

**DISCURSIVE INCONVENIENCE:
THE DIS/APPEARING RHETORIC OF LGBT RIGHTS
IN POST-SECONDARY INTERNATIONALIZATION TEXTS**

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This paper outlines a preliminary document analysis of the intersection of two prominent discourses in the Western public academy: equity and internationalization. Particular dilemmas arise for people who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). These dilemmas, I propose, exemplify impacts of the neoliberal compulsion to let financial costs and benefits drive change. After explaining the globalizing discourses of LGBT rights and internationalization, I use texts from my home university to illustrate the implications of their convergence for post-secondary institutions and the LGBT people who work and study within them.

Introduction

In recent decades, sexuality and gender identification have garnered attention worldwide (Altman, 2005; Brewer, 2003; Engberg, Hurtado, & Smith, 2007). As somebody who self-identifies as lesbian, I am intricately, intimately engaged with issues related to LGBT identity and equity.¹ Until now, my scholarly focus has not been on LGBT issues; rather, it has been on popular culture and consumption as sources of adult learning about identity (see, for example, Jubas, 2013; Jubas, Johnston, & Chiang, 2014). I have taken up those studies using a neo-Gramscian/feminist theoretical framework, a point to which I return in my discussion about

¹ The addition of *Q* or *queer* is common. Because I turn my attention in this article to internationalization and, at times, legislation, I tend to use the shorter acronym of LGBT. Where it exists, legislation refers to homosexuality or gender identity; while it might be a helpful addition in the activist community, queer does not transfer neatly into my discussion.

discourse in relation to this new undertaking. My interest in more concentrated LGBT studies was piqued by both my personal circumstance and my observation that, across the cultural sphere, attention to relevant issues is growing in breadth and volume. Yost and Gilmore (2011) take note of this trend, as well as “the use of cultural performance as a form of both political critique and mobilization” (p. 1331). Within North America, the coming out stories of U.S. football player Michael Sam and basketball player Jason Collins, and Canadian actor Ellen Page, the success of films or television series that tell the stories of LGBT people (e.g., *The Imitation Game*, *Transparent*, *Modern Family*), and segments on current affairs shows (e.g., the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s *Q* and *The Current*) or documentaries (e.g., *Transforming Gender*) suggest that discrimination against and oppression of LGBT people is fading.

Within and beyond that North American context that is so much a part of my own life, the picture is much less clear and, often, seems less rosy. For the past few years, there has been a flurry of relevant high-profile news stories. Leading up to the Sochi Olympics, Russia solidified its homophobic stance with extended anti-gay legislation, prompting participation by Canadian Olympic athletes in the Ottawa Pride Parade to stand in solidarity with LGBTQ people (Morrow & Duhatschek, 2013). Several months later, debate about and passage of anti-gay legislation in Arizona was covered by major news outlets (Sanchez & Marquez, 2014; Vega, 2014). In the same year, Uganda became especially notorious when its legislature toughened sanctions against homosexuality, including the possibility of life imprisonment for “repeat offenders found guilty of ‘aggravated homosexuality’” (Raghavan, 2014, para. 2). Even more recently, Ireland became the first country where, by citizens’ referendum, a call was made for constitutional amendments to accept same-sex marriage. One of the most interesting elements of that story, for me, was that “thousands of Irish emigrants—many of them forced to leave the island after the economy

crashed in 2008— . . . returned home to vote from countries in Europe and across the world, including Canada, Australia and the US” (Bolan, 2015, para. 6). That outcome was greeted with celebration from LGBT and other human rights activists in Ireland and internationally, at the same time as it was condemned by others, including some spokespeople in the Vatican (“Same-sex marriage,” 2015). Media coverage of these events and other relevant stories indicates how heated this issue is as a public concern, and suggests how equity and internationalization are converging for and about LGBT people in political, cultural, and economic spheres.

