



“Out” in the field. Reflecting on the dilemmas of insider status on data collection and conducting interviews with gay men

Interviews with
gay men

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore using a reflexive approach the impact of author’s personal positioning on issues of power balance between the interviewer and the interviewee, dealing with sensitive stories and concerns of difference and sameness between participants and the researcher in both the data collection process and also during the interviews.

Design/methodology/approach – Initial data were gathered from 45 semi-structured interviews with self-identified gay men in a wide range of occupations and ages working in the seaside resort of Bournemouth on the south coast of England.

Findings – The paper highlights some of the dilemmas of insider status and doing research on gay men. These include: ethical issues of closeness and involvement with participants, dealing with author’s own personal frustrations, tackling the power imbalance between the interviewer and the interviewee and the impact of author’s personal positioning on the data collection.

Originality/value – Little research has been done on the impact of men doing research on issues of diversity. In particular, this paper re-examines the power balance between the interviewer and interviewee as being one sided as previous studies have suggested in the researcher’s favour. It also uncovers ethical dilemmas such as sexual attraction and involvement that has had scant coverage in the literature.

Keywords Methodology, Diversity, United Kingdom, Reflexivity, Gay men

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Johnson and Duberley (2003) define the role of reflexivity as about monitoring how the researcher’s behaviour impacts upon their study. England (1994) adds to this by stating that reflexivity is about taking a self-critical approach to research and about being self-consciously aware. As Finlay (2002) states this self-consciousness lends itself to the researcher telling “confessional stories” about the dilemmas and pitfalls in the research process. This paper aims to redress these issues identifying critical incidents and issues that I had to confront in both the recruitment of participants and during the subsequent interviews. McKeganey and Bloor (1991) argue there has been scant research of the impact of male gender on fieldwork and data collection. In this paper I tackle this issue by reflectively discussing my personal positioning as an openly gay man and the ensuing benefits and drawbacks of insider status in researching gay men.

Previous studies (Legard et al., 2008; Platzer and James, 1997; Rubin and Rubin, 1995) have highlighted the possible pitfalls and issues around conducting interviews around sensitive issues. This study came under this category. The focus of the research was an explorative one to investigate how gay men manage their gay identity in the workplace throughout their working lives including issues of discrimination and personal coping strategies. A key aim of the study was to investigate how gay men

responded to discrimination. There have been a number of progressive pieces of legislation in the UK enacted with the intent to eradicate discrimination on the basis of sexuality in the workplace. The pace and scale of acceptance of gay equality laws[1] has been relatively rapid in recent years. Furthermore, there has been a significant change in social attitudes towards homosexuality over the past 20 years (The British Social Attitudes Survey, 2008). It is against this backdrop that I aimed to explore the ways gay men challenge, negotiate and conform in the two way process of managing their identities in the workplace.

I conducted 45 semi-structured in-depth interviews with self-identified gay men in a wide range of occupations and ages working in the seaside resort of Bournemouth on the south coast of England. I chose to adopt a qualitative methodology in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the ways gay men manage their gay identity in their interaction with others.

One of the concerns in doing qualitative research is the issue of bias creeping into the data, particularly given my insider status as a gay man exploring the working lives of gay men. One of the key strengths of adopting a reflexive approach as Yip (2008) points out is that it allows the researcher to examine where he or she fits with respect to the research, what exactly his/her involvement is and the researcher's impact on the fieldwork and data analysis. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) neutrality is impossible to obtain, and probably not a legitimate goal in qualitative research. Lee (1993) also questions the feasibility of taking a neutral stance. Moreover, Lee argues that any spurious claims to neutrality will in fact impede the research activity. It is therefore more appropriate to use one's insider status and its ensuing benefits it entails rather than pursuing a fruitless task of neutrality. Given my personal involvement in the research as an openly gay man, striving for objectivity would be flawed. Theoretical concepts used in this study to guide the research were influenced by my own personal experiences in the workplace. During the data collection process, hunches and ideas drawn from a gay standpoint have to some extent driven and shaped the data. Consequently, it is, as Yip (2008, p. 4) points out, important to declare our biases and its impact on our research. It is for this reason that I have decided to use reflection as a research strategy in order to explore my presence and baggage in the study. Thus, adopting a reflexive approach and revealing my personal involvement in this paper addresses some of the concerns raised surrounding the issue of objectivity and bias. As Ritchie et al. (2008, p. 20) state:

Reflexivity is important for striving for objectivity and neutrality. We try to reflect upon ways in which bias might creep into our qualitative research practice and acknowledge that our own background and beliefs can be relevant here.

