



This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following unpublished document and is licensed under All Rights Reserved license:

Bullingham, Rachael ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1940-3008> and Roberts, Claire-Marie (2018) Examining Homophobia in Female Elite Team Sports. In: Women in sport and exercise conference, 13-14/06/2018, Stafford University. (Unpublished)

EPrint URI: <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/8099>

Disclaimer

The University of Gloucestershire has obtained warranties from all depositors as to their title in the material deposited and as to their right to deposit such material.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation or warranties of commercial utility, title, or fitness for a particular purpose or any other warranty, express or implied in respect of any material deposited.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation that the use of the materials will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark or other property or proprietary rights.

The University of Gloucestershire accepts no liability for any infringement of intellectual property rights in any material deposited but will remove such material from public view pending investigation in the event of an allegation of any such infringement.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

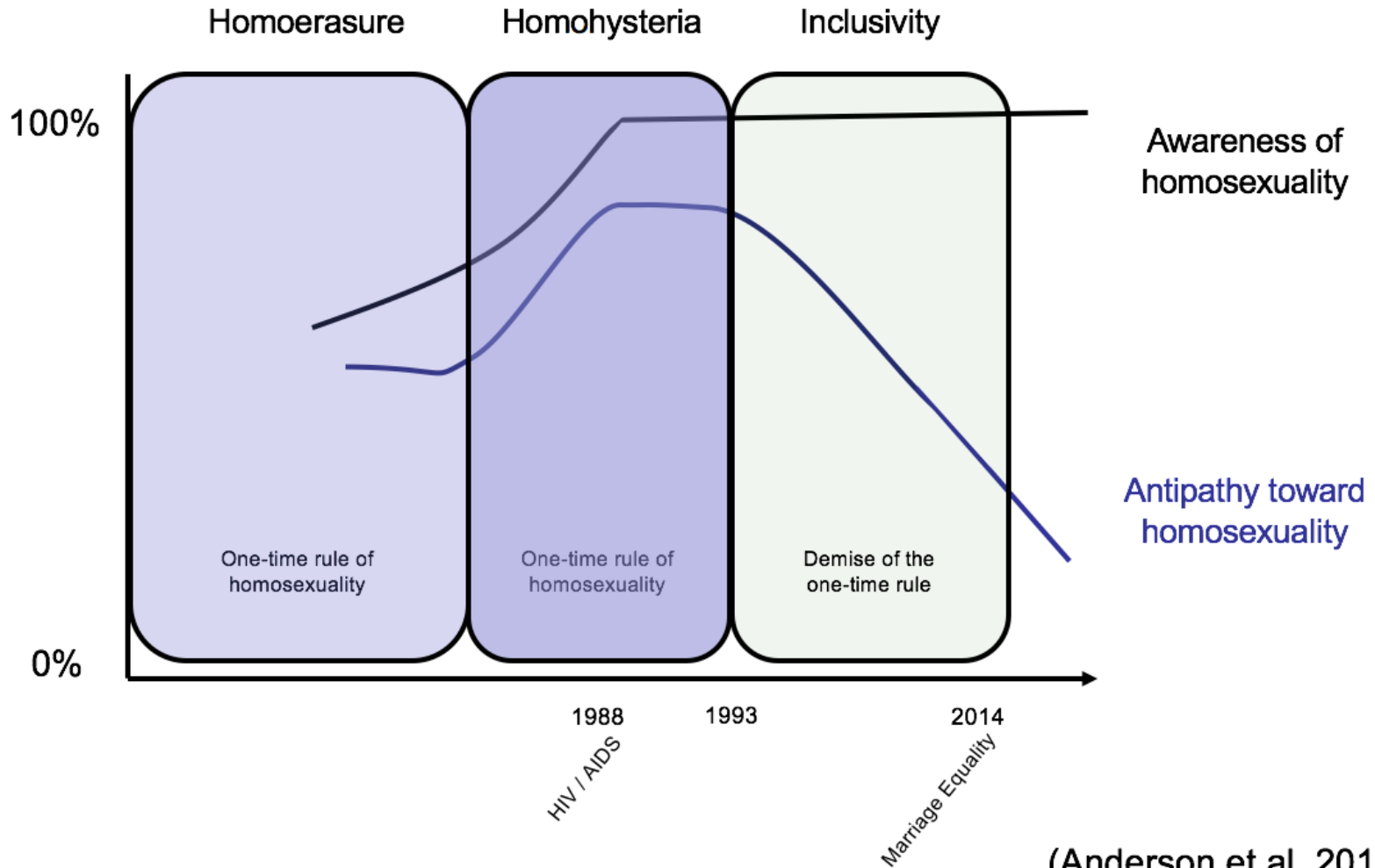


Examining homophobia in female elite team sports

Disclaimer

- Half way through data collection period
- Four initial interviews
- Initial findings
- Elite but not full internationals

Homohysteria



Culture change







Lionesses  @Lionesses · Jul 1

 @ellsbells89's and @JoPotter8's tribute to the anti-homophobia campaign celebrated at today's game 🥰