Higher education is another sphere where that convergence between internationalization and equity is evident. The public secular Western academy has long been seen as a place of openness for members of varied groups, including LGBT people, and a base for many relevant organizations and campaigns to support students, staff, and faculty members from varied marginalized groups including LGBT people (Renn, 2010). Academic programs and courses in women’s, gender, and queer studies, research-related activities, student clubs and support centres, spaces marked by rainbow flags, and equity-oriented policies related to hiring and conduct all indicate universities’ attempts to signal that the ivory tower doors are open to LGBT people. These advances mirror shifts in broader society, evident in extension of marriage rights to same-sex couples and the public “coming out” process of celebrities and other famous figures. Although not embraced or pursued by all, such equity-oriented measures and assurances are features of many of today’s university campuses. For that reason, the post-secondary campus has become a place that attracts staff and students from a wide range of backgrounds and with varied identities. Indeed, after working for some 15 years in small community-based not-for-profit organizations, most of which were extremely LGBT-friendly, I was drawn into academic

work myself as much by the promise of a welcoming work environment as by the prospect of intellectually challenging and rewarding work.

Overall, there remains a dearth of research into academic life for LGBT people (Dilley, 2004; Engberg, Hurtado, & Smith, 2007; Hill, 2013; Wickens & Sandlin, 2010), and existing research is seen as lacking in theoretical and/or methodological rigour (Renn, 2010). Moreover, the post-secondary institution and faculty or staff within it are especially uncommon foci among educational researchers working on this topic (Renn, 2010). Existing research does indicate that “even for faculty, staff and administrators who have not directly experienced such discrimination, the fear of negative repercussions has likely limited the ability of many of them to fully participate in the academic community” (Rankin, 2003, p. 12)

Research that has been conducted in this area, including what are known as campus climate studies, confirms that there are limitations to and problems with how inclusion and equity have been and continue to be taken up in the academy. Recognition of that reality is central to the discussion that I present here. LGBT people relay experiences of “harassment or discrimination (ranging from verbal insults to physical assaults) because of their sexual orientation” (Brown, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2004, p. 9); for students, such experiences often lead to a sense of “fear and hypervigilance” (p. 9).

In findings from their study on campus climate involving students and staff (including both faculty members and administrative or support staff people) at their own institution, Yost and Gilmore (2011) conclude that U.S. campuses are creating “less ‘chilly’ climates” (p. 1350), even as “LGBQ, transgender, and gender nonconforming students, staff, and faculty are at physical, emotional, psychological, academic, and professional risk” (p. 1350) because sexual and gender norms remain in place. Moreover, Yost and Gilmore expose the lack of consistency

between perceptions of campus climate and classroom climate, as well as between perceptions among LGBT people and straight people. Dilley (2004) notes that policies designed to alleviate on-campus discrimination against LGBT students do not necessarily make campus life (seem) easier or more comfortable for LGBT faculty. In short, even when anti-discrimination policies and programs exist, LGBT students and staff/faculty members often face discrimination and harassment directly or perceive that it persists.

Engberg, Hurtado, and Smith's (2007) large-scale survey of 4,741 first- and second-year college students sheds some light on impacts of students' "exposure to diversity" (p. 57) within and beyond the classroom to their attitudinal development and change. The study team found that, although students' selection of elective courses that cover LGBT rights and similar social concerns depends largely on pre-existing attitudes that are consistent with a critical, equity-oriented point of view, getting to know peers from marginalized groups can help students overcome initial prejudices and accept the multiplicity of their own identities. Those findings led the authors to call for consideration by post-secondary institutions of greater emphasis in mandatory courses on social relations and equity and by instructors about their pedagogical methods, as well as to call for extension of opportunities for students from varied social groups to interact with one another outside the classroom. For the most part, undergraduate students are fairly young; what is impossible to infer from this study is the extent to which attitudes among older adults, including mature students and institutional staff, are open to change as they work alongside others from marginalized groups. As Engberg, Hurtado, and Smith themselves assert, youth and early adulthood is a period when people's opinions are likely to be more malleable than they become in later years.