2. Being an insider

Previous researchers have reflexively expressed clear benefits of being open about their gay identity and their insider status in their studies of sexual minorities (Homfray, 2008; Cooper, 2006; Yip, 2008; LaSala, 2003; Rumens, 2008; Ozturk, 2011). One of the major benefits is the increased trust and rapport achieved through a shared identity. This was evident in Homfray's (2008) study of sexual minorities in the northwest of England. He noticed that there was an increased level of trust and a higher level of rapport. Furthermore, Homfray argues that, according to his observations, if the researcher is assumed to be heterosexual this might lead to possible resistance from some individuals to participate, either denying access to target populations or

censoring the information they provide. Consequently, Homfray believes that his insider status made it easier to elicit information from his respondents, particularly over sensitive issues around sexuality. Interestingly, Bruni (2006) in his ethnographic study of an all gay, male workplace, he chose to be economical with the truth, by stating that he was single when asked whether he had a boyfriend rather than reveal his heterosexual identity. Obviously, there are ethical issues that need to be addressed where some of the participants in his study might have felt deceived in imparting information they might not have wished to have done had they known his outsider status. It is difficult to be certain whether my shared sexual identity had a bearing on how they revealed personal and at times disturbing stories of their experiences of being a gay man in the workplace. Nevertheless, some respondents revealed their “inner soul” expressing quite raw emotions whereas others would recount stories beyond my line of questioning that were rather sexually explicit. This raises the question whether these interviewees would have been so open and frank to an outsider. Possibly because of a shared identity interviewees might have inferred that I might not have been so shocked by such stories and thus felt more relaxed. The shared experiences of “coming out” and personal experiences of managing a gay identity in the workplace I would argue facilitated a more open exchange.

I found that revealing my sexual identity made it easier to gain access to target groups. This was particularly the case during the recruitment drive of my study. For example, I aimed to use different sources (snowballing, Gay Pride and gay bars) in order to obtain a diverse sample. One of my aims was to obtain a wide range of occupations and ages in my sample. Using snowballing alone would not have achieved this. One such source was requesting permission to set up a stall at Gay Pride. Initially there was reticence from key gatekeepers to give me access to key decision makers. This rescinded after I had revealed my gay identity. Similarly, as with previous studies (Rumens, 2008; Cooper, 2006; Platzer and James, 1997; Williams, 1993), being a gay man made it easier for me to find other gay men to interview through my gay friends and acquaintances. In fact 11 out of 45 of my sample came from snowballing. In one case, after having interviewed a junior member of one of the largest organisations in the area, this contact initiated a further volunteer in a much more senior position as well as access to the company’s LGBT networking group.

In addition to using Gay Pride as a source, I also visited the gay bars in Bournemouth accompanied with a clip board seeking potential interviewees for a later mutually agreed interview. Frequenting gay bars for my research created ethical dilemmas. Gay bars can be very much sexualised spaces in which some gay men visit with the primary purpose of cruising other gay men. As with previous research on sexual minorities (LaSala, 2003; Heaphy et al., 1998; Williams, 1993; Walby, 2010; Einarsdottir, 2012) a shared gay identity opens up the potential as Heaphy et al. (1998, p. 465) state “of sexual attraction and involvement between researchers and respondents” – something that as Heaphy et al. state has remained silenced in the research literature. I noticed that I was greeted to a range of reactions when I approached gay men in the bars to ask whether they might be interested in participating in my research. Some of the younger gay men sensed a sexual under current in my intentions possibly believing that my approach was just a ruse to chat them up. On the other hand, there were a few individuals who flirted with me. One individual in fact proffered his mobile number on the pretext of a romantic encounter rather than to be genuinely interested in participating in my study. I was therefore aware of the sexual dynamics between the researcher, the researched and the potential

respondent. Like LaSala (2003) and Walby (2010), I felt there needed to be ethical boundaries between the investigator and the participant. I thus graciously declined any advances or did not respond to flirtatious behaviour. Consequently, a shared sexual identity brings with it potential ethical dilemmas that an outsider might not have had to confront. Certainly a researcher doing similar fieldwork needs to be aware of these ethical concerns.

