The Relative Impact of Identity on LGBT API Outness: A Quantitative Analysis

Jessica Lee

Graduate Center, City University of New York

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THE RELATIVE IMPACT OF IDENTITY ON LGBT API OUTNESS:
A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

BY

JESSICA LEE

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Juan Battle, Ph.D.

Date

Thesis Advisor

Matthew K. Gold, Ph.D.

Date

Executive Officer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

THE RELATIVE IMPACT OF IDENTITY ON LGBT API OUTNESS:
A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

By

Jessica Lee

Advisor: Professor Juan Battle

In the United States, the intersecting relationship among race, sex, gender, and sexuality plays a significant role in one’s identity development and socialization. Especially for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Asian Pacific Islander (API) individuals, such interplay presents a continuous task of processing and presenting different identities. Employing a national sample of over 500 LGBT API individuals and utilizing multivariate regression analysis, this thesis explores how LGBT API individuals’ sexual and racial identities affect their decisions in coming out to family, friends, co-workers, and other community members. Findings indicate that the level of discomfort in racial/ethnic and/or LGBT community settings is an important predictor of LGBT API outness. However, the impact of the importance of identity alone was negligible.

KEYWORDS: LGBT, Asian Pacific Islander, identity, coming out, community
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Tables</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Figures</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Means, Standard Deviants, Ranges and Description of Variables for API LGBT Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Weighted Comparison of Means on Gender, Age, and Religion by Outness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Pearson’s Correlations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>OLS Regression Coefficients for the LGBT API Outness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Model Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.</td>
<td>Cass Model of LGBT Identity Formation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.</td>
<td>Troiden Model of LGBT Identity Formation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.</td>
<td>McCarn and Fassinger Model of LGBT Identity Formation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.</td>
<td>Hahm &amp; Adkins’ API Sexual Minority Acculturation Model</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Coming out – the act of becoming aware of one’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity and disclosing such information to others – is central to contemporary lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) discourses. Especially within the western social framework, which puts much emphasis on one’s individual identity, coming out is often valued as an act of self-empowerment and agency, establishing one’s sociopolitical position within the larger society. This trend is apparent in the narratives of many activists throughout the history of LGBT rights movement. For instance, Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay elected officials, encouraged all LGBT-identifying individuals to come out to empower themselves. In one of his famous public speeches, Milk stated,

We must destroy the myths once and for all. We must continue to speak out and most importantly, every gay person must come out…once they realize that we are indeed their children and that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all. And once you do you will feel so much better (Bstewart23, 2008).

Thus, coming out became more than just disclosing one’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity to others; it became a political act to raise awareness and to counter homophobia and heterosexism in the society. In addition to existing LGBT liberation efforts like LGBT Pride parades and consciousness-raising groups, National Coming Out Day was founded in 1987 to celebrate not only LGBT identities, but also the act of disclosing (and therefore, empowering) such identities. As Human Rights Campaign’s *A Resource Guide to Coming Out* (2013) states,
coming out is considered to be “an act of bravery and authenticity” among many LGBT individuals, activists, and scholars.

Indeed, coming out has proven itself to be an effective tool in advocating LGBT rights and gaining support from heterosexual others. For instance, Senator Rob Portman, a conservative Republican who has been a rather adamant opponent of marriage equality for same-sex couples, recently reversed his position on the issue after his own son came out to him as gay (Bash, 2013). Senator Portman is not the only person who became accepting and aware of LGBT identities and consequent discriminatory sociopolitical treatments of LGBT individuals experience after having someone close to him come out. The impact of having a personal relationship with someone who openly identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender is rather powerful and significant in the public discussion of LGBT rights. According to a recent survey conducted by Public Religion Research Institute, “The number of Americans who have a close friend or family member who is gay or lesbian has increased by a factor of three over the last two decades, from 22 percent in 1993 to 65 percent today,” and support for gay marriage has increased by 21 percentage points since 2003, when Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage (Jones, Cox & Navarro-Rivera, 2013). Such findings support aforementioned argument of Harvey Milk that coming out does in fact positively contribute to the overall public attitude towards LGBT individuals.

However, such emphasis on and celebration of coming out in the mainstream LGBT discourses sometimes marginalize LGBT individuals who choose not to disclose their sexual
identity to others. This phenomenon is the most apparent in the dichotomous image of inside/outside the closet. When one chooses not to reveal his or her sexuality and/or gender identity, he or she “stays in the closet.” Many mainstream LGBT narratives stigmatize the closet as shameful, fake, and isolated in direct juxtaposition to the freedom, bravery, and legitimacy of LGBT identity that being out represents. This simplistic understanding of the closet often reduces LGBT discourses and experiences as an either/or binary – when coming out is in fact a continuous process (Cass, 1979) and every LGBT individual experiences this process in his or her unique ways. Furthermore, not all individuals who identify as LGBT decide to come out for various reasons (Rasmussen, 2004). These reasons include racial background, religious affiliations, and/or fear of rejection by family and friends. Especially for LGBT individuals of color, coming out is more than just a mere acceptance of one’s sexual orientation and gender identity.

LGBT individuals of color experience different sets of challenges to and celebrations of their multi-faceted identities as racial and sexual minorities. They are challenged as racial minorities in mostly white mainstream LGBT activism, spaces, and narratives. Meanwhile, they are simultaneously marginalized as sexual minorities in their racial communities that could be extremely conservative socio-politically and/or are not used to talk about sexuality publically. Yet, these individuals do not necessarily “hide in the closet,” living in fear and shame. Rather, they actively navigate through racially and sexually normatizing protocols and further negotiate a
“phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides and punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship” (Muñoz, 1999). Thus, one cannot simply assume LGBT people of color are either out or closeted as they experience varying degrees of outness to different people within one’s family, peer group, and racial community. This thesis examines how the duality of one’s identity caught between racial and sexual paradigms affects an LGBT Asian Pacific Islanders’ (APIs) decision to come out and to whom.

