

PRIDE OR PREJUDICE?

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF PERUVIAN LGTB+ ISSUES

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INTRODUCTION

For weeks, my passport has been the prized projectile of an especially stressful game of postal keep away. Today, with barely a week until my first out-of-country departure, I find myself, yet again, at a post office counter explaining the fifteen days I have played the passport monkey-in-the-middle. The workers helping me head to the back to look for my package. After a few minutes I take this opportunity to people watch.

I turn to see a family consisting of who I would presume are a mother and a father. They appear middle aged, and the man yells adamantly to the woman at the register about the stamps he is trying to purchase, his preteen son pacing behind him, his cheeks red with embarrassment. Eventually, everything resolves, and the small family leaves.

A short while later, another man comes into the office with his two daughters, who play respectfully as he leaves the room to attend his appointment. I notice their pink outfits contrast very nicely with their dark brown skin. Eventually, I meet the gaze of one of them, and she giggles, hiding around another corner. The second follows suit. I can't help but think about how much I love children.

After individuals have trickled in and out for a while, another little family comes in. This one appears to be a father and a son. This son is much younger than the girls in pink seem to be. He seems to have only just recently learned to walk because when his father is not holding him, he walks very slowly and cautiously. His dark brown eyes twinkle with the sterile light of the post-office, his black shoes squeak across the chlorine-scented floor, and his little round face looks mildly uncomfortable in this environment. Nevertheless, his curiosity outweighs his discomfort, and he wanders the six foot radius he feels comfortable away from his dad. I giggle to my partner about how adorable the kid is from time to time. And then it happens. The father has just set down his child again, when the boy looks up at me. I feel an instant rush of love for the boy and I can't help but smile. His face lights up simultaneously, and this moment feels so precious. His rise in countenance is accompanied by rushed tottering of little feet, rising arms, and outstretched hands. My heart is quickly melting to a puddle, but little do I know how much warmer my heart will soon become. "MAMA" the boy exclaimed, "MAMA" The name was certain, and absolute. Nearly in tears, I smile down at the boy, holding my heart as tightly as I want to hold him in this moment. It takes every fiber of my willpower to not oblige him as he stands there, pleading for me to hold him. As the father rushes over and scoop the little child into his arms, my beaming face rises to the people around me in the post office. I meet the eyes of a woman in the crowd. Her knowing eyes twinkle the affirmation, "One day, Daniel, one day". I look forward to that day.

My passport eventually turns up, and, within a few weeks, I find myself in Peru, in a round green chair, staring at a swimming pool. I am wondering what I should focus on for my ethnography. At our field school, we have been working with a small community on the outskirts of Huanchaco (A small coastal town North of Lima) on needs and asset-based recovery after severe flooding had destroyed their community. We attend classes every day on research methods, and in our spare time have been given the task of starting our own research projects. Part of the time, our coursework has been devoted to cataloging medicinal plant use, emic understandings of space, health, medicine, and wealth. Each of these areas of study intrigues me, but nothing quite feels like it fits. One suggestion we have been given is to just start writing as soon as we possibly can, about whatever interests us.

Sitting here, staring at the pool in front of me, I realize something. The last few days I have scoured the web for information regarding the rights and lives of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, and Bisexual (LGTB+) people in Peru. I have searched for laws, histories, cultural mores, political discourse, media portrayals, and so on and so forth. If this is something I can study, then I've already started the work.

Every researcher begins their work with a frame of bias. This bias will likely never completely dissolve, but ideally, by understanding and being open about their biases, by maintaining respect for the scientific process, and by paying careful attention to methodology, a researcher can move towards a place of relative objectivity. In addition to this, although all of us have biases, the process of scientific review allows us to better transcend our own biases.

As is shown in the passage above, I have a great love of children and a lot of passion for the rights of LGTB+ people. I identify as gay, am currently partnered, and hope to someday marry and raise children with my spouse. I also have a lot of passion for the rights of children and want what is best for them. This means that the question of whether it is healthy for a child to be raised by coupled LGTB+ parents is very important to me. These facts reveal that I have a lot of bias that I need to be aware of as I research this very controversial issue. As a student of anthropology, I hope to maintain a lens of cultural relativism throughout my work and to maintain an open mind as I do my research.

Concerning language, it is important to define a few key terms. Firstly, the acronym LGTB+ is an umbrella term to represent sex, gender, and sexual minorities. My informants (speaking Spanish) found it easiest to reference the acronym above in the order it has been listed (l, e, t, b, +); no hierarchy is implied by the order used. The term cis-gender in this piece will refer to any presumably non-intersex person whose gender identity matches the sex on their birth certificate.

METHODS

In order to find informants for my research, I utilized social media. Specifically, I planned to use an app known as Grindr. Utilizing this app allowed me to find potential informants who identified asGBT+ men and/or who were men seeking sex with men (MSM). Having informants who use an app designed for men

seeking men gave me better access to information pertaining to MSM individuals and others in the LGTB+ community. This was an important approach methodologically because of the limited time I had to conduct research, and because many of the informants I desired to find were members of marginalized minority communities.

