LGBQ-Specific Elderly Housing as a "Sparkling Sanctuary": Boundary Work on LGBQ Identity and Community in Relationship to Potential LGBQ-Specific Elderly Housing in Sweden

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LGBQ-Specific Elderly Housing as a "Sparkling Sanctuary": Boundary Work on LGBQ Identity and Community in Relationship to Potential LGBQ-Specific Elderly Housing in Sweden

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how boundaries in relationship to community and identity were created and negotiated among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer (LGBQ) people within the framework of picturing LGBQ-specific elderly housing as a housing alternative in older age, by applying focus group methodology. "An island as a sparkling sanctuary" was identified as a metaphor for how symbolic resources defining the LGBQ community can be manifested in LGBQ-specific qualities of elderly housing. The boundary work underlying this manifestation included elaborations on the dilemma between exclusiveness and normality. The findings illustrate further how symbolic resources and collective identities were developed through dialectic interplay between internal and external definitions. Further, the findings show how boundary work generated shared feelings of similarity and group membership. The associated symbolic and social resources not only served to deal with difficult situations but also to manifest LGBQ identity and sense of community as a "gold medal."

Sexuality and gender identity are fundamental to social organization and living circumstances among younger as well as older persons (Heaphy, 2007), including social relationships and household composition. In spite of an increased recognition in research and policymaking of the diversity in living conditions among the older population (Harper, 2000), diversity in sexuality and gender identities is not yet taken sufficiently into account (Bromseth & Sieverskog, 2013; Brown, 2009). This article poses questions about meanings and content of potential LGBQ-specific housing for older people. Specifically, the article addresses how boundaries around community and identity are negotiated among people who identify themselves as LGBQ, in relationship to this topic.

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LGBQ aging in a heteronormative society

A large body of research shows that people who do not conform to heteronormativity express strong concerns regarding living and aging in heteronormative elderly housing. These concerns are based on their previous experiences of discrimination in health and social care services due to their sexual identity (Addis, Davies, Greene, MacBride-Stewart, & Shepherd, 2009; Bromseth & Sieverskog, 2013; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Muraco, 2010; Goldberg, Sickler, & Dibble, 2005; Neville & Henrickson, 2010). These concerns are also developed in response to failures in such health and social care services to meet and handle the specific problems related to the unique life situation experienced as an LGBQ person, or that the sexual identity has been neglected or ignored by such services in situations where it would have been a relevant aspect to consider (Hughes, 2009; Johnson, Jackson, Arnette, & Koffman, 2005; Schope, 2005). As a consequence, people who identify as LGBQ often do not choose to disclose their sexual identity in encounters with health and social care, or postpone or even avoid seeking health and social care due to their negative experience from earlier encounters (Durso & Meyer, 2013). They may also postpone moving to housing for older people, with the consequence that they later on might end up with an acute need to move due to a trauma (e.g., a fall) or disease, and then with less remaining possibilities to influence where and when to move. It is also well documented that people who identify as LGBQ generally view LGBQ- specific elderly housing as the preferred housing alternative in situations where they are not able to manage everyday life on their own, on the basis of concerns and worries about discrimination in ordinary elderly housing (Addis et al., 2009; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Muraco, 2010; Goldberg et al., 2005; Hughes, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Schope, 2005; Siverskog, 2016). Still, there is limited empirical knowledge about what such LGBQ-specific services actually represent and mean for this group.

A study based on large survey data from the United States show that older LGBT people who do not live with partners or spouses experience loneliness to a large extent (Kim & Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016). LGBQ-specific elderly housing potentially can serve as an intervention that may reduce such loneliness among older LGBQ people. However, to meet the call for interventions to reduce loneliness by enhancing social resources and also reducing risk for internalized stigma (Kim & Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016), LGBQ-specific facilities cannot simply be particular physical places where older LGBQ people reside or spend time. Instead, they need to encompass certain qualities that are necessary to meet the needs, preferences, expectations, and concerns among people who identify as LGBQ. Such qualities can be understood as manifestations of the symbolic resources through which the LGBQ community create, maintain, contest, and negotiate social differences in relationship

to the heteronormative society, as part of the process through which boundaries between different social groups are defined (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Research that explores various expressions and experiences from such processes of boundary work thus contributes crucial and important understanding of the meaning and characteristics of LGBQ-specific qualities of elderly housing and other facilities. Therefore, the aim of this study was to generate a deeper understanding about how boundaries in relationship to community and identity are created and negotiated among LGBQ people. This topic aimed to be explored within the frame of picturing LGBQ-specific elderly housing as a housing alternative in older ages.