Being racial and sexual minorities, LGBT APIs face a unique set of challenges in negotiating, compromising, and presenting their multi-dimensional identities. Then, how does the negotiation of identities affect LGBT APIs’ decisions in disclosing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity? Through survey data collected from over 500 Asian Pacific Islanders who took part in the Social Justice Sexuality Project – a national survey measuring the sociopolitical experiences of LGBT people of color – this thesis explores the relative impact of LGBT APIs’ racial and sexual identity on the level of outness (i.e. out to family, friends, co-workers, etc.).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Although coming out is often perceived to be a crucial and even necessary step in the LGBT discourse, the process of it is much more complicated than a simple statement of acknowledgement, “I’m gay (or lesbian, bisexual, transgender, etc.).” For one to come out, he
or she has to first develop and accept his or her sexual identity. There are currently three
generally accepted theories regarding the process of LGBT identity development:

The Cass Identity Model (see Figure 1) by Vivienne C. Cass (1979) is the oldest of the
three theories of LGBT identity development and it presents six stages of gay and lesbian
identity development that often leads to disclosing such identity to others in the end. According
to this model, LGBT individuals first experience identity confusion, where they recognize their
own non-heterosexual thoughts and behaviors and redefine what they mean. Individuals in this
stage also seek more information on non-heterosexual sexuality. Identity confusion is followed
by identity comparison. In this second stage, individuals accept their sexuality in a positive way,
but only partially. In other words, one feels positive about being different, but he or she may
only embrace his or her non-heterosexual identity while rejecting such behaviors or vice versa.
Individuals then seek out other LGBT-identifying people, frequenting gay bars, LGBT events,
and so on, trying to build a sense of community; Cass refers to this as the Identity tolerance stage.

Identity acceptance and identity pride stages come next, where individuals identify with and
actively take a part in LGBT subculture. Lastly in identity synthesis stage, individuals recognize
supportive heterosexual others and perceive there sexual identity to be a secondary factor in
building relationship with both heterosexual and non-heterosexual others.
Another widely accepted theory of LGBT identity development is the Troiden Model (see Figure 2), which presents a four-step model that includes: 1) Sensitization, 2) Identity Confusion, 3) Identity Assumption, and 4) Commitment. According to this model, LGBT individuals first become sensitized by realizing their difference and possible marginalization, which is caused by their same-sex attraction and/or gender identity. Then, they become confused as they encounter social stigma, misinformation, and rigid boundaries of traditional gender roles. This stage is followed by identity assumption, where individuals have positive experiences and challenge negative stereotypes. This is also when most LGBT individuals come out, followed by commitment stage, where they accept their LGBT fate and identity as a way of life (Troiden, 1988).

Lastly, the McCarn and Fassinger Model of LGBT identity development (see Figure 3) is the most recent model that presents two four-step processes that are similar to the Troiden Model. McCarn and Fassinger (1996) present two four-step processes of LGBT identity development: individual sexual identity development and group membership identity development processes. At the individual level, LGBT people experience 1) Awareness, 2) Exploration, 3) Deepening/Commitment, and 4) Internalization/Synthesis. In other words, a LGBT person first becomes aware of his or her difference from others, explore his or her non-heterosexual desires and attractions, commit to the new sense of self as LGBT person, and finally incorporate (or synthesize) his or her sexual identity into one’s entire identity. McCarn and Fassinger also put
much emphasis on how feeling of belonging to a community also contributes to the development of LGBT identities. The development of group membership identity has the same four-step processes as in the individual sexual identity development model: one becomes *aware* of the existence of LGBT people, *explore* their relationship with these people and their community, *commit* oneself to the community and embrace some negative consequences in doing so, and finally, *internalize* the minority group identity across contexts.

While all three models of LGBT identity development present similar multi-phased processes of one acknowledging his or her non-heterosexual desires and eventually embracing such desires and behaviors entirely as a part of his or her identities, the possible effects and contributions of other minority identities such as racial identity are completely absent in these models. For many LGBT individuals of color, sexual identity and/or gender representation intersect with their racial and ethnic identities and therefore, require careful negotiation and navigation of different social spaces, relationships, and marginalization. Thus, considering only sexual identity development in trying to understand one’s LGBT status and determine how one decides to come out is a rather inadequate and monolithic way of approaching LGBT identities and coming out experiences. Being subjected to racism and heterosexism, LGBT people of color are the ultimate Other among differently marginalized groups of Others.

Hence, their coming out requires conscious and cautious management of various forms of intersection racial as well as sexual identities and oppressions. LGBT people of color are neither white nor heterosexual and therefore, are the “antithesis of Audre Lorde’s ‘mythical norm’ and
become the standard by which other groups measure their own so-called normality and self-worth,” as shown in Patricia Hill Collins’ (2000) analysis of Black lesbians. In addition to the larger sociocultural oppression such as sexism, heterosexism, racism, and others, many scholars also pointed out factors like race, religious background, white gay stereotypes, family relations, level of conservativeness or liberalness in one’s family as possible hindrance to coming out (Waldner & Magruder 1999; Newman & Muzonigro, 1993; Merighi & Grimes 2000; Loiacano 1989; Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter 2004; Choi et al. 2011).

Such intersectionality stemming from LGBT people of color’s complex and particularly situated identities and experiences is often overlooked as white normativity dominates the general LGBT communities and discourses. Historian and activist Allan Bérubé (2001) argues that the mainstream LGBT discourse in the United States has been predominantly white, excluding LGBT people of color as a strategy to appeal their “normal,” and therefore, deserving status to eradicate sociopolitical marginalization and discrimination of LGBT population. Since the white normativity of LGBT identity was firmly established in the mainstream LGBT rights activism, it has been defending itself rather vehemently, deeming many anti-racist efforts within the LGBT movements and communities, especially when led by LGBT people of color, as bringing in unnecessary (racial) identity politics into the discussion. For instance, Judith Halberstam (2005) criticizes a similar incident that happened during the Gay Shame conference at University of Michigan in 2003 that captures such white normativity sentiment in her essay *Shame and White Gay Masculinity:*
Perez found himself very much in the position of Montez: he could speak, but he would always be read as a queer of color performing as a person of color and leaving the space of articulation open to the real gay subjects: white gay men…and the story of the conference, soon after it was ended, began to circulate as the tale of another scholarly project hijacked by the identity politics of queers of color!

Thus, LGBT people of color have to be acutely aware of their minority status even within LGBT community, where it is supposed to provide a safe space for all of its members. White normativity also separates one’s sexual identity from his or her racial/ethnic identity, further complicating their coming out discourses and experiences. The fragmentation of identity into several different compartments often resulted in favoring one identity over another among LGBT people of color. Queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz (1999) calls this disidentification, a “survival strategy that works within and outside of the dominant public sphere simultaneously.” The “dominant public sphere” he refers to include both mainstream heterosexual and LGBT spheres for many LGBT people of color.