Numerous scholars have used the Grindr app to conduct research (Burrell, E.R., Pines, H.A., Robbie, E. et al, 2012), (Landovitz, R.J., Tseng, CH., Weissman, M. et al, 2013) and (Winetrobe, H., Rice, E., Bauermeister, J., Petering, R., and Holloway, I.W., 2014). In addition to simply using Grindr as an informant selection tool, numerous other scholars have conducted research about courtship, normativity, and digital anthropology on the Grindr app (Horst, H., Miller, D., 2012) (Brubaker, J.R., Ananny, M., Crawford, K., 2014), (Miller, D., 2016), and some have used the Grindr app and other apps to examine homosexual behavior and the nature of these apps in society (MacKee, F., 2016), and (Brennan, J., 2017).

While it appears that countless others have, and continue to use, Grindr and similar social media apps to conduct their research, it appears that thus far in published and peer reviewed research, no researchers have used the Grindr app for the sole purpose of finding initial informants to ethnographically study the in-person interactions and lives of their informants . Instead, researchers seem to prefer the Grindr app in conducting research on the courtship and self-presentation behaviors of men who identify as GBT+ and/or who are men who have sex with men (MSM), particularly in studying the culture surrounding the app itself and its uses.

I decided to make sure to include a thorough a description of my reasons for being in Peru and on the app as part of my profile, so that any user of the app had the opportunity to know my intentions. This would help me avoid deceiving my informants. Although I wrote this profile in Spanish, here is the English translation:

I am a student of anthropology (USA), visiting Peru.

I am interested in knowing more about the LGTB+ community here.

In addition to finding an informant on this social networking app, I also used connections that I had procured in the area. Some of the informants I found lived in a town relatively near Huanchaco. These informants were part of a community, in which our Ethnographic Field School had been doing applied fieldwork. Other informants I found through the familial and social ties of a local anthropologist we had been working with. Through each of these connections, I was able to find interviewees from both within and without the LGTB+ community. I determined that conducting semi-formal interviews would be the best approach to my research; conducting semi-formal interviews allowed me a structure of comparison between different interviews while maintaining the flexibility required to gather emic understandings of the subject at hand. In total, I interviewed one lesbian cis-woman, one gay cis-man, and one bisexual cis-woman. Each of these were aged 20 to 30 years. In addition to these individuals, I interviewed 3 heterosexual ciswomen aged twenty to thirty-five years of age. Interviews were conducted over the course of 5 weeks. All of those interviewed were born between 1985 and 1995.

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

Over the course of interviews with the six individuals described above, it became clear that religion can cause hardship for many LGTB+ individuals; however, the heterosexual cis-gender young-adult women interviewed stated that they did not believe that LGTB+ individuals should be discriminated against or gossiped about. During my interviews with the three heterosexual cis-gender young-adult females, I found that they did not view being LGTB+ as a choice, but rather as a state of being caused by external factors that were out of an individual's control. They stated that even a religious person can become LGTB+, so it is not their fault. Both a heterosexual cisgender Catholic woman and a lesbian cisgender catholic woman stated that the Catholic Church does not accept LGTB+ people. Two heterosexual cisgender Catholic women stated that their local Catholic community does not gossip about LGTB+ people. This, along with other statements that were made by the three heterosexual cisgender young-adult Catholic women interviewed show that these women value treating LGTB+ people both fairly and kindly. One interviewee, a cis-gender lesbian woman, stated that many LGTB+ individuals in Peru are told that they cannot identify as Christian or Catholic if they are LGTB+. Even

though she is not allowed to be public about her beliefs, as many straight people are, this lesbian woman identifies as a Catholic and a Christian. This shows how complicated studying the interactions between religion and the LGTB+ community can be. There are many discrepancies between how people feel others should be treated and how they are treated in reality.

In the decade preceding the year 2014, it was shown that institutionalized discrimination within Catholicism and Peruvian Law, coupled with aggressive masculine pride and an already intolerant environment toward homosexuality, perpetuated intense homophobia in the Peruvian populus. Additionally, it was shown that the Catholic Church has an enormous impact on Peruvian attitudes toward homosexuality, as well as moral and legal judgements of LGTB+ individuals and their rights. (Davalos, M., Paola, C., Vasquez, L., Enrique, C.). In Italy another 2014 study examined how Italian Catholic parents navigated their children's sexuality, revealing a great diversity in the beliefs these parents developed in relation to their children (Bertone, C., Franchi, M.). Some Catholic practitioners would prescribe Catholicism as a cure for homosexuality (Fitzgibbons, R.). These articles demonstrate the vast impact that Catholicism has on legal and moral perceptions of homosexuality. It can be conjectured that views on homosexuality usually transfer to views regarding the larger LGTB+ Community.

POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Knowledge of legal proceedings regarding LGTB+ individuals varied widely among informants. Most informants, when asked whether they knew any laws pertaining to LGTB+ individuals, replied by saying either that they knew nothing, or they only knew that LGTB+ people do not have the right to marry in Peru, and one said that they knew that LGTB+ people could not raise children in Peru either. They were unsure whether there were any provisions for civil unions provided by the Peruvian state. Many of these informants did not feel as though they understood the topic well enough; however, one informant who studied political science demonstrated a wealth of knowledge on the subject. After her formal interview, she explained:

“The Peruvian Government at the present time wants to help LGTB+ people. It is public, not hidden aid. But the movements with Fujimori and the Movimiento Misionero Mundial evangelists have power and are going against LGTB+ progress. Alberto Fujimori was a dictator in Peru, he is part of the anti-LGBTB+ movement, in conjunction with Evangelist extremists. Keiko Fujimori is his child. They are part of a group

called Fujimorista. Movimiento Misionero Mundial is an Evangelist Group that is tied to Fujimori. That movement makes very violent comments, they are very descriptive and hateful. There is a video of Rodolfo Gonzalez, a leading pastor in the movement, telling you to kill any woman that you see kissing a woman or with another woman. In El Callao, the marching on Saturday has been cancelled because the police made a statement saying that allowing this march will allow a terrorist act to happen. The MMM will go into marches and stir up hate crimes. In the seventies there were terrorist murders in a transgender brothel, this was in El Callao. These things also happened in the jungle. These powers balance each other out to the point that progress has come to a halt. The society as a whole is commenting that the government shouldn't support LGTB+ people. In one such instance, the Ministry of women and vulnerable populations came out with a statement saying, "You have to have courage to celebrate the day of the pride: 28 June, international day of the pride LGTB+I" When this happened, they got a lot of backlash from the public. The public said that they shouldn't say that LGTB+ people are vulnerable. The public says that there are people more important to focus on, such as elders, women, and children. The government keeps trying to make progress, but the public and these groups keep pushing back."

As can be seen within these interviews, there is an understanding about the state of LGTB+ individuals here in Peru, but that knowledge may be limited to those few individuals in Peru who seek higher education, or even to those who study political science. It is clear from my interviews that some of the general public, including members of the LGTB+ community, do not know the complexity of the issues that face LGTB+ people. The student quoted above, informed me of a very comprehensive book involving LGTB+ issues in Peru. The title of the book was "Nuestra Voz Persiste", or "Our Voice Persists" (Rose, M.).

Disparities in access to information is often exacerbated by frames in the media. The Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, in an analysis of the written media discourse surrounding a civil union bill, determined that the media (while presenting itself as unbiased) discussed the controversy and contention surrounding the bill rather than content of the bill. In addition to this, the media prioritized voices speaking against the bill more than those voicing support for it. The bill was defeated in 2014. In the years since, a solidarity law has been passed. In addition to this, marches for equality have begun and some presidential platforms in the latest election included a theme of LGTB+ rights (Paredes Vilca, E. I., 2017).

In an attempt to evaluate security and acceptance amongst LGTB+ people in Peru, I decided to have my informants rate safety from 1-10. In the first scale, I explained that 1 represented a dangerous environment for LGTB+ people in Peru and that 10 represented a safe one. Informant responses, when averaged, came out to 3.79 out of 10. This leans significantly more towards "dangerous". One informant gave a much more specific

response, which consequently had to be averaged before being factored with the others. They explained the following:

“Lesbian: [5.5] Gay: [4.5] Trans: [2.5] Lesbian women are better accepted than Gay men here in Peru. I only had to tell my family twice, and they accepted me. I feel privileged because of that. I lost a lot of friends in coming out, but I gained so many more. I have access to education and work. Others (lesbian, gay, transgender people, etc) have been kicked out of their homes and have been attacked. LGTB+ people are targeted as promiscuous. They target bisexuals as people who don’t define themselves. They target Transgender people. Every day Transgender people have to go through so much discrimination and non-inclusion.”

In the second scale, I explained that 1 represented rejection or non-acceptance for LGTB+ people in Peru and that 10 represented acceptance for them. Informant responses, when averaged, came out to 3.15. This shows that Peru is likely not a very accepting place for LGTB people. This fact was cemented by the information given by my informant in political science during her interview:

“... I’m actually doing research in this region in Peru, here in the Trujillo area, in all of La Libertad. My research is about non-discrimination and inclusion of LGTB+ people and the LGTB+ population in this region of Peru. I am more specifically studying the implementation of the public laws, because although people have initiative to work with changing the law, we have a hard time making the laws a reality. Society is prepared to not discriminate, but there is nothing that is asking the society to do it, so they don’t. But even though these things are happening, the LGTB+ community is united in demanding acceptance. For example, there have been a lot of marches for rights for LGTB+ people. For example, there are a lot of initiatives to change the legislation, but the congress is so conservative that every attempt has been denied and denied and denied for many years. But something very important is that there have been very many requests from the country. The issue is just that the congress is a really strong stumbling block. There are many actors and people trying to get these rights, they have been really purposeful and dedicated. These actors and people are working really hard for their rights and for equality and for non-discrimination, and to be treated as human beings. For example, the Transgender community has a lot of violence against them. The reality about the lives that transgender people have to live is a tragedy. This tragedy is that they have to be makeup artists, or sex workers, and that is something terrible. And it is not something good because many LGTB+ people who have access to education still can’t get a job in reality, even if they studied to

become a lawyer or something. They can't get jobs that are formal and stable, no matter what level of education they have. There are a lot of people fighting for their rights, though. In Trujillo there are a lot of people fighting for their rights. These are social groups and cultural groups. There is a festival called OUTFEST (see OUTFESTPERU). This is an LGTB+ film festival in all of the provinces, but Trujillo is more progressive and dedicated to it than many of them are. This film festival is a huge step for progress for Peru and the LGTB+ population."