Beyond the question of how LGBT-identified people are (not) accepted as legitimate, valued members of the post-secondary community, new issues surface when policies and strategies related to equity collide with policies and strategies related to internationalization. That latter phenomenon is manifest across Western post-secondary institutions that pursue international agreements and collaborations energetically. Internationalization strategies can include satellite campuses, partnership agreements, service learning, practica, travel study programs, research collaborations, and recruitment of international students and faculty. When a university based in one place opens satellite campuses or collaborates with institutions in other places, uncertainty about exactly where the campus begins and ends complicates the idea of the campus as a “safe” zone. As people travel abroad in the course of their employment or study, members of some groups might encounter legislation and other sorts of social constrictions directed against their identities and, possibly, their persons. In light of that uncertainty, I ask what safety, equity, and risk can and do mean for LGBT faculty members and, by extension, students and staff members in the contemporary Western academy as they travel themselves, meet and work with people from other places, or anticipate doing so. That question is consistent with Renn’s (2010) call for research that relates LGBT identity and rights, the post-secondary institution, and globalization and internationalization, as part of “learning how to improve higher education institutions and systems” (p. 138).

In my own post-secondary experience, I have not experienced what I consider to be blatant harassment or discrimination. I have, however, felt that even colleagues who seem aware about problems of marginalization and supportive of me and other LGBT people *in general* seem unaware of how marginalization actually is playing out. For example, I had to decide whether I would participate in an international conference that I have attended for the past eight years

when the 2015 gathering was scheduled to be held in Singapore, where homosexuality is illegal. When I mentioned that fact to one of the conference organizers, whom I consider a good colleague if not a close friend, he admitted that he had never considered the question of such legal restrictions and their implications. Such experiences, as well as impromptu conversations that I have had with other LGBT faculty members, have prompted me to turn my attention to what are, for me, new questions in my own research.

In this article, I offer a preliminary and still very partial analysis and discussion of policy and strategic texts developed in the post-secondary institution where I am employed, in an attempt to ground a study that I am beginning to undertake and to raise questions about experiences of LGBT-identified faculty members, staff, and students that need to be asked in that study. In focusing on this one university, I do not imply that it is in any way notable or notably problematic; rather, following the autoethnographic perspective that has informed my other recent writing about life in the contemporary academy (Jubas, 2012; Jubas & Seidel, 2014), I simply begin with my own local and lived context. Before delving into institutional discourses and texts, and establishing the convergence of two central discourses, I briefly summarize my approach to discourse, and outline developments in these two discursive threads: LGBT rights and internationalization.

Understanding and Analyzing Discourse

In this analytical work, I draw on the writing of Naples (2003) and Gee (2011). I concur with Naples's ultimate identification as a feminist materialist, as well as her press to (f)use elements of materialist and poststructural perspectives. For her, the insistence on a division between materialism and poststructuralism overlooks the potential and value of working with

insights of both paradigms. Rather than seeing this hybridization as a sort of intellectual “fence-sitting,” I believe that it enables scholars to explore the complexities of social life more deeply and fully. From Gee (2011), I take the distinction between *discourse* as “language-in-use or stretches of language (like conversations or stories)” (p. 34), and *Discourse* as

socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting, in the “right” places and at the “right” times with the “right” objects (associations that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or “social network”). (p. 34)

For ease of reading, I do not capitalize discourse in this paper; however, it is Gee’s second, politicized understanding of the word that I employ in my discussion.

Going International I: The Emergence and Spread of an LGBT Discourse

The LGBT identifier, movement, and associated discourse(s) are decidedly Western in origin. As Kollman and Waites (2009) detail, in the years following the end of the Second World War, movements often framed their demands with rhetoric around equality and civil rights as they pressed for an easing of prohibitions against homosexuality. Those efforts met with success in a handful of European countries during the 1950s. In later decades, rhetoric shifted to human rights, as the LGBT movement and organizations expanded transnationally, and other human rights oriented organizations (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) began to ally themselves with this movement. Eventually, legislative liberalization occurred in other European or English-speaking countries, as well as much of the Americas. In 2006, Norway submitted the Joint Statement on Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to the UN Human Rights Council, which garnered 54 signatories. In sum, Kollman and Waites’s tracing of policy developments suggests a trend across Western countries to attend to the

arguments and demands of movement activists, and to bring them into human rights arenas and discourses.