Boundaries related to identity and community within the LGBQ community

People who identify as LGBQ share the feature of deviating from the hegemonic norm of heterosexuality. This deviation can be understood to constitute symbolic boundaries that define the LGBQ group. Symbolic boundaries separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Pachucki, Pendergrass, & Lamont, 2007). When symbolic boundaries are widely agreed on, they can pattern social interaction and translate into social boundaries, i.e., objectified forms of social difference, manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of material and nonmaterial resources (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). In this sense, the symbolic boundaries that define differences between heteronormativity and expressions of LGBQ identity also might become a social boundary between the majority group and people who identify as LGBQ (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). However, this categorization of LGBQ people as one social group must be seen in relationship to the risk of dismissing the different political and social circumstances and identities that define the different groups included in this broad category (De Vries, 2007). Heaphy (2007) argued that there is no unitary, shared non-heterosexual experience. On the other hand, an extensive body of research shows that the experiences of not conforming with heteronormativity strongly impact life circumstances and life choices (Bromseth & Sieverskog, 2013; Heaphy & Yip, 2003). In spite of a great diversity among people who identify as LGBQ, they share the experience of continuously negotiating their life circumstances and life choices with the heterosexual norm. A non-heterosexual identity thus might serve as a basis for a collective identity and shared symbolic resources that define boundaries in relationship to the general heteronormative society. Research that explores various expressions and experiences from such negotiations thus contributes with crucial and important understanding concerning the life situation for people who identify as LGBQ. With the ambition to deepen the understanding of how negotiating life circumstances and life choices with the heterosexual norm influence the meaning and character of LGBQ-

specific qualities of health and social care services, we have chosen to use the established categorization *LGBQ* for this study. Still, it is important to be aware of the risks of categorizing the various subgroups included in the established label *LGBQ* as one group, as discussed above.

Historical and political context of the study

This study is conducted in Sweden, and in the following we briefly present the general policies of elderly housing in Sweden and the historical and political situation on LGBTQ issues in Sweden.

Policies of elderly housing in Sweden

The policy of aging in place, meaning that most older people stay in their ordinary housing as long as possible when aging, has been strong in Sweden during the last decades (Schwarz & Nord, 2015). Aligned with this policy, there are different types of elderly housing in Sweden: "senior houses," self-organized co-houses, "extra care housing," and nursing homes. Senior houses are privately owned houses with condos for older persons over the age of 55 without major health problems. They vary in layout and organization, but they do often have some common shared areas such as activity rooms or dining places and offer different levels of service. This housing option is entirely paid for by the individual and often relatively expensive. Older people who either age in place, in senior houses or in self-organized co-houses, can get care from home-care services financed mainly by the municipality (Schwarz & Nord, 2015). Individuals who need extensive care to manage their everyday life, due to, for example, a progressive dementia disease, can apply for a room/apartment in a nursing home with professional care 24/7. Eligibility for a place in a nursing home is defined by the individual's needs, as assessed by municipal needs assessors. The nursing homes and the care for older people are the responsibility and cost of the municipalities, but such services can be run by private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, which has become more common, especially in the larger city areas in Sweden. During the 2000s, a new housing alternative has also been developed in the Nordic countries—extra care housing for people who are over 70 years old—in order to provide a housing alternative for people who do not qualify for nursing homes (Schwarz & Nord, 2015). Still, this alternative is not very common.

Supported by the argument that future older populations will not accept being treated as a homogenous group, the idea of elderly housing with specific profiles has been presented as an alternative option, where individual identities and preferences are the overarching categorization. During the last decade, a number of such elderly housing facilities with a specific ethnic and/

or language profile have been developed in Sweden. A number of LGBTQ-profiled housing facilities for older persons exist internationally, mainly in the United States (see, for example, http://gleh.org/or http://openhouse-sf.org/). To our knowledge, only one elderly housing facility with an LGBTQ profile exists in Sweden, opened in Stockholm during 2013 (see http://www.regnbagen.net/).