In fact, previous research on intersection of identities of LGBT Blacks and Latino/as points out that many of these individuals perceive their sexual identity as separate from and secondary to their racial/ethnic identity due to prevailing white dominance and normativity within mainstream LGBT community (Grov et al., 2006). However, white normativity dominates the understanding of non-heterosexual identities within racial and ethnic communities, too. Many heterosexual Blacks and Latino/as perceive non-conforming sexual and gender identities to be a White phenomenon, further complicating LGBT Blacks and Latino/as’ coming

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1 All racial categories are capitalized (i.e. Blacks, Whites, etc.) throughout this thesis
out decisions and experiences (Loiacano, 1989; Parks, Hughes, & Matthews, 2004). By
racializing LGBT identities and experiences as “white,” racial and ethnic communities and their
members continue to reinforce white normativity of LGBT identity from the outside while
silencing their LGBT members, further removing (homo)sexuality from the discussion of race
and ethnicity. Consequently, coming out for LGBT Blacks and Latino/as requires sensitive
negotiation and compromise of racial/ethnic and sexual identities, as well as acceptance from
both LGBT and ethnic communities. When one of these factors fails to accommodate LGBT
Blacks and Latino/as’ multi-dimensional identity, their coming out discourse might be altered or
erased completely.

Furthermore, LGBT people of color are likely to experience more social barriers and
hostility associated with race and ethnicity than with sexuality, since race is a more visible social
marker than sexuality in most cases (Wallace et al. 2003). Consequently, most LGBT people of
color develop their sense of identity in relation to their race first and a sense of belongingness to
their racial/ethnic communities, where they share and identify with similarly marginalized
experiences with others. In the case of LGBT Blacks and Latino/as, they seek to establish
solidarity with and support from co-ethnics as they tend to distance themselves from various
LGBT social activities and turn to racial/ethnic communities to avoid racism in both mainstream
and LGBT societies (Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2004; Choi et al., 2011). Nonetheless,
many of them continue to fear rejection from their racial/ethnic communities, too. Several
interviewees in a study about LGBT identity of Black Americans expressed much regret for not having LGBT Black role models and fear in possibly getting pulled away from their primary reference group, which is their racial group, for being “too out” (Loiacano, 1989). Another research on the coming out decisions of LGBT Black and Latino/as point out that while there are no racial/ethnic differences in coming out to oneself, cultural differences in the perception of (homo)sexuality often hinders these individuals from disclosing their sexuality to others, especially family members (Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter, 2004). In addition, other factors such as the importance of family, emphasis on traditional gender roles, and religious affiliations also contribute to homophobic attitudes in racial/ethnic minority communities.

Similarly, LGBT Asian Pacific Islanders have to negotiate sexism, homophobia, and racism when coming out, as they are also racial minorities in both mainstream and LGBT societies. The obstacles in LGBT API’s coming out experiences resemble that of other LGBT people of color: their racial/ethnic communities are often homophobic due to the cultural emphasis on traditional gender roles, religious affiliations, importance of family and family lineage. As a result, LGBT APIs choose to come out to peers before coming out to family, and/or choose not to disclose their sexual identity to their parents altogether (Chan, 1989; Bhugra, 1997; Li & Orleans, 2001; Merighi & Grimes, 2000). Although much of LGBT APIs’ complexity of multi-faceted identity resembles that of other LGBT people of color, there is one key difference: their racialized status as “perpetual outsiders.”
Historically, the API race in the United States has been constructed as a racialized minority (despite extreme heterogeneity within the group) and foreigners, as many of them voluntarily immigrated to the country looking for opportunities. As APIs became more integrated in the American society, they were engendered and racialized according to the social hegemony, which protects and reinforces White, middle-class, heterosexual dominance. Previous research on racialization of Asian Americans argue that they obtained “margins in the mainstream” social status as ethnic Americans by putting emphasis on work ethics, which is comparable to the emphasis on (white) American middle class values (Dhingra, 2007). As the phrase “margins in the mainstream” suggests, Asian Americans in general have better chance at accessing the mainstream society and appealing as ethnic Americans than other racial and ethnic minorities. This is because they occupy certain class positions as professionals and/or small business owners as the middleman minority. Thus, they are more likely to gradually lose their ethnic ties and assimilate into the mainstream society in the end as Italians, Irish, and Jewish Americans have in the past. (Cornell and Hartmann, 2006)

Yet, this does not mean Asian Americans are fully accepted as ethnic Americans like previously considered ethnic whites. The perception of Asians is dichotomized into two categories: model minority, which aligns with the idea of “margins in the mainstream,” and yellow perils, who threaten American purity, safety, and prosperity, especially during economically challenging times and war (Dhingra, 2007). In both images, Asian Americans are
racialized as perpetual outsiders who either need the West’s help to be “civilized” or remain separate from the Western civilizations. Furthermore, Asian Americans are perceived as model minority because they are hardworking and have achieved some upward social mobility and yet, not threatening to the white majority as they “stay in their place” (Dhingra, 2007; Kumashiro, 1999). Their work ethics contribute greatly to the local and national economy with their small businesses, professional positions in science, technology, and medicine, and so on, and benefit themselves as well as the mainstream white society. This racialization of Asian Americans and the census classification of “Asian Pacific Islander,” which includes extremely wide ranges of ethnicity, culture, language, and even skin color, greatly contributed to creating the API race as the American society come to understand today.

The position of LGBT APIs is similarly constructed like that of their heterosexual counterpart. Chong-suk Han (2008) argues that gay Asian men in US media either have no presence or are always portrayed as foreign by locating their stories outside of the United States (or other Western countries), and only in Asia. Their foreignness is emphasized in comparison to hegemonic White gay men and simultaneously, exonerates non-API individuals from their racist treatment of APIs.

Furthermore, gay Asian men are often (de)sexualized as feminine to maintain the superiority and dominance of White masculinity (Han, 2008; Lowe, 1996). In M.Butterfly, Song Liling says, “And…I am Oriental. And being Oriental, I could never be completely a man”
(Hwang, 1988). This racialized and sexualized cultural perception of Asian men remains prevalent within the larger society as well as in LGBT communities (Chan, 1989; Hahm & Adkins, 2009; Merighi & Grimes, 2000; Li & Orleans, 2001; Bhugra, 1997; Eguchi, 2011; Han, 2007; Poon & Ho, 2008). The term “rice queen,” which refers to mostly older and wealthy White men who are drawn to the youthful, smooth, feminine, and passive “Oriental boys,” perfectly captures the ethnic fetishism that many gay API men experience (Poon and Ho, 2008).

