

Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Homophobia (British Research): Other Studies' Findings

The Campaign for Homosexual Equality (1980) conducted a study of homophobia between 1977-80. They recorded 250 incidents of which 15 per cent had resulted in the death or disablement of the victim.

Trenchard and Warren's (1984) survey of 416 young gay men and lesbians in London found that 45 per cent had experienced problems at school because of their sexual orientation; 58 per cent had been verbally abused; and 21 per cent had been physically assaulted. 41 per cent of the men had cottaged or cruised¹ and 8 young men had been in contact with the police for cottaging, 7 for soliciting.

Derbyshire (1990) noted the number of convictions for possession of obscene materials for gain tripled between 1979-88. Clubs, sex theatres, shops, cottages and cruising areas had been raided; surveillance operations had become more extensive; and more officers were being assigned to such operations. Convictions for indecency increased from 826 in 1985 to 1,496 in 1988; convictions for importuning increased from 482 in 1985 to 699 in 1988; convictions for other sexual offences increased from 1,051 in 1985 to 1,148 in 1988.

Tatchell (1990) reported Home Office statistics revealing that 2,948 men were convicted or cautioned in England and Wales during 1988 for consenting homosexual behaviour (gross indecency, soliciting and importuning, procuring and buggery). In addition, an estimated 1,000 were convicted or cautioned under local authority and public transport bylaws (including an estimated 200 prosecuted under public order and indecency laws), giving a total of 3,948 men. Furthermore, there was a high conviction and caution rate in 1988: 90 per cent of cases. Tatchell argued that this amounted to the large-scale criminalisation of bisexual and gay men.

GALOP conducted a survey at Lesbian and Gay Pride 1991. 41 per cent of gay men had experienced physical assault. GALOP conducted another survey at Lesbian and Gay Pride 1992. 40 per cent of gay men and 25 per cent of lesbians had experienced physical assault; 80 per cent of men and 72 per cent of women had experienced verbal abuse; 23 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women had reported incidents to the police; of these, 35 per cent found the police indifferent, 16 per cent found them incompetent and 22 per cent experienced harassment whilst reporting the incident (cited in Derbyshire, 1994).

¹ Sex between men in public toilets is known as cottaging; sex between men in open spaces or parks is known as cruising.

The Lewisham Safer Cities Survey of Violence against Gay Men (1992) involved 242 men. 81 per cent had experienced verbal abuse; 45 per cent reported having been physically assaulted (40 per cent required medical attention afterwards); of the perpetrators of violence, 19 per cent were unknown groups, 12 per cent unknown individuals; only 16 per cent reported incidents to the police; 32 per cent worried 'about violence'; 43 per cent said their fear of assault had increased; and 55 per cent felt violence against gay men had increased (cited in Derbyshire,1994).

Project Sigma's study of 387 gay men found that 68 per cent had experienced verbal abuse for being gay and 24 per cent had experienced physical assault (three had been knifed). All but one of these assaults involved male assailants (often multiple assailants) and most assaults were perpetrated by strangers. 21 assaults occurred on the street; 19 outside gay venues; and 16 at cottages and cruising areas. Very few men reported incidents to the police (cited in Derbyshire,1994).

Richardson (1994) reported that there were 155 murders of gay men and 3 murders of lesbians between 1986-94. The overall unsolved murder rate is 10 per cent per year, but 22 per cent of gay murders remained unsolved. Two thirds of gay murders occur in the victim's home; 3 per cent in cottages; 10 per cent on the street; and 10 per cent in cruising areas.

Truman *et al* (1994) surveyed 178 gay men and lesbians in Manchester who had been the victims of crime. 38 per cent of men and 21 per cent of women said they had been 'queer bashed' (cited in Mason and Palmer,1996).

Fahey (1995) surveyed 105 gay men and lesbians in higher education settings. 40 per cent felt isolated; 39 per cent had suffered verbal abuse; and 4 per cent physical assault.

McColl's (1995) survey of youth workers asked them to cite the major sources of distress and their consequences for the bisexual, gay and lesbian young people they worked with. Bullying and physical abuse were cited as sources of distress for 35 per cent of the young people.

Mason and Palmer (1996) cited the Social and Community Planning Research sample of 116 representative bisexuals, gay men and lesbians from the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles. Of these, 43 per cent had experienced verbal abuse and 25 per cent had been either physically assaulted or threatened.