Although insider status and a common identity might bring many benefits as outlined above, assuming sameness in identity through the insider perspective does, however, have its drawbacks. As LaSala (2003) points out, there is great variability within the LGBT communities. An insider perspective assumes that there is commonality of experiences and consequently fails to recognise any differences. There is also the problem of the researcher “going native”, that they identify so closely with the researched population that they fail to notice what is unique and of significance about their own group. LaSala (2003) also raises the point that it might also be the case that insider investigators might fail to adequately explore certain respondent perceptions and their world view, under the taken for granted assumption that the respondent’s experiences and outlook are the same. Consequently, the inside investigator might in error assume common cultural understandings or fail to explore their respondents’ unique perceptions. Platzer and James (1997, p. 630) argue that insider status can make us immune to what we hear. It was only when they presented their findings to a shocked audience that they realised the significance of their findings. I realised that I equally made similar mistakes. Reflecting on some of the interviews I conducted, I initially ignored the significance of how respondents took heterosexual work colleagues to gay bars, even though it was a repeated theme raised by a number of respondents. I initially felt that it was not worthy of note, until others I had presented my findings to showed surprise.

As discussed earlier, reflexivity as Ritchie et al. (2008) argue is a useful tool if we are striving for neutrality and objectivity. It also allows us to reveal potential bias that might be brought into our research. The dilemma I faced was the degree to which I should show detachment and distance from the interviewee. As England (1994) states positivist methodologies have influenced our thinking that research is only of good quality if there is a degree of neutrality and impartiality. Some of my respondents revealed very personal stories including: bereavement, harassment, discrimination in the workplace and crises in their lives. Not showing any empathy or compassion during these moments would have conveyed a cold dispassionate disinterest. As Platzer and James (1997) express as insiders themselves, they felt it was absurd to feign ignorant neutrality. Although I avoided value laden questions, I was aware that at times my own personal frustration and irritation at the interviewees for their unwillingness to face “reality”. Reflexivity was useful in bringing attention to my own involvement in the research. An example of this was when a few respondents did not see derogatory nicknames as being discriminatory. One of my respondents, Kris, was a good example of this:

SR: Why would you say it is gay friendly?

Kris: Because I feel very comfortable there. And it’s gay friendly, but they just rip the piss out of me. They call me a faggot, flamer, what have you. But there is no malice behind it.

Although I did not express my irritation to Kris, I remember recounting my frustration in my notes immediately after the interview. Another example of this was where I tried to get respondents to reflect on how they managed their gay identity throughout their

working lives – a key research objective. I wanted them to reflect on how they might have modified or adapted the way they presented their gay identity in light of job changes, different work contexts, etc. Even though I gave my own examples, quite a number of respondents found it difficult to reflect. A few respondents, in fact, believed that how they managed their gay identity had not changed irrespective of changing social contexts and situations. Jack, who had started his career in the army in the 1990s and was now owner and manager of a gay lifestyle store was a good example of this even though the social context and occupation had radically changed. As illustrated in this piece of transcript:

SR: Throughout your working life in what ways would you say you have changed or adapted how you manage your identity in the last ten, fifteen years?

Jack: I don't think I've changed much at all. I still do whatever I did back then.

On reflection, I realise that my frustration might have impacted upon and tainted the data. I ensured, however, that I did not influence the respondents' standpoints by expressing my own views or displaying signs of dismay in my body language. Nevertheless, in my notes immediately after these interviews I noted my frustration or disappointment in respondents' inability to reflect on how they had modified and adapted the ways they presented their gay identity throughout their working lives. Such sentiments might not have arisen if an outsider had conducted this research.