One gay API subject in a qualitative study of queer Asian Americans stated,

> the whole rice queen phenomenon. You know, I have nothing against White men who like Asian men. I think it becomes exploitative, questionable, and crucifiable when White men have their ideal image of the smooth Asian bottom who will, who will listen to their biddings…White guys who hit on me…they think I’m more effeminate or submissive (Kumashiro, 1999).

Such fetishization of the gay API male bodies is problematic not only because it sexualizes and racializes gay APIs, but also because it continues to reinforce White masculinity as the norm in both heterosexual and LGBT societies.

What is even more problematic than sexualized and racialized depiction and treatment of gay API men is the lack of research on lesbian, bisexual, and transgender APIs. These groups of individuals are rendered completely invisible in the discussion of race/ethnicity and sexuality in mainstream, LGBT, and academic realms. Previous research points out that APIs are largely absent from both political and commercial representation of the mainstream LGBT communities (Han, 2008). LGBT API representation in mainstream media and societies is closely related to the issues of coming out for this particular population. Like their Black and Latino/a counterparts,
API racial communities offer a rare source of support and affirmation to cope with racism in the mainstream society and consequently, LGBT-identifying members of the community fear losing such support when they come out. Thus, LGBT API representation in both mainstream heterosexual and LGBT societies is crucial to continuously providing support and safe space that these individuals may experience as both sexual and racial minorities. Creating a space for LGBT API representation in both mainstream LGBT community as well as API community also contribute to bridge the gap between one’s race, culture, sexuality, and other aspects of his or her complex identity (Fung, 1991).

Intersecting systems of oppression as described above also affect LGBT API identity development. LGBT APIs’ identities are developed in a more complicated fashion than their non-API counterparts, due to their particularly marginalized racial status that requires assimilation or acculturation in order to join the mainstream American society. Hahm and Adkins (2009) expand previously mentioned Troiden model of identity development to accommodate LGBT APIs by incorporating Berry’s (1980) acculturation theory. As the API identity within the racial framework of the United States requires assimilation and/or acculturation in its development process, studying the overall identity development processes of LGBT APIs require multi-angled approach that incorporates both their racial and sexual identities. In this adapted model (see Figure 4), LGBT APIs experience the original four stages of the general identity development, but these occur simultaneously as they become racially
acculturated. Hahm and Adkins’ API acculturation model also follows a four-step process: 1) 
Initiation, 2) Primacy, 3) Conflict, and 4) Identity Synthesis.

In the initiation phase, LGBT APIs recognize their difference from others, but such 
difference is emphasized through their “otherness,” lack of belongingness in the mainstream. 
During this period, they not only realize their sexual and racial difference, but also encounter 
expectations and feelings of siblings, parents, peers, and other community members regarding 
their differences. This complicates the identity development of LGBT API from the get-go, as it 
forces an individual to negotiate different cultural paradigms as well as to navigate through his or 
her individual identity’s interference with collective identities that are central to their Asian-ness 
such as familial, racial, ethnic, and cultural identities.

Once LGBT APIs get past the Initiation stage, they move onto Primacy, where they 
choose one group identity over another. In this process, some prioritize their racial/ethnic 
identity as a result of being racially marginalized or partial to no assimilation. On the other hand, 
some choose their sexual identity over racial/ethnic ones and Hahm and Adkins argue that these 
individuals are more likely to be comfortably acculturated into the mainstream society. Cultural 
conflicts and language barriers (limited vocabulary to express sexualized identity) force LGBT 
APIs to favor one identity over another. Yet, both groups experience similar marginalization as 
many APIs experience sexism and homophobia within their racial/ethnic communities while 
struggling with racism in the process of assimilating into the general LGBT community. Hahm
and Adkins call this stage Conflict, where LGBT APIs experience different forms of minority stress. Again, the patterns of conflict differ accordingly with an individual’s level of assimilation, acculturation, and integration. The more assimilated and acculturated individuals have a better chance at negotiating their identities and even benefiting from having access to both ethnic and LGBT communities and their resources. Meanwhile, those who are less acculturated are more likely to fall victims to various forms of minority stress and therefore, become depressed and isolated to varying degrees.

Hahm and Adkins concludes that LGBT APIs are more likely to desire to remain closeted due to such complexity in the development of LGBT API identity and hostile attitudes of both racial and LGBT communities toward them. Likewise, many scholars of LGBT people of color’s complex identity and issues of coming out also point out these individuals’ desire to not disclose or only partially disclose their sexual and gender identities (Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter, 2004; Loiacano, 1989; Grov et al., 2006). Furthermore, Dang and Hu’s (2004) quantitative research on Asian Pacific American LGBT community partially confirms Hahm and Adkins’ theory. In their study, 73% of the respondents reported being out to their siblings and only 60% reported being out to their parents. The percentage decreases significantly when accounted for outness to other extended family members. However, the outness of the respondents in Dang and Hu’s study does not necessarily reflect Hahm and Adkins’ conclusion as the majority (87% and 71% each) of the respondents reported being out to their friends and co-workers.
Nonetheless, LGBT API’s complex identity seems to have definite impacts on an individual’s decisions in disclosing his or her sexuality to peers, siblings, parents, co-workers, and other community members. There has been little research on the subject and most existing research regarding LGBT API focus on Asian gay men and marginalization they experience within gay community due to racial stereotyping and racism. Furthermore, there is a considerable gap between researches between LGBT APIs marginalization in LGBT community and racial/ethnic ones, treating racism in LGBT community and homophobia in API community independently as if they are separate subjects, with the discussion of coming out often absent. This thesis aims to bridge such gap by exploring the interplay of racial/ethnic identity and sexual identity of LGBT APIs and its impact on their outness. As a group that has to constantly present and negotiate their racial/ethnic and sexual identities in the face of racism and homophobia, LGBT API provides the perfect paradigm through which to examine how coming out discourses extend beyond simply acknowledging one’s sexual and gender identity publicly.