Stonewall conducted a national survey of hate crimes against bisexual, gay and lesbian people in which 4,000 people participated. 34 per cent of men and 24 per cent of women had experienced homophobic violence; 32 per cent had been harassed; 12 per cent were threatened; 6 per cent had experienced vandalism; 73 per cent of the sample had experienced verbal abuse; and 4 per cent had received hate mail. 19 per cent of the sample had been harassed by people unknown to them; 8 per cent by colleagues; and 6 per cent by neighbours. Only 37 per cent reported incidents to the police. A lower percentage of those under-18 reported incidents to the police (because of the age of consent and fear of prosecution). Of these young people, 48 per cent has experienced violence; 61 per cent had been

harassed; and 90 per cent had experienced verbal abuse. 50 per cent of violent assaults involved fellow students and 40 per cent occurred at school; 24 per cent of assaults were perpetrated by fellow students; 44 per cent of harassment was from fellow students; and 79 per cent of verbally abuse came from fellow students. The parents and families of these young people were responsible for 5 per cent of assaults, 14 per cent of harassment and 19 per cent of verbal abuse (Mason and Palmer,1996).

Nayak and Kehily (1996) found in their study that homophobic practices were regarded by teachers and pupils as natural and routine activities in the developing lives of young gay men (cited in Douglas *et al*,1997).

A survey of 307 secondary schools in England and Wales by Douglas *et al* (1997) found that 82 per cent of teachers were aware of homophobic verbal bullying and 26 per cent were aware of homophobic physical bullying in their schools. 99 per cent of these schools had a bullying policy but only 6 per cent of policies made any reference to young bisexual, gay and lesbian pupils. 98 per cent of schools had equal opportunity and confidentiality policies, but only 25 per cent included young bisexual, gay and lesbian pupils. 61 per cent of teachers were aware of bisexuals, gays and lesbians in their schools and 42 per cent had been approached by these young people for advice and support. In terms of teachers and schools addressing homophobic bullying, the most frequently cited factors felt to hinder efforts were: worries about parental disapproval (22 per cent); lack of experienced staff (15 per cent); and a lack of policies (14 per cent).

Smith (1997) reported that in the early 1990s, gay men were murdered at a rate of one every fortnight and 2,000 men were charged with public sex offences every year.

GALOP (1998) conducted a survey into homophobia against young bisexual, gay and lesbian people. 202 people under 25 participated (31 per cent were bisexual and lesbian women; 68 per cent bisexual and gay men; 11 per cent Asian; 10 per cent Black; and 8 per cent disabled). 83 per cent had experienced verbal abuse; 47 per cent had experienced physical abuse; 41 per cent had experienced sexual abuse (including being groped, flashed at, indecently assaulted and raped); and 31 per cent had been harassed. Only 19 per cent reported incidents to the police. Of these, 33 per cent said that the police had been supportive in their response, 13 per cent said that they had been hostile and 51 per cent said that they had been indifferent.

Rivers' (1998) sample of 140 bisexuals, gays and lesbians found that 82 per cent had experienced name calling at school; 71 per cent had been ridiculed; 60 per cent had been hit or kicked; 58 per cent had been teased; 59 per cent had been the subject of rumours; 49 per cent experienced theft; 52 per cent has been frightened by a look or stare; and 40 per cent had attempted suicide.

Hickson *et al* (1998), through their National Gay Men's Sex Survey in 1997, found that 37 per cent (of 581 men) had experienced hate crime in the last five years. Of those that had been assaulted or attacked, 50 per cent (18 per cent of all the men) indicated this had happened more than once and 25 per cent (9 per cent of all the men) indicated it had happened four times or more. The survey also found that younger men were more likely to experience hate crime than older

men, and more often. Furthermore, the survey revealed that only 15 per cent reported incidents to the police, and a third of these received a poor service.

3.2 Homophobia (British Research): Local Studies' Findings

OXAIDS (1997) conducted a survey with 221 bisexuals, gays and lesbians in Oxford. 20 per cent of respondents felt relations between the police and local bisexuals, gays and lesbians were poor or very bad. 47 per cent said they would not be happy contacting the police about an incident. 31 per cent had been subject to homophobic abuse, harassment and/or violence. 23 per cent of these incidents had occurred on the streets. Only 17 per cent had reported the incident to the police, however, 67 per cent said they would have felt happier reporting the incident to a bisexual, gay and lesbian organisation.

Mullen (1999) conducted a Young People's Health and Housing Survey with 169 young bisexuals, gays and lesbians in Reading. 20% of these young people had experienced unwanted violence from lovers/partners.