3. Redressing the power imbalance

There is a considerable debate particularly amongst feminist researchers (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1993; Pheonix, 1994) to ensure that any power imbalance between the researcher and the interviewee is reduced as much as possible. There is an underlying assumption that power predominately lies in the hands of the researcher at the expense of the researched. This is not always the case and as Pheonix (1994) points out power fluctuates between the researcher and the interviewee. For example, at the recruitment stage it is the potential volunteer who has the ultimate control in whether to decide to participate or not. At this stage I had to muster my best persuasive skills in trying to encourage them to be involved in my study. Quite often after the initial screening at Gay Pride or at the gay bars in town, I would follow up with a phone call only to be turned down. There were equally occasions where appointments had been arranged but the volunteer failed to turn up or appointment times had to be rearranged at the last moment. In all these situations I was powerless and felt that I had to be accommodating to their demands. I did not feel as if I had the power to dictate the terms. Even during the interviews the issue of control varied depending on the interviewee. For example, one of my last respondents I interviewed, Jenson came across as cold and unresponsive to my questioning. His manner was rather curt and abrupt. Listening back over the recording, I could sense the tense atmosphere with short answers and long pauses. His abruptness and silence at times could be interpreted as a form of empowerment to protect him from disclosing matters that he did not wish to divulge. The abruptness in his manner affected me as an interviewer. I felt uneasy and uncomfortable. Moments during the interview I felt my authority and power as an interviewer were draining away from me. It also made me question my abilities as an interviewer. Thus the dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee play a significant role in the power balance. This might have had an impact on the data collected. A lack of rapport or an unwillingness to disclose information to me might have produced an inaccurate account of his experiences in how he presented his gay

identity in the workplace. Consequently, interviewees can choose and can control what they wish to reveal as well as determine how their stories are presented.

One of the advantages of being an insider was the opportunity to build up a rapport and trust with respondents. Obviously this was not necessarily the case with Jenson.

Nevertheless, in an attempt to redress the power imbalance and to establish a better rapport with interviewees I would reveal my own personal stories and experiences as a gay man in the workplace. In these stories I would give examples of how I had changed the way I presented my gay identity over my working life, reactions of others in the workplace and frank and honest accounts of how I felt. I particularly did this where respondents were not so forthcoming or had difficulty in reflecting on how they managed their gay identity throughout their working lives – a key research aim. I noticed that by doing this that it facilitated triggers from respondents in relation to their own personal experiences. A similar strategy was adopted in previous studies on sexual minorities (Platzer and James, 1997; Cooper, 2006; Phellas, 1998; Rumens, 2008). By revealing my own personal stories and experiences in the workplaces based upon my sexuality I felt that I was making the interview process a less exploitative experience for the respondent. Nevertheless, revealing my own personal stories might have impacted on the data. My personal stories might have triggered respondents in giving me information that they perceived I wanted to hear. They might have tried to look for experiences that were similar to mine rather than ones that might have been extremely different. Song and Parker (1995) note how they would disclose information about themselves in order to encourage interviewees to be more open. There are, however, dilemmas with this strategy. This might significantly influence what respondents divulge, saying what they think the interviewer wants to hear. This might limit the diversity of experiences that could arise from the interviews.

Another way in which the power imbalance can be redressed is through giving respondents the freedom to choose where they would feel most comfortable to be interviewed. As Legard, Keegan and Ward (2008) state, the choice of venue should be left to the participant. I would argue that by giving respondents a wide choice of venues it gives them a degree of empowerment. I would offer participants the option of their workplace, my workplace, their home, my home or a neutral meeting place. The only condition that I placed was as long as the location was quiet enabling the recording of the interview. In fact, the vast majority chose to be interviewed in their homes (27). Arguably, the decision to be interviewed in their own homes also helped to rebalance the power relationship as I was entering their personal space. Although I took precautions, there are of course potential safety concerns in conducting interviews in the respondents' homes with near strangers. Nevertheless, in giving respondents the choice it made them more comfortable and rebalanced the power imbalance.

One of the dilemmas in the relationship between the researcher and the respondent is how to deal with sensitive matters without upsetting or exploiting the interviewee. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) state there is an ethical dimension in interviewing. One such ethical concern is being sensitively aware of how hard you should press someone for information without abusing your position. During my research, I had uncovered a theme around stereotyping and nicknaming from earlier interviews. I was therefore keen to press for additional information from one interviewee, Paul, a sales assistant, regarding his feelings towards being called "Pauline the drama queen". I realised, however, that he was becoming uncomfortable with the questioning and I had to stop the interview. I was conscious of the fact that I did not want to "damage" the

interviewee by pushing the probing too far. As illustrated in this extract from the transcript:

- SR: Do you think you try and play up to gay stereotypes of what they expect you to be?
Paul: I mince anyway! I am quite short and I walk quite fast so they always say I power mince up and down the store (laughs).
SR: What about the lads at work? Do they stereotype you?
Paul: No, I don't say they stereotype me. I don't know.
SR: How do you feel about being called "Pauline the drama queen".
Paul: Yeah, I don't know whether I want to carry on doing this. I feel a bit uncomfortable.