It is hard to disagree with the taboo on "talking politics". The justifications given for this argument are clear to see. Friends get into angry debates on various issues, family members call each other despicable names, and the tribalism at times rips people from their loved ones. That being said, sometimes discussion deters more harm than it encourages. In my interactions with the people of La Libertad, Peru, it was clear that the political environment surrounding LGTB+ people was largely uninformed. This prevalence of misinformation likely contributes largely to the dangers that LGTB+ Peruvians face every day.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE

Similar to discussion of legal proceedings, the discussion of scientific discourse during my interviews was full of uncertainty, revealing a general lack of education regarding the topic for the majority of my informants, regardless of sex, gender, or sexuality.

In discussing the scientific understanding that one of my informants had regarding the cause of homosexuality, I learned that in studying obstetrics one of her her professors, a physician, told her the following:

"Children, when they reach 12, should stop sleeping with their mother or with women because women excrete a hormone which enters the child through the anus and makes the child gay. It is a hormone that women have more of than men."

I was unable to find research pointing to the statement made by my informant's professor, but theories like these are not uncommon. Explanations like the prior can be seen within the context of many Westernized

cultures. After I came-out to my father, he asked me if I would be interested in taking testosterone in an attempt to rewire my attraction to men into an attraction towards women. I explained to my dad that taking testosterone would likely make my then goal of not acting on my sexual orientation more difficult to accomplish. The belief that androgens and estrogens govern not only sex differentiation and sex drive, but also sexuality, is common. Timothy Murphy, in the *Journal of Sex Research* evaluated several attempts to change sexual orientation leading up to the 1990s. Initially, as was the case with my conversation with my father, attempts were directed towards the use of testosterone to treat homosexuality; in these studies, treatment was actually counterproductive in that it heightened sex-drive without redirecting orientation (Murphy, 511). In response to these findings, estrogen-based treatments for homosexuality were put in place, successfully limiting libido in all orientations equally, but still without redirecting orientation (512). These studies demonstrate that sexual orientation is not redirected by androgens and estrogens, as has often been supposed in modern western society.

A range of opinions on LGTB+ couple parenthood were discussed over the course of my interviews. I gathered from the interviews that it is common for people to believe that girls with two fathers would not have a woman for their role model, and that the same goes to boys raised by two women. Additionally, people believed that if two men raise a boy together they can confuse him into thinking that he is a girl. One informant stated that having LGTB+ parents could produce so much ridicule for the child that it could be inhumane to subject the child to such an upbringing. Others interviewed believed that the amount of children in orphanages would be helped a lot if LGTB+ people were able to adopt, and that being a parent is one of the best things a person can be, so it would be beautiful for LGTB+ people to be able to be parents too. They believed that in some situations an LGTB+ couple would treat the child even better because they would not take a child for granted. All LGTB+ individuals interviewed stated that if laws and culture made it possible to raise a child in an LGTB+ partnership they would certainly want to. However, one of my informants pointed out that there is too much stigma surrounding LGTB+ people themselves at the moment for Peru to be able to work toward the legalization of LGTB+ couple parenthood at the present time.

Discourse on this issue is very active at the moment in Peru. A 2015 argumentative thesis at the Andean University of Nestor Caceres Velasquez argued that legalizing the adoption of children by homosexual couples violated the children's human rights (Suero Miranda, R.Y.). Another article coming out of Peruvian University literature from 2015 argued that it was very important to study homoparentality, because same-sex adoption could be such a good thing for the adoptees (Longobardi, P.S.).

In the international scientific community, much research has been under critical peer review regarding the topic of same-sex couples raising children. A 2011 French overview of existing research on homoparentality points out that according to research thus far, parental sexual orientation generally does not impact the child's well-being, orientation, gender-role behavior, orientation, or cognitive functioning whatsoever. In addition to this, it pointed out that the discrimination children face and the impact of their parent's orientation on their social lives is likely to vary from culture to culture, and at the time of the article the writer had not found any standardized cross-cultural questionnaire-based studies (Fond, G., Franc, N., Purper-Ouakil, D.). This data is cemented by a growing number of peer reviewed studies. Thus far, no evidence has shown that children of gay or lesbian couple parents are developmentally compromised any more than children of heterosexual couples placed in similar circumstances (Patterson, C. J.). Unintentional and Divorced LGTB+ parent couples complicate familial dynamics, and our ability to study the impact of LGTB+ identities on children (Goldberg, A. E.). In a comparison study of planned lesbian couple parent families born via artificial insemination, matched against heterosexual parent families, no significant differences were found between the children of the lesbian couples as opposed to the children from the matched heterosexual-parent families, and it was even shown that the lesbian couples showed better parenting awareness skills than the heterosexual couples (Flaks, D. K., Ficher, I., Masterpasqua, F., Joseph, G., 1995).