LGBQ policies in Sweden

Since 2008, the Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Rights (RFSL) offers LGBTQ certifications for service-providing organizations and institutions. To qualify for such certification, the majority of staff have to participate in an educational program focusing on LGBTQ people's experiences and the current norms in society. The program addresses power structures and different grounds of discrimination from an intersectional perspective. The ultimate goal is to give the organization/institution future tools to work systematically with such issues of human rights, equality, and antidiscrimination in order to promote a more inclusive environment (RFSL, 2015b). According to the Web site of RSFL, three elderly housing facilities have yet been certified in Sweden.

As in many other countries in the Western world, the attitudes toward people who identify as LGBTQ have changed considerably during the last 50 years in Swedish society. This may imply that people who are born in different time periods also approach their later years with very different life experiences. For example, in Sweden, homosexuality was classified as a disease until 1979 (RFSL, 2015a). We can therefore conclude that people who identified themselves as being homosexual before 1979 might also have different experiences than younger generations that also may impact their boundary work in relationship to the general society and associated views on future housing options and services when getting older.

In general, the legal status of same-sex relationships has moved toward equality with the status for heterosexual relationships. In 1994, paired relationships between same-sex individuals were legally secured in Sweden, and in 2009 the regulations for marriage became gender neutral. Furthermore, same-sex and heterosexual relationships now have similar status when it comes to adopting children, and a registered or married homosexual couple can get shared custody of the biological children of either partner (RFSL, 2015a). The laws and regulations related to family relations (having children and legal status of relationships) still do not specifically address transgender persons. In 2013 the law stating that a person has to be sterilized to get access to sex-reassignment treatment was finally withdrawn after a period of intense debate on the topic.

The Swedish laws against discrimination do include discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Ambjörnsson et al., 2010; SFS, 2008). The situation for LGBTQ people is currently on the political agenda in Sweden, and, with some exceptions, most political parties strive to present their politics as LGBTQ-friendly.

However, in spite of a legal system that emphasizes the equal rights of people who identify as LGBTQ, violations of the law against discrimination and hate crime toward LGBTQ people are still repeatedly documented (Brå, 2015).

Context and design of the study

This study is part of a larger project that aims to map needs, preferences, and concerns in relation to future housing in later life among people who identify as LGBQ and to create ideas and sketches for a potential building encompassing these viewpoints. Parts of the project findings have been reported elsewhere (Aase, Johansson, Kottorp, & Rosenberg, 2012; Kottorp, Johansson, Aase, & Rosenberg, 2015). The present study is based on data gathered through focus groups included in the project, addressing the area of challenges, possibilities, hopes, and concerns in relation to LGBQ-specific housing for older people. The discussions related to this topic generated interesting elaborations and reflections on the relationships between LGBQ-specific qualities of potential elderly housing and the creation and negotiation of boundaries in relationship to community and identity, leading to the formulation of the aim of this particular study.

No specific ethical approval was required for the project from the university, as it was a noninvasive study and involved limited risks for the participants to participate in the focus groups.

Participants

Participants identifying themselves as LGBQ were recruited mainly from a sample of persons ($n = 487$) who had participated in a survey included in the larger project (Kottorp et al., 2015). Participants for the project were recruited at the yearly Pride festival in Stockholm. The survey included a question about if participants were interested in being contacted for participation in focus groups. Approximately 80 persons indicated that they were interested in participating in focus groups. Among those, 21 persons (15 men and six women) agreed to participate in focus group discussions by responding to an e-mail invitation. To include a wider spectrum of the LGBQ group, a purposeful sampling method (Patton, 2002) was also used to recruit more women; we asked the women who already were included as participants to ask women in their lesbian and/or bisexual network if they also might be interested in participating. We also contacted organizations for lesbian and

bisexual women. We did not have access to further bi- or transsexual networks, and no purposeful sampling was applied to include those groups. This process resulted in a total of 30 participants being included: 18 men and 12 women. Twenty-eight of the participants identified themselves as homosexual, one as bisexual, and one as queer. Thirteen of the 30 participants (seven men and six women) lived with a partner, and seven had children (four men and three women). The age of the participants were reported in age groups and distributed as follows; 1 aged <36, 13 aged 36–50, 12 aged 51–64, and 4 aged 65–74.