**METHODOLOGY**

The data used in this study comes from a 2010 survey administered by the Social Justice Sexuality Project. The purpose of that project was to collect data on the experiences of LGBT people of color around five themes: identity (both racial and sexual), physical/mental health, family, religion/spirituality, and sociopolitical involvement. Data were collected from over 5000
respondents throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The current article focuses on the subset of 558 respondents who identified as Asian Pacific Islander.

The APIs within this sample were between 14 and 78 years of age, with a mean age of 31. The average age of respondents when they first came out to themselves is 16. About half (50.1%) of the respondents identify as female and a little less than a half (45.6%) identify as male. Some 4.3 percent of the respondents identify as gender variant.

Measures

This paper focuses on the correlates of outness among a sample of LGBT APIs. To comprise this dependent variable, six measures were combined. More specifically respondents were asked “How many people within the following communities are you ‘out’ to?” They were allowed to check “none,” “some,” “about half,” “most,” “all,” and “not applicable” for the following six categories: family, friends, religious community, co-workers, people in your neighborhood, and people online (via social networking services like myspace, facebook, twitter, etc.).

Three blocks of variables – identity, demographics, and community – comprise the independent variables for this thesis (see Table 1). Outness was a six-point scale about outness to various groups such as friends, family, co-workers, religious community, etc. The items of outness were scored on 5-point Likert scales where 1=none to 5=all.
Identity

Importance of Sexual Identity consisted of the item, “Do you feel that your sexual orientation is an important part of your identity?” and Importance of Racial Identity consisted of the item “Do you feel that your racial or ethnic status is an important part of your identity?” Both items were scored with 6-point Likert scales where 1=not at all important to 6=extremely important.

Demographics

Demographic variables included age in three categories (young adult, adult, and older adult), gender identity, age of coming to self, and religious practices/affiliations.

For age categories, young adults include respondents between the ages of 18 and 24, adults include respondents between the ages of 25 and 49, and older adults include respondents who are older than 50.

Gender identity consisted of the item, “what is your current gender identity?” where respondents were asked to check “male,” “female,” “transgender (male to female),” “transgender (female to male),” and “other.” Those who checked “transgender” options and “other” were coded as “Gender Variant.”

Age of coming out to self asked, “How old were you when you first ‘came out’ to yourself: that is, how old were you when you first knew you were ‘not straight?’” and respondents were allowed to write down the age.
For religious practices/affiliations, respondents were asked “what religion do you currently practice?” They were allowed to check “Catholic,” “Protestant,” “Jewish,” “Muslim or Islamic,” “Atheist,” “Agnostic,” “None,” and “other.” Those who checked “Atheist,” “Agnostic,” and “None” were coded as “No Religion.”

Community

Uncomfortable in LGBT Community because of Race consisted of the item “How often have you felt uncomfortable in your LGBT community because of your race and ethnicity?” and Uncomfortable in Racial Community because of LGBT Identity consisted of the item “How often have you felt uncomfortable in your racial or ethnic community because of your sexual orientation?” Both items had 6-point Likert scales from 1=always to 6=never.

Connectedness to LGBT communities consisted of three items “I feel connected to my local LGBT community,” “I feel that the problems faced by the LGBT community are also my problems” and “I feel a bond with other LGBT people.” All items were scored on 6-point Likert scales where 1=strongly disagree and 6=strongly agree.

Models

In order to explore the effects of identity on LGBT APIs level of outness, three models were run. The first examined importance of identity (Importance of Sexual Identity and Importance of Racial Identity) on level of outness. The second model examined demographic
information (Gender, Coming Out Age to Self, No Religion, and Age3) on level of outness. The third model examined community connectedness (Uncomfortable in LGBT Community because of Race and Uncomfortable in Racial Community because of LGBT Identity) on level of outness.

RESULTS

For all analyses, Outness was the dependent variable. Below, results are presented from the bivariate and multivariate analyses.

Bivariate

One-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the outness among three age groups (young adults, adults, and older adults) and three gender groups (males, females, and gender variants). The results indicate that there was no difference in outness across these age and gender groups. Furthermore, there was no difference in level of outness between those who practiced an organized religion and those who did not (see Table 2).

Pearson’s correlations examined the relationship among the dependent and independent variables (see Table 3). Here, outness was positively correlated with the importance of sexual identity (.099), negatively correlated with discomfort in racial/ethnic community because of sexual identity (-.150), and positively correlated with feeling connected to LGBT community
and other LGBT individuals (.261). Each of these correlations was statistically significant at .05, .01, and .001 levels.

**Multivariate**

Regression findings indicate no significant relationship between importance of identities and the level of outness (see Model I on Table 4). However, once demographic variables were introduced, LGBT APIs who felt their sexual identity is an important part of their identity reported being out to more people (see Model II). Controlling for all other variables, LGBT APIs reported higher levels of outness by .097 units for every unit increase in the importance of sexual identity; and this relationship is statistically significant at .05 level. Meanwhile, the importance of racial identity continued to not have any impact on outness.

Furthermore, LGBT APIs’ level of outness decreased by .016 units when controlling for all other variables for every unit increase in coming out age to self; and this relationship is also statistically significant at .05 level. In other words, respondents who came out to themselves later in life reported being out to fewer people. Adults (age 25–49) reported significantly higher levels of outness than young adults with the statistical significance at .001 level, while for older adults (age 50+) showed no significant impact of age on outness.

The age when the respondents came out to themselves and the adult age group continued to have the same impact on respondents’ level of outness when community variables were
introduced (see Model III). Meanwhile, the importance of sexual identity became insignificant in predicting respondents’ outness. However, respondents who identify as gender variant reported being out to more people with weak statistically significance (.05 level) than those who identify as just male or female. Moreover, feeling uncomfortable in racial/ethnic communities because of one’s sexual orientation and gender identity reported having a negative impact on outness at .01 level, while discomfort in LGBT communities due to respondent’s racial/ethnic identity had a statistically significant positive impact at .001 level. Finally, controlling for all other variables, the level of outness increased by .267 units for every unit increase in respondents’ connectedness to LGBT communities; and this relationship is also statistically significant at .001 level.