An important point is that what has been globalizing or internationalizing is not homosexuality, but a discourse of LGBT identity and rights. For Altman (2005), “the question is not whether homosexuality exists—it does in almost every society of which we know—but how people incorporate homosexual behavior into their sense of self. Globalization has helped create an international gay/lesbian identity” (p. 411). That view hints at an inherent problem with the use of LGBT, which infers a singular community with a shared identity. As Altman suggests, there are important cultural differences in understanding what gender, sex, sexuality, homosexuality, and the LGBT community or any of its constituents might mean. In an age of coinciding pressures around human rights and internationalization, those differences seem heightened.

Even within the Western LGBT “community,” the assumption of shared identity is problematic. As Renn (2010) writes, “although this conflation is common among activists on and off campus, it is contested in theory and in practice” (p. 132). For starters, as Renn notes, the moniker covers members of both sexuality and gender identity minority groups. From my own experience and sense of self as a woman living with patriarchy and a lesbian living with homophobia, I recognize that distinctions remain between lesbians (and straight women) and (gay or straight) men. For that matter, there are important differences among lesbians, as other facets of identity—such as race, class, or dis/ability—figure in lived experience. For example, radical feminist lesbians might not “feel” a part of a larger LGBT community; their affiliation might be to a feminist community of both lesbians and bisexual or straight women. Some countries that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexuality or sexual orientation lag behind in

passing similar rights for transgender people (Gedro, Mizzi, Rocco, & van Loo, 2013). As Kollman and Waites (2009) clarify, the political contestation that accompanies the amalgamation of lesbian, gay (man), bisexual, transgender, and queer into a singular moniker is amplified by the attachment of the LGBT identifier to the also-contested notion of human rights. On its own, then, the internationalization of an LGBT rights discourse is fraught with complications and tensions.

Although I recognize the limitations of the term, I use it throughout this paper. In part, I use it for the sake of brevity; more than that, however, I recognize that the label for any group overlooks intragroup differences that always exist, a central argument taken up by intersectionality theorists (Davis, 2011; McCall, 2009). Still, as McCall argues, even if identity categories have a degree of arbitrariness, they can have strategic use, and might remain legitimate especially given the widespread acknowledgement that research and knowledge are always partial. In offering “an analytical resource rather than just an identity marker” (Davis, 2011, p. 46), intersectionality helps bridge the political project of feminism with the insights of poststructuralism, particularly around the complications of social categories. That ability to hold positions in tension is consistent with the neo-Gramscian/feminist perspective that has been helpful to me up until now. For the LGBT “community,” distinctions can be drawn between lesbians and gay men, between lesbian/gay men and bisexual people, between those who are marginalized on the basis of sexuality and those who are marginalized on the basis of gender identity. In contrast to Davis’ argument that it can be useful, strategically, to use a single identity category for analysis, in the case of my inquiry it might be equally useful to consolidate several groups under the LGBT moniker. Whether or not they feel bonds to one another, LGBT people might find themselves facing particular forms of sociocultural boundaries and boundary-crossing

penalties. Both intersectionality and—if you will—“multisectionality” can help move an analysis forward.

With regard to LGBT people, legislated boundaries are especially firm and penalties harsh in some countries in the Global South, where homosexuality can be illegal and, sometimes, a capital offence (Gedro, Mizzi, Rocco, & van Loo, 2013; Hill, 2013). Traditional values and national authority have been invoked to support anti-homosexuality legislation or court rulings in countries such as Russia, Uganda, Nigeria, and India. Typically, such legislation and rulings are defended as resistance to neocolonialism and a cultural war against “traditional” values (Kollman & Waites, 2009). In this rhetoric, LGBT identity is represented as a distinctly Western and modern phenomenon, and the insistence that LGBT people are entitled to rights and equity is portrayed as contrary to certain indigenous or religious values and norms. Such legislation and rulings have elicited both support from many and condemnation from LGBT and other activists within and beyond those countries (see, for example, Jennings, 2014).