It seems that for the most part, the scientific discourse is now shifting from studying whether or not same-sex couples are inherently less competent in raising children than heterosexual couples to more nuanced topics. One study evaluated how LGTB+ parents tend to raise their children and what impact these methods have on the child's life (Oakley, M., Farr, R. H., Scherer, D. G., 2017). They found that like ethnic and racial minority families, same-sex parent families incorporate cultural socialization, preparation for bias, and proactive

parenting. These methods help to prepare children for stigma they may face throughout their life, and they help children to be aware of diverse family structures. Oakley et al. concluded that these things make children more resilient, and argue that supporting family structure diversity is vital to our society. A study out of Spain categorized the rejection people show towards the concept of same-sex parenting into two separate zones (Frías-Navarro, D., Badenes-Ribera, L. Monterde-i-Bort, H., 2017). The first category was a more openly aggressive rejection based on assumptions that the orientation of the parents would have direct negative psychological ramifications. The second was in opposition because of subtle everyday heterosexism, which presumes that because most people do not have homosexual couples for parents, no one should. In addition to this, it was found that when people believe that homosexuality is a learned trait, then it is more likely that those people will believe that same-sex couples should not raise children. Frías-Navarro et al. determined the inverse scenario to also be true.

Thus we can see that for the most part, the scientific community has determined that homosexual couple parenthood does not negatively impact the children involved. Current research has focused on studying the social dynamics that surround these families and is seeking ways to decrease the marginalization of families in these situations.

CONCLUSION

Just over eight weeks have passed since that day in the post office, and the five weeks I spent in Peru during that time were priceless. The methods I learned and the research I was able to do made for an invaluable experience. As a gay man and an aspiring parent, this topic was very close to my heart. The people I met, the conversations I had, and the information I scoured have taught me more than I could have ever expected. I discovered that Catholics in Peru have a very nuanced relationship the LGTB+ community, and have varied opinions regarding the Church's respective policies; Peruvian politics regarding LGTB+ people is very active, and there are many positions on many sides of every issue; and there is a great disparity between information environments in Peru, and the consequent ignorance can facilitate discrimination and rejection towards LGTB+ individuals in Peru. International scientific understanding can help a lot in dispelling myths about the

LGTB+ community, however the relative inaccessibility of higher education in Peru limits informed scientific discussion on the local level. These issues are not unique to Peru; from my observations in the United States and in my interactions with the global literature it can be seen that these matters are also prevalent in the United States and across the globe.

Despite the prevalence of these conclusions in my interactions, these matters are by no means universal. This research does not represent the experiences of enough people to be considered representative of the population as a whole, however, it does show the opinions and experiences of a few. By examining these local understandings and comparing them to the Peruvian and global discourse on the topic, we can start to gain insight into the efficacy of public policy along with media coverage in improving lives at the local level. Nevertheless, further research should be done to better evaluate the impact of Peruvian culture on LGTB+ individuals and the children raised by them. Cross-cultural comparative studies would be useful in addressing these holes in our scientific discourse. Understanding LGTB+ people and their safety cross-culturally, as well as their and their culture's impact on those children raised by them, will help guide lawmakers to make better decisions for the community as a whole. It will allow us to assess the protections that need to be implemented for LGTB+ individuals, as well as their allies. In addition to this, more thorough studies of information disparity both in Peru and across the world should be done. Assessing where people get their information and how accurate that source may be is vital to helping the people of the globe make informed decisions at all levels of society. By doing so, it is likely that the people of every culture will find ever greater capacity for hospitality toward not just LGTB+ individuals, but for marginalized groups everywhere.

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APPENDICES

Interview I

1.

a. Have you heard of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? If so, what are they like? OR

1. Yes, I have heard of them. There is a word for them that I don't like to say. I always treat them like a normal person. I see them as nice and good people.

b. How do you Identify? Who are you open about this with?

2.

a. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and LGTB+ people? OR

1. I have a very broad concept of religion. In the end we all pray to one God. I believe in Jesus and the Virgin Mary. I always pray. If I am invited to other religions, I will go. I always feel welcome because in the end, we all pray to the same God.

a. Here in Peru, Catholicism doesn't accept them. My perspective is that we should let people be happy and in the end let God judge them.

b. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and your sexuality/gender?

3.

a. What laws are in place regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people?

1. The right to get married as a Catholic they don't have. I don't know about Civil Unions.

4.

a. What research have you heard about regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? AND

1. When I was studying, I studied obstetrics. One of my professors was a doctor. He said that children, when they reach 12 should stop sleeping with their mother or with women because women excrete a hormone which enters the child through the anus and makes the child gay. It is a hormone that women have more of than men.

b. What research have you heard about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people raising children?