DISCUSSION

Regression findings showed that while community-level variables were significant in predicting outness of LGBT APIs, sexual and racial identity proved to be of equal level of importance. This finding supports previous researches arguing the correlation among various oppression mechanisms (i.e. racism and homophobia) in racial communities, LGBT communities, and the coming out experiences of people of color (Waldner & Magruder 1999; Newman & Muzonigro, 1993; Merighi & Grimes 2000; Grov et al. 2006; Loiacano 1989; Rosario, Schrimshaw, & Hunter 2004; Choi et al. 2011; Ham & Atkins, 2009; Chan, 1989).
The emphasis an individual puts on his or her sexual and racial/ethnic identity did not report having any significant impact on LGBT API outness on its own. However once demographic variables are introduced in the second domain, respondents who find their sexual identity an important part of their holistic identity reported higher levels of outness. In other words, those who consider their sexual identity important were out to more people around them than those who consider other aspects of their identity more important than their sexual identity.

Among demographic variables, respondents’ age influenced their level of outness in two distinctive ways. First, respondents who realized their sexual orientation and/or gender identity later in life reported being out to fewer people. This could be interpreted as that these individuals had limited time and opportunities to disclose their sexual identity to others than those who came out to themselves earlier in life. Second, respondents between the ages of 24 and 49 reported significant impact of age on outness, while such trend was not observed among older (50+ in age) adults. This phenomenon is closely related to the larger historical and cultural contexts regarding individuals’ coming out experiences (Grov et al., 2006) The respondents of ages between 24 and 49 have enjoyed greater degrees of tolerance from the larger society and more presence of supportive networks (i.e. LGBT organizations, communities, night life, etc.), since they were born in or after the era of progressive social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, when these individuals realized their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, the general public is
more educated about LGBT issues and the overall social atmosphere became more accepting of LGBT identities than in the earlier years.

Respondents’ gender identity did not have a significant impact on their levels of outness until community variables were introduced in the third domain. While male or female gender identity reported no impact on outness, respondents who identify as gender variant reported that their gender identities do have an impact on their levels of outness. Considering that transgender and gender variant APIs are often rendered invisible and marginalized more so than other APIs (Chen & Yoo, 2010), this analysis suggests that gender variant APIs come out once they establish and feel secure in community-level connection and acceptance. The importance of community-level connection and acceptance stands out even more in examining their impact on API outness in the third domain.

The third domain of variables, which examines levels of discomfort in both racial/ethnic community and LGBT community settings and how connected an individual feels to LGBT communities, proved to be the most important variables in this research with the highest betas. First, feeling connected to LGBT communities have the greatest impact on LGBT API outness with the beta of .280, indicating that LGBT APIs who reported feeling strongly connected to LGBT communities are more likely to have come out to others. The feeling of connection to LGBT communities could be interpreted as the feeling of belongingness. Scholars of LGBT Blacks and Latino/as previously established that these individuals often lack such sense of
connection and belongingness to the larger LGBT communities due to their race/ethnic identity (Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter, 2004; Loiacano, 1989). This type of alienation often drives LGBT Blacks and Latino/as to view their sexual identity as secondary to their racial/ethnic one in an effort to find support and sense of belongingness in their racial/ethnic communities. LGBT APIs, on the other hand, seem to establish a sense of connection to the larger LGBT communities without much difficulty and maintain the relationship without fearing rejection or discrimination. Previous research also proves that despite their racial/ethnic minority status, many LGBT APIs strongly identify with their LGBT identity and often do not separate their racial/ethnic and sexual identities (Chan, 1989). Therefore, LGBT APIs who feel connected to LGBT communities become more likely to be open about their sexual orientation and gender identity to others.

Furthermore, findings show that LGBT communities still function as a support system even when LGBT APIs experience discomfort or discrimination in these communities because of their racial/ethnic identity. These results were unexpected, but not unreasonable. It is possible that LGBT APIs perceive racism in LGBT communities and their own sense of belongingness to the community as separate experiences. In fact, Pearson’s correlations results showed no significant correlation between the two variables, supporting this hypothesis. The finding also supports previous research claiming that many LGBT APIs do not necessarily think that they are being systematically oppressed when they experience racist encounters with non-API individuals in LGBT communities and instead, they often justify their negative experiences as a matter of
personal preference or ignorance of others. In addition, LGBT APIs avoid individual confronters rather than the larger social setting—LGBT community settings—in which the confrontation occurred when faced with direct racist confrontations (Choi et al., 2011). Consequently, their perception of racial marginalization and discrimination as non-systematic racism allows LGBT APIs to maintain high levels of connectedness to the larger LGBT community, which has the greatest positive impact on LGBT API outness as mentioned above.

On the other hand, feeling uncomfortable in racial/ethnic communities due to one’s sexual identity reported having a significant negative impact on LGBT API outness. In other words, respondents who feel uncomfortable in their racial/ethnic communities because of their LGBT identity are less likely (or unlikely) to disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity to others. While it is easy to assume that API communities have homophobic attitudes toward LGBT individuals for similar reasons that are often observed in Black and Latino/a communities (Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter, 2004; Loiacano, 1989), many scholars argue otherwise. Many heterosexual APIs, especially those who are less acculturated in the mainstream American society and have stronger religiosity of Christianity and Islam, do emphasize prescribed traditional gender roles and view homosexuality and transgenderism as deviant and inappropriate (Chung & Singh, 2012; Chan, 1989). However, there are other larger cultural barriers in discussing non-heterosexual identities that hinder LGBT APIs from disclosing their sexual identity to others in the racial/ethnic community. One of these cultural barriers is the problem of
language. In most API cultures, the issue of sexuality is seldom a central theme and therefore, they often lack the language and cultural context to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity (Han, 2007; Li & Orleans, 2001; Tan, 2011; Ulep, 2011). Thus, LGBT identity as a concept is hard to grasp within this cultural framework and therefore, LGBT APIs have difficulties in adequately expressing their identity to their less acculturated and assimilated family members, friends, and other community members.

Moreover, most API cultures emphasize collective, familial identities and lineage, unlike its mainstream American counterpart that puts much emphasis on individuality. Thus, it evokes the fear of rejection and disappointing other family and community members, as coming out could be translated as a betrayal or rejection of such collective identity (Li & Orleans, 2001; Tan, 2011; Merighi & Grimes, 2000; Han, 2007). Even if one is lucky enough to have an accepting family, his or her family has to “come out” again to the larger racial/ethnic community for having an LGBT family member in explaining why their child or sibling is not dating or getting married (Li & Orleans, 2001). In which case, the LGBT API individual who comes out and his or her family share the same fear of rejection from their racial/ethnic community, which is often at the center of their sociopolitical lives. Here, it is important to note that such expected hostile community attitude towards LGBT API individuals and their families does not necessarily stem from homophobia. Rather, as explained in the previous paragraph, it is the lack of cultural and linguistic contexts that allows little room for LGBT APIs to express their identity and therefore,
their heterosexual family and community members to understand how such “untraditional” sexual identity could still function within traditional cultural and social frameworks.