Participants

- Four participants
- Age range: 24-34
- Football and rugby
- Elite level
- Two retired
- Average 45 minutes
- Semi-structured interviews

Declining homophobia

- P2: “Back in the day it was the worse thing that you could say to a female footballer”
- P2: “Society has come a long way”
- P3: “Overall perception of LGBT is changing”

Team climates

- P1: “Being in that environment almost made me feel reassured that it was ok”
- P1: ”Coming out would not have been a problem...in any of my teams”
- P2: “Club level is an easy environment to be a lesbian”
- P3: “You feel safe...you feel comfortable”
- P4: “A comfortable environment to be who I knew I was and who I wanted to be”

Climates – Griffin, 1998

Hostile

- “Lesbian participation prohibited” (p. 93)
- “Identity must be concealed” (p. 93)

Conditional tolerant

- Don’t ask, don’t tell
- Glass closet

Open and inclusive

- “Can be more open” (p. 104)
- “Without as much concern about the kinds of discrimination or harassment experienced” (p. 104)

Hostile

- “Lesbian participation prohibited” (p. 93)
- “Identity must be concealed” (p. 93)

Conditional tolerant

- Don’t ask, don’t tell
- Glass closet

Open and inclusive

- “Can be **more** open” (p. 104)
- “Without **as much** concern about the kinds of discrimination or harassment experienced” (p. 104)

Welcoming and supportive

- Completely open
- Welcoming environment
- Supported by team mates

Coming out – team confidence

- P1: “Gaining confidence speaking to my teams and friends, I then spoke to my parents”
- P3: “You can walk into a team like that [with open players] and just be like, ok I am safe, this is fine”
- P4: “I definitely remember feeling a lot more, at that time, more comfortable in football and around my football friends, just to be gay and to be who is was”

Coming out quietly

- P1: “There is not that moment when you sit people down”
- P2: “There was no real coming out”
- P3: “You don’t physically stand there and say ‘Hi I am [name] and I am gay’ ”
- P3: “There’s no actual having to come out”
- P4: “It wasn’t an announcement...It definitely wasn’t a coming out like I did to my family”

Homophobia

- No homophobia from team mates or managers
- P2: “My manager is really supportive”
- P4: “I can’t remember any incident when anyone has said anything nasty to me or made me feel like they aren’t accepting of me”

Exception

- P1: “A familiarity with the manager that I didn’t appreciate”

Homophobia - fans

- P1: “I have heard it in the stands, a lot...I went to watch a match last season and there was a guy behind me saying it and I had to say ‘are you actually joking?!’”
- P2: “Fans were really supportive of me”
- Not many spectators at games

Media and sponsors

- Not asked by the media or sponsors
- P1: “No there was never an incident when I had to come out to sponsors”
- Evidence of some activism
- P3: “I wouldn’t want to be sponsored by someone who didn’t accept that of me”

Travelling

- P2: “I would find it difficult going to play sport in a country now with having to be somebody else...I probably wouldn't go”
- P3: “I probably wouldn't go”
- P4: “I have played in Russia, twice maybe three times...I can't remember any incidents or feelings of being uncomfortable or anything like that...[when asked if things had changed] I think for me I wouldn't be happy at all about it but its never down to the players in this situation is it...I just don't like tolerating that sort of stuff”

Room for improvement - international

- P1: (at junior international level) “It’s an environment where you can’t always be yourself”
- P2: (at junior international level) “I found it really, really difficult in the England set up at club level it was really easy”
- P2: “I hated my England experience”

Room for improvement - coaching

- P1: “He brought me off the pitch...he tried to shake my hand, I refused. He approached me aggressively, grabbed my jacket and started screaming in my face...I told him to ‘fuck off’ because I was scared...my confidence was sort of shot to pieces. You are trapped because you can’t leave unless the manager says to can. It took me about a year to get over that...I don’t know if it had something to do with sexuality...he couldn’t turn the charm on with me”

Summary

- P1: “Being gay within my sport gave me the confidence to be gay...I was accepted”
- P3: I am part of an open inclusive welcoming team so my sexuality has never been an issue...I think that makes me a better rugby player I don't have to hide anything”
- P4: “Football has always made it really easy for me”

Limitations

- Two sports
- Not full internationals
- Some areas are limited on data due to lack of international experience
- Wider range of experiences needed

Participants wanted!

Participant requirements:

- Female— identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- Played a team sport at a national league level/international level for at least one season in the last 10 years.
- To take part in a 1-to-1 interview for around 90 minutes.



Aims of the project:

1. Examine the environment of elite team sport in the UK.
2. Investigate if the environments differ across sports.
3. Analyse any cohort differences between athletes.

Please contact: R.bullingham@worc.ac.uk

out in sport



**The experiences of openly gay and
lesbian athletes in competitive sport**

**Eric Anderson,
Rory Magrath and
Rachael Bullingham**

References

- Anderson, E., Magrath, R. and Bullingham, R., 2016. *Out in sport: The experiences of openly gay and lesbian athletes in competitive sport*. Routledge.
- Griffin, P. (1998). *Strong women, deep closets*. Leeds: Human Kinetics.