Even within countries that have adopted progressive stances in this area, there have been differences in how those stances have developed. One of the first countries to extend rights, Canada’s policy shifts followed court rulings that confirmed the constitutional right of same-sex marriage. In the United States, the situation varies from state to state. In some states, court decisions have extended rights; elsewhere, rights have been extended through legislation or referenda. Interestingly, all of those tactics have been used in attempts to curb LGBT rights, ostensibly to protect religious rights. Even within Western societies, legislators’ opposition to LGBT rights has surfaced in clear and, sometimes, sudden ways, a reality exemplified by the “turn away the gays” legislation passed by the Arizona legislature early in 2014 (Vega, 2014) and eventually vetoed by the state’s governor. Sometimes, then, arguments around this issue in

the Global North resemble those in the Global South. This variation in the strategies taken up by people on *all* sides of relevant social and political debates echoes my premise that, in this contemporary time, the discourse of LGBT rights and equity is replete with tensions that influence the social values, debates, and civic processes (Schulzke & Carroll, 2014).

Going International II: The Globalizing University

At the same time as a discourse of LGBT identity and rights is spreading worldwide, a second globalizing trend is underway: internationalization of Western universities. Internationalization is seen by many as a response by post-secondary institutions to globalization (Friesen, 2012; Stromquist, 2007), although it also might be seen as a contributor to how globalization is developing. As I outlined above, internationalization can include the launch of new satellite campuses, partnerships in educational program or curricular development and delivery, research collaborations, recruitment of students from other countries, and other sorts of agreements or arrangements. Stromquist (2007) clarifies that, although proponents of internationalization use terminology such as global citizenship, community, diversity, and the general “promotion of global peace and well-being” (p. 82), internationalization is rather different from “internationalism,” which refers to the “common sense notions of international community, international cooperation, international community of interests, and international dimensions of the common good” (Jones as cited in Stromquist, 2007, p. 82). Coinciding references to institutional reputation, competitiveness, and revenue-generation hint at the shift away from the latter and toward the former.

Friesen (2012) notes that “faculty members . . . [are] the primary agents in the internationalization process within their institutions, being both contributors and inhibitors,

actively furthering internationalization as well as being impacted by its effects” (p. 210). Nonetheless, despite their crucial role in internationalization, “faculty [members’] perspective toward this phenomenon has been noticeably understated in current literature” (p. 210). Instead, writing in the area tends to favour the official institutional perspective and interests, which can be seen in terms of four categories: “academic, political, social-cultural, and economic” (p. 212). In her discussion of her phenomenological case study exploring faculty members’ understandings of, rationales for, and effects of internationalization, Friesen comments on participants’ feelings of uncertainty in understanding the meaning and possibilities of both internationalization and globalization, their sense that institutional documents tend to articulate internationalization “in terms of various programs, activities and structures that facilitate international perspectives being brought to the institution” (p. 217), an emphasis on building quality to position institutions favourably in a competitive environment, and a divergence between institutions’ over-riding interest in financial returns and faculty members’ interests in academic richness.

I assert that, for LGBT faculty members, the internationalization discourse and its translation into practice has very particular effects or potential effects. The increase in deliberate internationalization activities within the university heightens the links between discourses of internationalization and equity, and complicates their implementation. The possibility that internationalization discourses and strategies exacerbate that tension and present new forms of discrimination and marginalization occupies my attention here.

Discursive Slippage: From Equity/Rights to Diversity

In this section, I present several policy-oriented texts produced by the University of Calgary and especially its Werklund School of Education that relate to either LGBT equity/rights or internationalization. In some cases, a text refers to both topics and the discourses about or of them. In all cases, the texts that I use have been made available by the University of Calgary to the general public, and are accessible online. No confidential, restricted, or draft materials are included here. I use these texts to examine how LGBT rights surface as a fleeting concern and commitment, which fades away as equity is displaced by other priorities. I consider the social and materials implications of this discursive displacement for LGBT-identified faculty members and, by extension, students and administrative staff who might be asked or expected to travel during their work and studies. Again, I reiterate that my emphasis on texts from my “home” university and faculty is not meant to signal a belief that they are exceptional in this regard; rather, it reflects an autoethnographic inclination to start with my own location and experience in considering broader realities and understandings.