However, many LGBT APIs navigate through such rigid boundaries of the traditional cultural framework without hiding or compromising their identities and romantic desires. For instance, some LGBT APIs choose to “go home” instead of “coming out” when disclosing their sexuality to family (Tan, 2011). When someone “goes home,” he or she brings his or her romantic partner home to introduce him or her as a friend. Once family members approve this “friendship,” LGBT API then increase the frequency of his or her partner’s visit, hoping to integrate their relationship into the traditional Asian family and its values without disclosing the nature of their relationships. In doing so, family members, mostly parents, eventually accept the partner as a family member. This strategy of “going home” allows LGBT APIs to express their sexual identity in a very nuanced manner over a long period of time, without explicitly stating their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

In summary, the findings show that sexual and racial/ethnic identities of LGBT APIs alone hold no significance in predicting their outness and the most significant predictors of LGBT API outness were community-level variables. However, the relationship LGBT APIs have with the mainstream LGBT and racial/ethnic communities are different from the relationship other LGBT people of color have with these communities. Unlike their Black and Latino/a counterpart, LGBT APIs established and maintained the sense of connection and
belongingness with the larger LGBT community in spite of whatever form of racial marginalization and discrimination they encountered. LGBT APIs were reluctant to disclose their sexual identity to their racial/ethnic community and its members due to prevalent homophobic cultural sentiment like their Black and Latina/o peers. Nonetheless, homophobia alone was not responsible for LGBT APIs’ discomfort in racial/ethnic communities. Other cultural factors, such as language and closely tied community and familial relationships, also hinder LGBT APIs coming out to various members within their racial/ethnic communities. Such findings indicate that coming out processes and experiences of LGBT APIs require continuous negotiating with and navigating through complexly intersected racial, ethnic, sexual, and cultural factors.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the relative impact of racial/ethnic and sexual identity on the level of outness among LGBT APIs. The analyses presented in the thesis suggest that while identity alone does not have any significant impact on LGBT APIs decisions to come out or stay closeted, community-level variables proved to have the biggest impact on LGBT API outness. Particularly, being connected to the LGBT community was the most important predictors of LGBT API outness, as LGBT APIs decided to come out even when they feel uncomfortable in LGBT communities due to their racial/ethnic identity, suggesting that the feeling of connectedness and belongingness to the LGBT communities plays a more crucial role than
racial/ethnic discrimination and marginalization does in these individuals’ coming out experiences. On the contrary, LGBT APIs were less likely to be out when they feel uncomfortable in their racial/ethnic communities because of their sexual identity. This finding suggests that community-level intolerance and ignorance of non-heterosexual sexuality and gender identity in API communities hinder LGBT API from coming out to others, but does not necessarily coerce them to stay closeted. Within racial/ethnic community settings, there are many different reasons such as lack of vocabulary, different cultural understanding of family and kinship, traditional gender role, and so on that affect LGBT APIs coming out or lack thereof.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the present thesis. First, it is possible that the sample was not truly representative of the general LGBT API population. More specifically, this study used a non-probability sample. Participants of the survey were recruited mainly at LGBT and/or POC events and therefore, they may be out to more people and feel more connected to LGBT communities than individuals who do not regularly participate in these events. Moreover, the sample does not provide ways to compare the results with LGBT APIs who have not come out, since they are significantly unlikely to participate in these events. The sample also only includes low numbers of transgender APIs.
Second, the availability of the survey was also limited as the survey was given only in English. This language limitation allowed only a few immigrants to participate in the survey, leaving out many LGBT APIs who do not speak English or have limited English language skills from the research. It is possible that immigrant APIs experience and express their identities (both racial/ethnic and sexual) differently from their API American counterpart. In other words, immigrant API identity could have different impact on individuals’ coming out experiences and how they feel in and navigates through different community settings. Thus, future data on how immigrant experiences affect one’s outness is needed and providing the survey in different API languages is its necessary first step.

Lastly, the methodology used in this thesis presents another limitation. The research is strictly quantitative and therefore, does not examine exactly why LGBT APIs feel comfortable or uncomfortable in different community settings and how such feelings affect their decisions to come out to various people. Further qualitative research is necessary to understand the research findings in depth and explore how and why these individuals choose to come out or not come out in different settings. Moreover, this research is cross-sectional and lacks longitudinal analysis. In other words, it does not examine any changes in attitudes toward or experiences of coming out that may or may not occur over time. Combined with only a small number of immigrants in the sample, this lack of longitudinal research overlooks factors like acculturation and assimilation and how they may or may not affect LGBT API identities and coming out experiences as described in the analysis of Hahm and Atkins (2009).
Implications and Future Directions

The findings of this thesis are important and may help all members of both LGBT and API racial/ethnic communities in supporting LGBT API individuals. The most important variable for LGBT API outness is simply feeling connected, especially to the LGBT community. Previous research on risky sexual behavior among Asian men who have sex with other men (MSM) also reported that feeling accepted by and connected to the larger LGBT community reduces the likelihood of Asian MSM having risky sexual behaviors such as having unprotected sex (Han, 2008). Thus, feeling connected to the LGBT community functions as a strong support system and a platform for LGBT APIs to be more open about their sexual and gender identity. If LGBT API individuals report high levels of connectedness to the LGBT community, they have the potential to be out to more people.

Similarly, feeling comfortable in racial/ethnic communities is an important predictor of LGBT API outness, or lack thereof. Like other LGBT people of color who choose not to disclose their sexual orientation or non-conforming gender identity because they fear losing the support from other members of the racial/ethnic community and/or being rejected by the community altogether (Rosario, Schrimshaw, and Hunter, 2004; Loiacono, 1989), LGBT APIs seldom come out to others when they expect hostile receptions of their LGBT identity from other community members. If API racial/ethnic communities could provide a support system or network for its LGBT members to feel more welcomed through various venues such as
community outreach and education programs, LGBT APIs would feel less uncomfortable and have the potential to be more out and visible in these communities.

Earlier in this paper, three major limitations were delineated – the study used a non-probability sample, the survey was available only in English, and the study lacks qualitative data for an in-depth investigation of how and why LGBT APIs’ level of outness is affected by various factors. Future research might address these in the following ways.