Procedures

Six focus groups were conducted in the home of one of the members of the research group with three to six participants in each group (see Table 1). The discussions revealed that all participants lived in the larger Stockholm City area, and they represented a variety of socioeconomic conditions. The location was chosen to create a relaxed atmosphere at a central address that was easily accessible for the participants. The focus groups were composed on the basis of practical issues; that is, age and gender diversities within the groups depended on which individuals choose to participate on different suggested occasions. All the focus group discussions were moderated by LR, with assistance from one or more persons on the research team. Each session lasted approximately two and a half hours, including a break of about 15 minutes. During the sessions, a brunch or dinner was served to facilitate participation for those who came to the focus groups directly after work, and also to create a more relaxed social situation. At the beginning of each session, the moderator explained the purpose of the study and encouraged the participants to interact with each other during the session (Morgan & Kreuger, 1997). The moderator stated that in order to keep an openness for

Table 1. Demographics (gender and age) of the participants in the focus groups ($n = 30$).

	Age (years)	Men	Women	Total
Focus group 1	36–50	3	2	5
	51–64			
Focus group 2	< 36	4	1	6
	51–64	1		
	65–74			
Focus group 3	36–50	6		6
Focus group 4	36–50	2	1	5
	51–64	2		
Focus group 5	51–64		3	5
	65–74		2	
Focus group 6	36–50		1	3
	51–64		1	
	65–74		1	
Total N		18	12	30

various needs and preferences, the project had chosen to not define what kind of elderly housing was in focus, in terms of what level of health and social care needs or what chronological age defines the potential residents. The discussions were moderated so as to focus on the following areas: (1) What would characterize LGBQ-specific elderly housing?; (2) If and how is LGBQ-specific elderly housing a potential attractive housing alternative?; and (3) Who would be welcome to live there? Overall, the focus group sessions were characterized by an open and energetic discussion climate where the participants approached the topic with a combination of deep seriousness and humor. New ideas and standpoints also emerged through the discussions, which is in line with the defined ambitions of focus group methodology. The participants also elaborated on their views and standpoints on the subject by discussing how and why their thoughts and standpoints had been developed (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999).

Data analysis

Five out of six focus group sessions were audio-taped. Due to technical issues, session number five was not recorded, so only field notes were used as data from this session. The analysis of audio files and written notes was conducted in line with the hermeneutic circle, meaning that the dialectics between the empirical data and theoretical understandings were continuously interpreted (Gustavsson, 2000; Ricoeur, 1991). As the participants drew on their previous experiences while discussing their perspectives in relationship to potential LGBQ housing for older people, the "trace model," recommended by Gustavsson (2000), was chosen for the analysis. According to Gustavsson, following a trace means to identify the origin of the trace, how it is expressed in the present time, and to understand the relationships connecting these aspects. In this study this was manifested in that "the non-heterosexual island," identified in an early phase of the analysis, was viewed as a trace of relevance for understanding how boundaries in relation to community and identity were created and negotiated in relationship to future potential elderly housing. Through the hermeneutic process, we followed this trace by investigating the material more in depth by using analytic questions in an iterative dialogic process aiming to generate further insights into the relationships between how the trace was developed and present expressions and impacts of the trace (Gustavsson, 2000). By further analysis of the meaning and character of the non-heterosexual island, we found that the metaphor of the island was simultaneously presented as a "sanctuary" and as a "gold medal." Next, we followed this trace by inquiring into the dialectics between "sanctuary" and "gold medal." This led to the conclusion that the meaning and character of the non-heterosexual island was connected to the participants' previous experiences from belonging to "a sense of a LGBQ

community" and the development of "a non-heterosexual norm." This conclusion guided our further analytic questions about what constituted and characterized the sense of an LGBQ community and the non-heterosexual norm. The analytic questions and tentative answers were developed through a collaborative process involving LR and KJ, in iterative discussions with AK.

