INTERVIEW)

1. Do you consider your bisexuality a work in progress?
2. That is, is there an end result, an ultimate goal to be reached, a final identity of bisexuality?
3. How important to you has the move from Ontario so many years ago been to the process of identifying as bisexual?
4. Is it important for you to have a place within society as a bisexual man? Why/not?
5. Can you tell me about your struggles in terms of being bisexual in a variety of scales—for example, your personal spaces, body space, daily live spaces and bisexuality—community—nation, perhaps in terms of laws?
6. How have you arranged your day to day life in ways that facilitates being bisexual—allows for easier expression of your sexuality?
7. How is being bisexual making your daily life different from someone who is either gay or straight?
8. Can you tell me about using cyberspaces for bisexual expression?
9. Can you discuss what your perception is of the spaces allowed or created for bisexuals through pop culture or the media? And importantly how that affects you on a daily life basis?
10. Being bisexual and open and out, are you ever totally free of the closet? Can you tell me about some recent experiences where you felt the closet again, what it feels like to be in the closet?
11. Can you tell me about your perception of bisexual women versus bisexual men in terms of spaces and places for expression, or in terms of the closet metaphor?
12. Why do you think bi-men have such difficulty compared to bi-women and the spaces in pop culture?
13. Is the closet a means of safety/liberation/or restriction for you, or all of the above?
14. How do you think society views bisexual men? What is the societal imagination of bisexual men? Where does this come from?
15. Does bisexuality have a space within monogamy or vice versa?
16. Can you tell me about the importance of threesomes or group activity for you, for your sexuality? As opposed to single partner encounters.
17. Outside of multiple partners, do you consider it gay sex with a man, straight sex with a woman, or always bisexual when you have sex?
18. What do consider to be the biggest day-to-day issue for you as a bisexual man?
19. One final question, a chance for you to say in your words, or summarize your feelings more generally, Can you tell me about the difficulties in day-to-day living that being bisexual poses for you?
# APPENDIX XXI

## AGE BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
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<td>Andrew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
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<td>Evan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
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<td>Paul</td>
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<td>Ramone</td>
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<td>Brian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren</td>
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**APPENDIX XXII**

**HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ACHIEVED BY PARTICIPANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garret</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Community College</td>
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<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Community College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramone</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Community College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
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## Appendix XXIII

### Annual Income Level of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Income Level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garret</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>$20,000-29,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>$0-9,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>$50,000+</td>
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<td>Evan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Declined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>$40,000-49,999</td>
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<td>Ramone</td>
<td>$0-9,999</td>
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<td>Brian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>$50,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren</td>
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REFERENCES