Although I gave Paul the opportunity for a break in the interview with the premise of restarting, Paul decided not to carry on. He later admitted that the anniversary of his father's death and his health problems were probably mitigating circumstances. Having learnt from this experience, I was conscious of not pushing respondents too hard. In a similar vein to Heaphy et al. (1998), a key priority is redressing the balance so as to ensure that the effects and costs to the respondent are the main concern rather than extracting information for the sake of the study.

4. Personal positioning

Although I was aware of the commonality of sexuality with interviewees as outlined above, I was also conscious of my difference and the impact it might have on my respondents. As Taylor (2001) argues, the identity of the researcher might affect the way answers are given. Song and Parker (1995), for example, note the issue of difference between the interviewer and the interviewee with respect to ethnicity, physical appearance and language used. As part of reflexivity I was aware of the possible effects I might have had on the research, in particular, my occupation as a lecturer, my accent and my age. For example, I realised that using my identity as a lecturer whilst canvassing for volunteers for my research at Bournemouth Gay Pride gave added legitimacy and trust to my research. It also possibly created barriers. Some of the interviewees might have felt intimidated by my role as a university lecturer. Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994) note how being more educated might make respondents feel relatively powerless. This insight was supported in Sparkes' (1998) findings on his research on the life experiences of an ex-student, as a lesbian physical education instructor. She expressed how she felt disempowered and unable to express her thoughts freely as she felt threatened by the researcher, her ex-lecturer whom she saw as an expert. Although I hope that my position as a lecturer did not inhibit respondents in openly expressing themselves, I was aware at times during the interviews that some interviewees saw me as "the authority" figure. This was especially the case for those in blue collar, manual work. At the recruitment stage, I tried to make it clear what the purpose of the research was. I informed potential respondents that data drawn from the interview would possibly be used in my PhD as well as future publications. I also did not want interviewees to misunderstand the nature of my research. For example, one respondent, Stuart, presumed that I might be able to help him with his grievance at work based upon alleged homophobic bullying from one of his co-workers. I reassured him that my research was not aiming to create specific policy recommendations or to stamp out homophobia in the workplace. Nevertheless, he still sought my advice at different stages of the interview. Unlike Heaphy et al. (1998), I did not directly ask interviews for their motivation for participating in the study. Nevertheless, some respondents did explain their reasoning. One gay man in his 40s, who had been extremely successful in his career, reaching

directorship level of a blue chip UK corporation explained to me at the end of the interview that he wanted to be involved as he wanted to put across a positive story. He believed that him being openly gay had not adversely affected his career. To some extent this created some equilibrium in the power imbalance as it allowed his positive story to be heard. This would seem to support LaSala's (2003, p. 18) belief that respondents may be motivated to participate in order to put right any societal misconceptions others might have of their group. Furthermore, the above example illustrates how respondents can control the agenda in deciding what story they wish to reveal and present.