Findings

Acting on the basis of everyday experiences or an ideology of an inclusive society?

The focus group discussions revealed that the participants elaborated on borders between the LGBQ community and the general society by addressing a dilemma between picturing potential future LGBQ-specific elderly housing on the basis of everyday experiences of exclusion or on the basis of an ideology of an inclusive society. Since the everyday experiences included having to continuously deal with being treated as deviant from normality, the participants concluded that LGBQ-specific housing for older people could therefore serve as a place where older people who do not conform to heteronormativity can get some respite from continuously dealing with the heterosexual norm. At the same time, the risk that the manifestation of boundaries between the LGBQ community and the general society in the form of an LGBQ-specific housing for older people would confirm the LGBQ group as deviant from the norm, and thereby contribute to stigmatization of this group, was also discussed. Referring to an ideology of an inclusive society as a central part of the LGBQ movement, the participants raised concerns that advocating for housing for older people that excludes people who do not belong to the LGBQ group is in conflict with this ideology as reflected in the following: "First we've struggled all our lives and took part in that Pride procession, and then we'll get old ourselves and not let anyone else in" (Focus group three).

Further elaborations on this dilemma led to discussions about to what extent today's society is inclusive with respect to LGBQ people. Illustrating the fluidity of the social borders based on LGBQ community and identity, the discussions contained examples of what the participants experienced as a trend toward greater tolerance and acceptance of people who identify as LGBQ, parallel with examples of experiences of being treated as deviants. The participants mentioned, for example, insurance companies that use terminology that is neutral in terms of gender and sexual orientation or LGBTQ certification in health care. However, the participants emphasized that tolerance and acceptance is not equivalent to social borders dissolving. They discussed that tolerance still means that non-heterosexual gender identity and sexual orientation are defined as deviant from heteronormativity,

even if tolerated and accepted by the general society. The discussions included many examples of everyday life situations where it became apparent that living in non-heterosexual relationships deviates from the norm. Such situations could be experienced as annoying and tiresome; for example, one man talked about how he and his boyfriend were expected to pay separately at the fast food restaurant, while he and his female friend were often expected to pay together. Other examples pointed at situations that could be threatening, such as being hesitant to show same-sex love openly to avoid harassment and even physical violence. These everyday experiences related to deviating from society's expectations of living according to the heterosexual norm can be understood as manifestation of symbolic borders toward LGBQ people that are created and maintained by the dominant society. Based on experiences of the fact that the achieved tolerance and acceptance is challenged in more life-critical situations such as when having children or caring for a sick family member, the discussions raised concerns about how experiences of being regarded as deviant would resonate into situations of care or support in everyday tasks in older ages. Referring to a potential future situation in ordinary elderly housing, one participant said: "it would be horrible not to be allowed to show my feelings [to my same-sex partner] or not to sleep in the same bed." The discussions concluded that having to define and justify oneself to care staff in elderly housing not only would be experienced as annoying and tiresome, but also could be magnified into discrimination, as exemplified in the following:

> P: Not needing to explain who you are all the time and not needing to "correct" people every time they take it for granted that I live with someone of the opposite sex. Not needing to put the record straight every single time. Sure, it's ok, but it would be rather nice not to have to do it.
>
> Moderator: Is this connected to becoming older?
>
> P: I think that for those of us sitting here, maybe it doesn't make such a big difference because you take your life experience with you when you get old. But on the other hand, the more help I need when I'm old, the more people I'll have to meet, and the more I'll have to explain who I am. Right now I don't need to do it so often but I often think that as an old person it will be . . . above all if I need a lot of assistance, then there'll be a lot of people helping me and I'll need to explain who I am to everyone. (Focus group four)

Overall, the elaborations on the dilemma between maintaining social and symbolic boundaries between the LGBQ community and the general society on the basis of everyday experiences, and reducing these boundaries on the basis of the ideology of an inclusive society, led the participants to conclude that LGBQ-specific housing for older persons is actually motivated, as long as LGBQ people are treated as deviants from the norm of the general society. Together, the experiences and concerns presented above were brought forward as arguments for LGBQ-specific housing as a safe place where older persons who do

not conform to heteronormativity could be relieved from defining and justifying themselves and their way of living, or from hiding who they are and how they want to live. In this way, LGBQ-specific housing can be understood as a sanctuary in a heteronormative world, defined by the social and symbolic differences between the LGBQ community and the general society.