First, the findings from this thesis also point to several areas that are in need of greater research. It would be the most ideal for future researches to use random sampling to solicit a diverse range of LGBT APIs. If not, they should try to incorporate more transgenders, individuals who have little to no connection to LGBT communities, individuals who have not explicitly come out, and recent immigrants than the present research did to get a more inclusive and holistic representation of the general LGBT API population. In addition, the survey should be available in various API languages for any participant who prefers to take the survey in their preferred language other than English.

Moreover, future research should include qualitative examinations of LGBT API identity, community settings, and outness. Exploring why individuals feel comfortable or uncomfortable in different settings, why they decide to disclose or conceal their sexual and gender identities, and how they navigate through different social circumstances would allow researchers to further investigate different factors that affect LGBT API outness in depth. Lastly, conducting a
longitudinal study on LGBT API identity, communities, and outness may serve to explain how acculturation and assimilation also play a role in forming, affirming, and expressing LGBT API identity and in what ways and to whom such identity is disclosed to.
# APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviants, Ranges and Description of Variables for API LGBT Individuals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description: SJS Variable Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent Variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outness (q14scale)</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Outness to family, friends, etc. (q14a-f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Sexual Identity (q13a)</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Do you feel that your sexual orientation is an important part of your identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Racial Identity (q16b)</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Do you feel that your racial or ethnic status is an important part of your identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Ref: Male)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>Identify as female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Variant</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>Identify as gender variant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming Out Age to Self (q15d)</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>15.49</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>0-89</td>
<td>How old were you when you first “came out” to yourself...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NoReligion</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>Do not practice a religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age (Ref: Young Adult)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>Respondents 25-49?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Adult</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>Respondents 50+?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable in LGBT Community because of Race (q15b)</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>How often have you felt uncomfortable in your LGBT community because of your race or ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable in Racial Community because of LGBT identity (q15c)</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.66</td>
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<td>How often have you felt uncomfortable in your racial or ethnic community because of your sexual identity</td>
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<td>Connected to LGBT Communities (q6scale)</td>
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<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Connected to LGBT Community/People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outness</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gender Variant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resp. Gender Identity</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resp. Age Group</th>
<th>Youth (18-24)</th>
<th>Adult (25-49)</th>
<th>Older Adult (50+)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth (18-24)</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult (25-49)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Older Adult (50+)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resp. Practices Religion</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
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### Table 3. Pearson’s Correlations

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<th>Variables</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Outness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Coming Out Age to Self</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Sexual Identity Importance</td>
<td>.099*</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Racial Identity Importance</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.419***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Uncomfortable in LGBT Community because of Race</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.177***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Uncomfortable in Racial Community because of LGBT Identity</td>
<td>-.150**</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>.182***</td>
<td>.183***</td>
<td>.490***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Connected to LGBT Communities</td>
<td>.261***</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.269***</td>
<td>.154**</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.106*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* p < .05  **p < .01  ***p < .001
Table 4.
OLS Regression Coefficients for the LGBT API Outness
(betas in parentheses)
N=401

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Model I</th>
<th>Model II</th>
<th>Model III</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Sexual Identity</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.097*</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.092)</td>
<td>(.109)</td>
<td>(.074)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Racial Identity</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>-.033</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.161</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.050)</td>
<td>(.070)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Variant</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>.522*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.074)</td>
<td>(.096)</td>
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<td>Coming Out Age to Self</td>
<td>-.016*</td>
<td>-.019*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(-.101)</td>
<td>(-.115)</td>
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<td>No Religion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.015)</td>
<td>(.015)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age (Ref: Young Adult)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
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<td>.400***</td>
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<td>(.174)</td>
<td>(.170)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older Adult</td>
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<td>.182</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(.026)</td>
<td>(.019)</td>
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<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable in LGBT Community because of Race</td>
<td>.119**</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.169)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable in Racial Community because of LGBT identity</td>
<td>-1.189***</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Connected to LGBT Communities (q6scale)</td>
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<td>.007</td>
<td>3.134***</td>
<td>.046</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.527***</td>
<td>.156</td>
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</table>

*p≤.05   **p≤.01   ***p≤.001
APPENDIX B: FIGURES

Figure 1. Cass Model of LGBT Identity Formation

IDENTITY CONFUSION
Recognize non-heterosexual thoughts and behaviors. Seek information on homosexuality/LGBT identity

IDENTITY COMPARISON
Accept LGBT identity but reject non-heterosexual behaviors OR accepts non-heterosexual behaviors but is LGBT identity

IDENTITY TOLERANCE
Seek out other LGBT individuals
Experience a sense of community among them.

IDENTITY ACCEPTANCE
Accept LGBT identity
Increased contact with LGBT subculture

IDENTITY PRIDE
Immersed in LGBT subculture; less interaction with heterosexuals
Come out to family and/or friends

IDENTITY SYNTHESIS
LGBT identity integrated with other aspects
Recognize supportive heterosexual allies
Figure 2. Troiden Model of LGBT Identity Formation

**SENSITIZATION**
Become aware (or sensitized) of their difference and possible marginalization caused by same-sex attraction and/or gender identity

**IDENTITY CONFUSION**
Encounter social stigma and rigid boundaries of traditional gender roles

**IDENTITY ASSUMPTION**
Have positive experiences and challenge negative stereotypes as a LGBT individual
Come out

**COMMITMENT**
Accept LGBT identity and fate as a way of life
**Figure 3.** McCarn and Fassinger Model of LGBT Identity Formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Awareness</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Sexual Identity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Group Membership Identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become aware of being different from others</td>
<td>Become aware of existence of different sexual orientations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Exploration</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Sexual Identity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Group Membership Identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore non-heterosexual desires and attractions</td>
<td>Explore one’s attitude towards and membership in LGBT community/group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Deepening/Commitment</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Sexual Identity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Group Membership Identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deepening understanding of and commitment to self-knowledge and self-fulfillment about sexuality</td>
<td>Deepening understanding and awareness of oppression and consequences of choices Commitment to LGBT community/group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Internalization/Synthesis</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Sexual Identity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Group Membership Identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual identity is incorporated or synthesized into one’s holistic identity</td>
<td>Internalize minority group (LGBT) identity across contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4. Hahm & Adkins’ API Sexual Minority Acculturation Model
REFERENCES