For LGBT people, one of the relevant texts at the University of Calgary is the sexual harassment policy, which has been in effect since 1990.² According to that policy, sexual harassment refers to any verbal or physical conduct that

emphasizes the sex or sexual orientation of one or more individuals in a manner which the actor knows or ought reasonably to know creates for that individual or those individuals an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, learning, or living environment. (University of Calgary, 1990, p. 1)

This policy indicates that sexuality or sexual orientation has been “on the radar” at the University of Calgary for more than a couple of decades. Moreover, it suggests that this institution has accepted that diversity in this regard is to be expected and accommodated, and that it has an

² It seems that this policy is currently under revision, and I do not know how it will read in its revised version or when that revision will be released.

obligation to attend to equity-oriented concerns among LGB (but not, it seems, T) staff and students.

Over the past couple of years, both the Werklund School and the University of Calgary have set about developing internationalization documents and activities. Both are guided by the *Eyes High* strategy, developed to boost standing as a research-intensive institution (University of Calgary, 2011). At Werklund, the current internationalization plan conveys the following vision statement: “To inspire and prepare diverse human minds and spirits to flourish through facilitating outstanding opportunities for creativity and innovative achievements in learning, discovery, and citizenship all in the service of the local and global public good” (Werklund School of Education, n.d.). That statement is accompanied by this mission:

To fulfill the promise of a significant international Werklund School of Education engaged with local and global communities in relevant, responsible, and reciprocal relationships, we will engage our teaching and learning, research and scholarship and service and community in defining and practicing just and equitable global citizenship. (Werklund School of Education, n.d.)

A series of values accompany that vision and mission. Among them is “Advocating for social justice and peace is informed by ethical, equitable, and inclusive praxis with respect to culture, race, ethnicity, religious belief, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, roles, and physical and mental abilities” (Werklund School of Education, n.d.). Strategies for implementing the mission in a manner consistent with the articulated values are noted in the corresponding *Internationalization Strategy* (Werklund School of Education, 2013), which was approved by Werklund’s academic staff in November 2013. The six strategies include “internationalizing the curriculum,” “international research collaboration,” “institutional international partnerships,” and “international educational development in support of customized education opportunities for international partners” (Werklund School of Education, 2013, p. 10).

Certainly, the Werklund internationalization material seems to hang onto some sense of obligation to connect diversity, internationalization, and equity. What is interesting to me, in the context of this analysis, is how the concern over equity falls away as attention turns from broad vision, mission, and values statements to more concrete goals and measures of success. That becomes apparent as one turns the pages of the *International Strategy* (Werklund School of Education, 2013). In its 31 pages, references to social justice and equity, including around gender and sexual orientation, are noticeable up until the eighth page. Midway down that page, goals, objectives, performance measures, and outcomes are outlined. In the final 23 pages of the document, the earlier commitments to social justice, peace, equity, and inclusion disappear. In other words, these values will not figure in the measurement of this strategy's success.

Unlike the Werklund School of Education strategy, the international plan of the larger institution makes no mention at all of social justice or equity. Although rhetoric around diversity is featured, it seems that neoliberal common sense³ has led to the insertion of another form of diversity: financial markets and industrial sectors. For example, in an article about the release of a new international strategy, a statement by the University of Calgary's president notes, "We are pleased to be working with the Government of Alberta to ensure that our strategy is aligned with the province's own goals for internationalization and economic prosperity" (University of Calgary, 2013b, para. 4). In other words, successful market diversification is seen as central to the internationalization agenda. Another statement in the same article, by the vice-provost (international) reads, "Our city demands creative graduates who have a global orientation, are competitive in a global marketplace, and who can adapt to diverse cultural environments" (para. 8). The international strategy document itself begins with the following statement:

³ Here, I use "common sense" as Gramsci (1996) does, to refer to "the traditional popular conception of the world: what is very tritely called 'instinct,' which is itself a rudimentary and basic historical acquisition" (p. 51).