While discussing LGBQ-specific elderly housing as a sanctuary, the participants in the focus groups developed a sense that such housing could be something positive and desirable. Their view of living there evolved into the understanding of LGBQ housing as a place that provided additional qualities to everyday life, compared to living in ordinary elderly housing or isolated in their own homes. This argument was built on the idea that the LGBQ identity was seen as "a gold medal rather than as a stigma," as one of the participants formulated it. In order to better understand the symbolic resources that define the qualities of such a place, we enquired further into the dialectics between sanctuary and gold medal.

The LGBQ island: A sparkling sanctuary

The analysis revealed that the dialectics between sanctuary and gold medal in relationship to LGBQ-specific elderly housing included an ambiguity and tension between inclusion in the general society and exclusiveness of the LGBQ society. Drawing from the metaphors the participants used, the analysis identified that LGBQ-specific elderly housing was perceived as a potential non-heteronormative island in the general heteronormative society. This island provided a place where people who identify as LGBQ represented normality, and by this it was seen as a sanctuary from the heteronormative society. At the same time, this non-heterosexual normality was discussed as exclusive, "sparkling from the gold medal in all its glory." In this sense, the boundaries that defined potential LGBQ-specific elderly housing, were simultaneously created by the excluding symbolic boundaries created by the heteronormative society and the symbolic resources used within the LGBQ group to define the group.

Through the discussions, the participants elaborated on LGBQ-specific qualities of potential LGBQ-specific elderly housing by referring to experiences of other defined "non-heterosexual islands" such as gay camps, lesbian or gay choirs, and Pride festivals. An example of the experience of being on a non-heterosexual island was expressed by a man who described how he had felt participating in a gay choir and going to a gay camp:

> I joined Stockholm Gay Choir in 93 and I've never experienced such a feeling of camaraderie, it was quite fantastic. Everything that had been lacking in my 30-year-old life up until then was suddenly there—complete acceptance, closeness, just being yourself. And then we went away on choir weekends, [….], and it was like a little 'ghetto' there, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and I was so exhilarated

and excited at being liked for who I was. I experienced the same thing the following summer when I went on gay camp for a week, and it was on a private estate on an island and it was the same thing. I've never felt so relaxed in my life. And it was almost painful to go back to the real world afterwards and at the same time, a little sad to experience, to feel that difference, I'd rather have that homo-life on the island, than go back to the normal hetero-world that expects me to behave in a certain way and do and say certain things. (Focus group two)

In all groups the participants reflected on the possible implications of housing for older LGBQ people as a non-heterosexual island, and the dilemmas between normality and exclusiveness, in the light of their experiences from the recent Stockholm Pride. This particular year the theme of the festival was "openness." In line with this theme, the festival was located in a central area, open and free to the public, while the festival in previous years had been located in an enclosed area with an entrance fee. To their own surprise, many of the participants experienced that in the current open form, the Pride festival did lack something that seemed to be of central importance. Reflecting further on what this something was, the discussions led to the conclusion that the sense of community, joy, and safety that stemmed from the more secluded format of earlier Stockholm Pride festivals generated a sense of normality and exclusiveness at the same time. Consequently, the earlier Stockholm Pride festivals had constituted both islands of sanctuary and sparkling medals through the manifestation of the symbolic boundaries that define the LGBQ community. This can be illustrated with the following response to the moderators' question "What kind of feeling was it that you missed this year?":

P1: Yes, but that "family atmosphere" (several nod in agreement) … we can call it a family atmosphere. Just that sense of being able to say "Here I am!" But it was that, you know, that feeling of when I'm sitting in a home and am 90 years old, I want to be able to experience something like that. Some sort of feeling like that …people all around me—it's OK in some way …

P2: … to be able to trust them?