My social class and educational background might also have impacted on my research. Although I shared a common sexuality with my respondents at times it was clear there were distinct differences in the language used and in accents. Previous studies (Ward, 2004; Rumens, 2008; LaSala, 2003) have highlighted how a common sexual identity facilitated conversational shortcuts. For example, reference to gay slang or gay bars and clubs did not necessitate the need for detailed clarification. Nevertheless, I was not proficient in all the slang terms respondents used. Similar experiences were uncovered by Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994) where they were not fully conversant with local terminologies. For example, one respondent used a word that I had not come across before, "breeder", a derogatory term to refer to heterosexuals. In this instance I had to ask for clarification in order to fully understand what he meant. I was consciously aware of the language I used and made a deliberate attempt to use the same terms and phrases as the respondent, avoiding academic language. There were, however, occasions where the respondent either misunderstood or did not understand some of the phrases and terms I used. One respondent, for instance, misunderstood the term "a gay friendly organisation" as being a place where it is easier to pick up another gay man! One of the advantages of face-to-face interviews is that it allowed me the opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings. In another interview, I was trying to explore the concept of "political identities". Here I aimed to explore whether gay men saw their gay identity in a collective sense to mobilise support for gay equality. This particular respondent was an LGBT equality activist in his union. In fact, I met him manning the Unison stand at the same Gay Pride event that I was recruiting potential volunteers for my research. He came to the interview wearing a number of gay insignia including a neckpiece with the phrase "Out in Unison" emblazoned around it in rainbow colours. He also wore a rainbow badge, a symbol of gay equality. Throughout the interview he expressed how he was "out and proud" and deliberately open about his sexuality. Given this information, I asked him whether he saw his role in the union as the LGBT chair as a political one. He misunderstood the term political and saw it in its narrowest meaning as solely about party politics. As in Heaphy et al.'s (1998, p. 461) study I noticed that "the meanings of questions were often negotiated between the respondent and the interviewer". Problems of understanding were not solely a question of language used. Social class and level of education also played a part. A few respondents had strong regional accents, which made it difficult at times in transcribing the transcripts. An additional problem was that some respondents had difficulty in expressing themselves in a coherent manner, where they failed to contextualise or explain who the key protagonists were in the stories they were recounting. These interviews were much harder to work in eliciting the information required. I noticed that this contrasted with those who worked in the professions. I discovered that these respondents tended to be able to express themselves and recount their experiences as a gay man much more

effectively without me having to use too many probes. On reflection I realise that this might have affected the data collection. I noticed that during the data analysis at an initial glance of the data that it was much easier for me to “cherry pick” those respondents who could tell a “good story”.

Age was also another dynamic that probably impacted upon the data collection. It was probably not surprising that I managed to obtain more volunteers for my research from gay men closer to my age (44). The commonality of both sexuality and age probably aided a better rapport and interest especially during the recruitment drive. However, as touched on briefly above, I found it much more difficult to recruit younger volunteers, especially those in their early 20s. Typically younger gay men at both Gay Pride and in the gay bars showed a lack of interest in participating in my research. I suspect that they might have felt threatened when I approached them assuming that there was an ulterior motive.

One of the benefits of adopting a reflexive approach as Yip (2008) points out is that it allows the researcher to examine where they sit with respect to the research and their involvement in the research. Researching the lives of 45 gay men made me reflect on how the study had affected me. For example, the wide range of stories of how they managed their gay identity in the workplace I heard challenged some of my ways of thinking about sexual identities. The way they presented their gay identities was very different to my own. One respondent who comes to mind expressed his sexuality in the workplace in a very brash, up front manner. His confidence and assertive approach made me admire him but also made me realise how his approach and experiences were vastly different to my own.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has brought to attention a number of methodological and ethical issues I experienced as a gay man at both the recruitment stage and also during the interviews. I have shown how my personal involvement in the research has impacted upon the research. I have as Yip (2008) points out declared my biases giving a frank and honest account of the dilemmas and issues in data collection in the field. Researchers about to go out in the field should take on board some of the issues raised in this paper. In particular, they should reflect on their own personal positioning and how it might impact on the data. This paper has highlighted the issue that although the interviewer and the interviewee might share certain identities such as gender and sexuality there are still differences that cannot be ignored. Studies using insider status need to acknowledge their differences to those they are researching and reflect how this might affect their data collection. This paper has also highlighted how reflexivity should not be an activity undertaken at the end of the data collection, but should rather be an ongoing process.

Much of the previous debate particularly amongst feminist researchers (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1993) has raised concerns around the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched. The assumption being that power lies almost exclusively in the hands of the researcher. I would argue that this is not necessarily always the case. My findings bring to the fore the issue of control that comes into play in the interactions between interviewer and interviewee. Control may shift back and forth between the two. It is not necessarily the case that the interviewer remains in control of the agenda throughout the process. My findings revealed how respondents made use of the interview as a vehicle in which to pursue their agenda and interests. Interviews therefore may act as empowering experiences for the

interviewee rather than being an exploitative relationship as previous studies have suggested.

Note

1. Since the turn of the century there have been four important pieces of legislation with the intent of giving greater protection to LGBT citizens in the UK including: the repeal of Local Government Act: Section 28 (2003), the introduction of the Employment Equality (SO) Regulations (2003), the Civil Partnership Act (2004) and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (2010), which makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in access of good, facilities and services.

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Further reading

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