Internationalization is a key strategic priority for the University of Calgary because we have an obligation to serve the needs of our community. Calgary is a global energy and corporate business centre, and the fifth most livable city in the world. Our city—home to the second highest concentration of head offices in the nation—demands graduates, both domestic and international, who have a global orientation, are competitive in a global marketplace, and who can adapt to diverse cultural, economic, and governmental environments. Our province—Alberta, Canada’s fourth largest and one of its wealthiest—suffers from a shortage of professionals and skilled labour that is a key barrier to future economic growth. (University of Calgary, 2013a, p. 1)

This final text, meant to showcase and celebrate University of Calgary’s potential and actual achievements in internationalization, exemplifies the assertion made by other scholars discussed above that the institutional motivation for embracing internationalization is most likely to relate to a perception of financial pay-off (Friesen, 2012; Stromquist, 2007). That priority might be accepted by some faculty members as pragmatic and prudent; however, it does little to reassure individuals for whom engagement in internationalization activities and processes might pose greater-than-average risks. The expectation—indeed, the “demands”—that graduates, like faculty members, will be globally oriented, competitive, and adaptable, even if and when placed in geopolitical contexts that are less than hospitable toward them, can set up LGBT people within the institution to weigh their prospects for academic, scholarly, and professional success against their identity and safety.

The slippage from equity and rights to diversity is, I believe, especially troubling. Logically, the word equity infers the presence of diversity, because equity only becomes a concern when differences are recognized. Leaving aside the likelihood that, in this instance, “diversity” is being used to refer to LGBT people as distinct from straight people—a distinction which itself can be made problematic but well beyond the scope of this paper to pursue—I recall Altman’s (2005) and Kollman and Waites’s (2009) point about meaningful diversities among LGBT people themselves.

No such inference is necessary when the order is reversed, though. In other words, the recognition and valuing of diversity does not necessarily require a commitment to equity. Coupled with neoliberal common sense, the turn toward rhetoric around diversity and away from rights and equity makes it easier to overlook structural, systemic barriers for members of some groups. When internationalization comes to the fore, the inclination to use diversity as a stand-in for national origin and ethnoracial identity can have the effect of pushing other rights claims and (in)equity concerns further into the background. This, I assert, is what is happening in the development and enactment of discourses related to LGBT people in the academy.

LGBT Rights as Post-script?

The preceding discussion aims to establish that, as Gee (2011), Naples (2003), and other discourse analysts recognize, talk and text are important in the lives of all who live with/in them. The texts discussed above suggest that equity, social justice, and rights are knotty issues for LGBT people and, presumably, for members of other historically marginalized groups, especially at a time when internationalization is seen as a crucial strategic focus. Like all policy texts, these examples are informed by their surrounding cultural and material contexts. They reflect both a particular institutional interest and a broader social and political environment, without being wholly determined by broader sociopolitical context. For LGBT people on campus, when terms such as equity and rights are present in these texts, their presence is consistent with texts developed in other institutional offices, notably those charged with discouraging and dealing with discrimination and harassment. Those offices and their efforts are not invisible; however, their profile is nowhere near that of internationalization, which is seen as exciting and lucrative.

Ultimately, the commitment to a rights-oriented discourse, at least when it comes to LGBT people, seems to be contingent on its impact on other interests and priorities. If it helps to position institutions as open and progressive, and supports the recruitment of bright, capable, keen faculty members and students, or if it is required by law, it appears in institutional texts. If the LGBT equity and rights discourse might be read as an inconvenient impediment to corporate progress or challenge to heterosexist interests, though, it is noticeably absent. This reality is one illustration of Renn's (2010) comment that "colleges and universities have evolved to tolerate the generation of queer theory from within but have stalwartly resisted the queering of higher education itself" (p. 132). The sort of textual and discourse analysis outlined in this article, albeit still in an early, preliminary state, is helpful in bringing important tensions, complications, and problems to the surface. There is, however, more to addressing these tensions, complications, and problems. At a time when LGBT identity and rights, as well as academic internationalization, is a prominent concern, now is the time to take questions about LGBT faculty members' experiences with campus life and internationalization seriously.

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