5.

a. How do you feel about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people marrying or raising children? OR

1. I don't know; there are different ideologies in Peru. One idea is that if a child is raised by two men or two women and their sex doesn't match the sex of their parents, they won't have someone to look up to. I don't necessarily believe the same, but that is an ideology here in Peru. Also, psychologically, if a boy is raised by two men, he can be confused because if he asks "What am I?" the men can tell him that he is a girl. Also, a kid

raised by LGTB+ parents can be bullied, and severely ridiculed. I personally don't feel like it is right to subject a kid to that much ridicule.

a. If they are happy, yes, they should marry.

b. If laws and culture allowed it, would you personally want to start a family and raise children?

6.

a. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being dangerous and 10 being safe, how safe do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru? AND

1. I would say 5

b. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being rejection/ non-acceptance and 10 being acceptance, how accepted do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru?

1. I would say 3 to 4

Interview II and III

7.

a. Have you heard of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? If so, what are they like? OR

1. Yes. They are different from a normal person. They change in the way they dress, and in what they like.

2. Yes. They are the same as us, but a man will like a man and a woman will like a woman. This is how it is. People are free to like whatever they want.

b. How do you identify? Who are you open about this with?

8.

a. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and LGTB+ people? OR

1. I am Catholic. Sometimes I think about getting closer to religion and closer to God, it is something beautiful to get closer to God.

a. They see [LGTB+ people] the same way. They do not gossip about it. [LGTB+ people] are the same as we are, but they only have different preferences in people.

2. I am Catholic. Me and my kids go to church. It is really pretty. When you go to church there is a lot of pretty stuff, and they teach you to be a responsible person with your things and everything in life. I have gone to church, but I haven't given myself to the church (meaning that she has not let religiosity consume her life).

a. I haven't heard anything. I don't find it right for people to gossip about others. [Being an LGTB+ person] is something natural because it can happen to anyone, even a religious person.

b. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and your sexuality/gender?

9.

a. What laws are in place regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people?

1. I don't know.

2. I haven't heard anything about it.

10.

a. What research have you heard about regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? AND

1. I don't know.

2. I don't know.

b. What research have you heard about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people raising children?

1. I haven't heard of any.

2. I haven't heard of any.

11.

a. How do you feel about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people marrying or raising children?
OR

1. It can be good, they can raise it as good parents. It can be good or it can not be good. "Why can it not be good?" If it is male couple raising a girl, she might not have an image of a woman to be like, the same goes the other direction (with a pair of women). "*How do you feel about them getting married?*" It is wrong, but there shouldn't be any discrimination. I believe it is wrong, but there shouldn't be any discrimination if that is how God raised them. However, some people say that people aren't born that way, but that over time, people end up like that.

2. I think it is okay for them to adopt a child. I think they might even treat it better than a mom and a dad, because you should never gossip about anybody. Maybe one day, one of my kids could become LGTB+ and I would be very happy if they raise a child. That is the best thing you can be, a parent. "*How do you feel about them getting married?*" No, no, no, I don't want to answer.

b. If laws and culture allowed it, would you personally want to start a family and raise children?

12.

a. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being dangerous and 10 being safe, how safe do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru? AND

1. I don't know. If we have a kid, and they are like that, and they go outside, they might be very insecure. I don't want to say the word they might be called.

2. People here are very discriminatory. I would give it a 1.

b. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being rejection/ non-acceptance and 10 being acceptance, how accepted do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru?

1. They are very rejected. I would give a 1.

2. I would give a 1.

Interview IV and V

13.

a. Have you heard of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? If so, what are they like? OR

b. How do you Identify? Who are you open about this with?

1. I am lesbian. My family has known since 2012. It has been a good time. All my friends know everything now. Everybody knows. In the University everyone knows. And if someone talks to me about it, I don't mind telling them. I am lesbian. I manifest myself as lesbian. And I fill the societal role of a lesbian. I am openly homosexual.

2. I am bisexual. My mother and my siblings know. Only my family that lives in my house know.

14.

a. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and LGTB+ people? OR

b. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and your sexuality/gender?

1. It is a really important question, because when you are talking about sexual orientation there is always a hard impact with religiosity here in Peru and in Christianity in general. For example, there are people who are homosexual who have to deny that they are Christian, because the church will not accept them. Even though that happens, I assume the role of a Christian, and I have my own way of manifesting my religiosity. I believe in an omnipotent God, but I do not think I have to always attend a church. I am not involved in a religious group, but I am christian and catholic.

a. Side Note: In many of my classes, my instructors say that there are no signs of homosexuality in Chimu or Moche culture, but in Chiclayo, there is an archaeological site called *senor de sipan*. In this site, there is a scene of men crossing their penises together.

2. I am evangelical. I have always been. My family is, and I currently believe in God, but I am not currently involved in a church. I believe in God, but I won't be fully involved with any religion.

15.

a. What laws are in place regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people?

1. I love your question, because I'm actually doing research in this region in Peru, here in the Trujillo area, in all of La Libertad. My research is about non-discrimination and inclusion of LGTB+ people and the LGTB+ population in this region of Peru. I am more specifically studying the implementation of the public laws, because although people have initiative to work with changing the law, we have a hard time making the laws a reality. Society is prepared to not discriminate, but there is nothing that is asking the society to do it, so they don't. But even though these things are happening, the LGTB+ community is united in demanding acceptance. For example, there have been a lot of marches for rights for LGTB+ people. For example, there are a lot of initiatives to change the legislation, but the congress is so conservative that every attempt has been denied and denied and denied for many years. But something very important is that there have been very many requests from the country. The issue is just that the congress is a really strong stumbling block. There are many actors and people trying to get these rights, they have been really purposeful and dedicated. These actors and people are working really hard for their rights and for equality and for non-discrimination, and to be treated as human beings. For example, the Transgender community has a lot of violence against them. The

reality about the lives that transgender people have to live is a tragedy. This tragedy is that they have to be makeup artists, or sex workers, and that is something terrible. And it is not something good because many LGTB+ people who have access to education still can't get a job in reality, even if they studied to become a lawyer or something. They can't get jobs that are formal and stable, no matter what level of education they have. There are a lot of people fighting for their rights, though. In Trujillo there are a lot of people fighting for their rights. These are social groups and cultural groups. There is a festival called *OUTFEST* (see *OUTFESTPERU*). This is an LGTB+ film festival in all of the provinces, but Trujillo is more progressive and dedicated to it than many of them are. This film festival is a huge step for progress for Peru and the LGTB+ population.

The Peruvian Government at the present time wants to help LGTB+ people. It is public, not hidden aid. But the movements with Fujimori and the *Movimiento Misionero Mundial* evangelists have power and are going against LGTB+ progress. Alberto Fujimori was a dictator in Peru, he is part of the anti-LGBTB+ movement, in conjunction with Evangelist Extremists. Keiko Fujimori is his child. They are part of a group called Fujimorista. *Movimiento Misionero Mundial* is an Evangelist Group that is tied to Fujimori. That movement makes very violent comments, they are very descriptive and hateful. There is a video of Rodolfo Gonzalez, a leading pastor in the movement, telling you to kill any woman that you see kissing a woman or with another woman.

In El Callao, the marching on Saturday has been cancelled because the police made a statement saying that allowing this march will allow a terrorist act to happen. The MMM will go into marches and stir up hate crimes. In the seventies there were terrorist murders in a transgender brothel, this was in El Callao. These things also happened in the jungle.

These powers balance each other out to the point that progress has come to a halt. The society as a whole is commenting that the government shouldn't support LGTB+ people. In one such instance, the Ministry of women and vulnerable populations came out with a statement saying, "You have to have courage to celebrate the day of the pride: 28 June, international day of the pride LGTB+I" When this happened, they got a lot of backlash from the public. The public said that they shouldn't say that LGTB+ people are vulnerable. The public says that there are people more important to focus on, such as elders, women, and children. The government keeps trying to make progress, but the public and these groups keep pushing back.

2. I don't know anything.

16.

a. What research have you heard about regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? AND

1. This is amazing. I was just reading a book about scientific research from 2013-14 in which there was registration from about 3-4 regional departments of Peru. These are departments all over Peru, in the Amazon, The Andes, and the Coast. And in that research there are case studies about what percentage of the population are part of the LGTB+ community, but also they show the cases of violence and discrimination and segregation that is happening in Peru. Because in Peru there is a high discrimination against Transgender, Transvestite, and Transexual people. These violations are done specifically to try to change who these people are. Families are physically violent, and kick the LGTB+ people out of their houses. Even at work, in the street, in their families, and in society, physical and verbal violences are committed against LGTB+ people. Not only physically, and psychologically, but also emotionally and sexually. In my case, I have no way to prove it, but someone I knew nearly sexually assaulted me. The sad part is that the Peruvian state said "Oh, that is your fault, because you were wearing a short dress. You are provoking the man to do that, it's enough reason for him to do it. The fault is yours because you had some alcohol and you were wearing a short dress" and the

prosecutor did not believe me. He didn't acknowledge that I am lesbian, even though I told him. He acted like I was just trying to get attention. The worst part is that the forensic psychologist, she is supposed to be the one with the most professional position to these things. She shouldn't have said that I was provoking the man to have sex with me, nor should she have suggested that I was confused and that I was possibly bisexual, but she did, even though she was the forensic psychologist. Not only did I have to deal with the violence of a man, but I had to deal with the incoherent, unprofessional, and conservative positions of the government.

2. No answer.

b. What research have you heard about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people raising children?

1. In my perspective, it can not become a fact because society is still digesting the concept. At the beginning there will be total segregation against LGTB+ people. Maybe in like ten years we can talk about gay marriage, and eventually we can talk about LGTB+ couples raising children. And that would be a genius thing because the poor communities have a lot of kids that are asking for money on the streets. They have been extremely affected by the huaico flooding. Here in Peru, there are a lot of kids in orphanages, or kids who are poor. The catholic community, I'm not picking on catholics, just making an example, because the catholic community is against both abortion and against LGTB+ adoption. It is like when 15-16 year old girls get pregnant because of lack of education about sexuality, because catholic schools don't give teenagers sexual education, and they have only been educated by myths about sexuality that go around conservative societies. Not only will she have sexual relations and not be responsible about it, but if she doesn't want to take care of the baby, society will judge her and not allow her to lose it (presumably via neither abortion nor adoption, there is stigma for both). The peruvian state will not allow women to abort their children, unless there is a very extreme threat to her life, or they are raped. So why would you not give the kid to a couple that is prepared and loving and wants to have a kid, instead of placing the kid in a difficult or unwelcoming environment and a hard life. Unfortunately, here kids who would be raised by LGTB+ family would be judged by society. They say things to boys like "You will be gay like your parents" and to girls they say "you will be lesbian because of your parents". There are cases of unofficial couples where a lesbian mother will get a divorce after she has a kid or gets pregnant, and she will have a lesbian partner and they will raise the child together. I know a couple in a different region of Peru, it is a lesbian couple, and they have a daughter. At all of their family parties the family will always ask them "where's the dad, where's the dad?". Another time, this daughter was at a school get together, and they were all talking about their parents being affectionate, and she was explaining that "It is really pretty how my mothers met each other and how they have raised me, and how they give each other kisses". The school called the mothers telling them to tell their daughter to be more careful. They said that the kid should not act like that is the situation because that will get the other kids more confused. In christian society and in conservative peru, the argument is always that a same sex couple only manifests their love to confuse people.

2. I don't want to talk.

17.

a. How do you feel about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people marrying or raising children?
OR

b. If laws and culture allowed it, would you personally want to start a family and raise children?

1. Yes. I still have faith in peruvian state. I'm young, but in the future I would like to form a family. I would like to be a couple, with a kid, a dog or a cat. It's a family, in the end the concept of family doesn't have to be nuclear. It can be diverse. Many of families here are diverse. Like out of 20 kid, maybe 12 out of twenty live only with their mother, or their father, or an aunt, or an uncle, or their grandmother, or their grandfather, or their parents are separated, and all kinds of things like that.

2. Yes. I believe in free love. In my case, I don't know if I'll be with a woman or a man, but whoever I fall in love with, with whoever I end up with, I would like to form a family.

18.

a. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being dangerous and 10 being safe, how safe do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru? AND

1. Lesbian: 5-6 Gay: 4-5 Trans: 2-3 Lesbian women are better accepted than Gay men here in Peru. I only had to tell my family twice, and they accepted me. I feel privileged because of that. I lost a lot of friends in coming out, but I gained so many more. I have access to education and work. Others (lesbian, gay, transgender people, etc) have been kicked out of their homes and have been attacked. LGTB+ people are targeted as promiscuous. They target bisexuals as people who don't define themselves. They target Transgender people. Every day Transgender people have to go through so much discrimination and non-inclusion.

2. I don't want to answer.

b. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being rejection/ non-acceptance and 10 being acceptance, how accepted do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru?

1. In the Coast: 5-6, In the Sierra/Andes/Mountains: 2-3, In the Selva/Jungle/Amazon, it depends. lesbian/gay 4-5, transgender 6-7,

2. I would say 4.

Interview VI

19.

a. Have you heard of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? If so, what are they like? OR

b. How do you Identify? Who are you open about this with?

1. I identify as homosexual, as gay. My mother and my brother know. They discovered it though, that is when I told them. My coworkers know because they found out. Some of my friends know, some don't.

20.

a. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and LGTB+ people? OR

b. What is your experience with religion? What is the relationship between your religious beliefs and your sexuality/gender?

1. Well, I don't go to church, and I don't really care if the church is for or against homosexual love. *"How does your family feel about it"* From my family only my mother and brother know, and although at first they had their issues at first, right now, I don't know if they fully accept it, but we don't talk about it. I know they don't allow LGTB+ couples to raise children either.

21.

a. What laws are in place regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people?

1. I'm afraid I don't know about the laws. I only know that gay marriage is not allowed here.

22.

a. What research have you heard about regarding Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people? AND

1. I haven't heard any really.

b. What research have you heard about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people raising children?

1. I know those are not allowed either.

23.

a. How do you feel about Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, or Bisexual people marrying or raising children? OR

b. If laws and culture allowed it, would you personally want to start a family and raise children?

1. Definitely, nothing will make me more happy than making a family and having a baby boy. But only one, haha. I think I have lots of love to give.

24.

a. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being dangerous and 10 being safe, how safe do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru? AND

1. I would say 5.
- b. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being rejection/ non-acceptance and 10 being acceptance, how accepted do you feel that LGTB+ people are here in Peru?
 1. I would say 5 for that one too.