P1: Yeah, that I trust them and don't need to worry about whether I fit in or not or whatever it might be. (Focus group two)

In their descriptions of what the non-heterosexual islands meant, the participants used expressions such as "a sense of community," "like-minded," and "imprint": i.e., (a group of) people whose body and consciousness have been indelibly marked by their experiences. These terms were used in the discussions as if having obvious shared meanings known to the participants in the focus groups. We interpreted this to mean that the participants addressed and defined an internal culture, with an assumed shared understanding of certain symbolic resources and associated boundaries. Still, this internal culture and the experiences related to belonging to this culture were difficult to describe, as illustrated by the following conversation:

P1: It's very difficult to find the right words…it's a feeling…

P2: No, because there are no practical things that are different (several nod in agreement). It's something you can't put your finger on.

P3: It's just that in the LGBQ-world, there are other, unwritten rules, you somehow don't follow society's norms. (Focus group two)

The analysis identified that the island as a sanctuary and a gold medal could simultaneously provide conditions for normality and exclusiveness. Furthermore, this was seen to be possible through creating a space for a non-heterosexual norm. Even though the participants had a clear idea about the existence of a sense of community connected to a non-heterosexual norm, they had difficulties to articulate and make explicit the meaning and manifestation of this. Therefore, we enquired further into how to understand this as the next step in the analytic process.

A sense of community through shared experiences of living according to "the norm of not living the norm"

The analysis revealed that the non-heterosexual norm could be defined as "the norm of not living the norm." The participants expressed that not conforming to the hegemonic norm of heterosexuality led non-heterosexual people to fiddle and fix to make everyday life work. These experiences were integrated as a central part of the non-heterosexual norm, which through the discussions was defined to be characterized by creativity and openness to diversity and unconventional ways to organize everyday life. The norm of not living the norm could be manifested in various aspects of life, such as how to create a family and how to celebrate holidays. LGBQ-specific elderly housing could therefore potentially represent a place where the symbolic resources associated with the norm of not living the norm could be manifested in everyday life, and it was thereby described as something that could be exclusive and also more fun, compared to ordinary heteronormative housing for older people:

P1: I also think it could be really fun, because there are lots of us who are little bit crazy, and you know, there are a few sequins and all sorts of things… (laughter and agreement), you know what I mean?

P2: And it maybe isn't accepted in the same way like, you know … (in an ordinary elderly housing) (with an ironic voice)—"No, you can't do that sort of thing"… (everybody laughs). I think it could be loads of fun, because we've got, you know, another lifestyle.
     […]

P3: The idea is maybe to have a lot more fun in an old folks' home because we always have a lot more fun together anyway … (Focus group two)

The analysis revealed that the norm of not living the norm, which was developed out of experiences of exclusion and oppression, generated symbolic resources that were shared among people who do not conform to

heteronormativity. For example, one man in his 60s said that the experience of belonging to a group that historically had been oppressed had created an imprint in him that made him both need and want the sense of community with other LGBQ people. Furthermore, he said that he wanted to stand up for and defend this sense of community because it supported his personal happiness and pride. In this way, the sense of community, and the symbolic resources that define the borders of this community, was connected to the LGBQ identity simultaneously as a stigma and as a gold medal. The exclusiveness of living according to "the norm of not living the norm" can be illustrated through jokes about imagined situations where people living according to heteronormativity became deviant and were forced to adapt to the non-heterosexual norm, as exemplified in the following discussion:

> P1: But it's all about being the norm for once! Being the norm is just so cool, like at the Pride Festival, and just think what it would be like when we're old and living in a home. That would be fantastic! And then just one or two "heteros" could live there and find out what it feels like (everybody laughs). We can bring one in (laugh) and take the piss out of them a bit (laughs).
>
> Interviewer: How do you others feel about that, about being the norm?
>
> P2: Yes, it would be fun. There would be one or two straight people with us that we could take the piss out of (laughs). That would be really fun, not in a nasty way, but just 'this is how we do things' (laughs). (Focus group six)

The shared experiences of living according to the norm of not living the norm were found to create a certain sense of community. In the analysis, we continued inquiring into the relationships between this sense of community and the norm of not living the norm. This also led to new questions about the foundation on which this sense of community is built, and about what characterizes the symbolic and social borders that define who belongs to the community.

A non-orthodox LGBQ island

The complexity of the relationships between the norm of not living the norm and the sense of an LGBQ community was illustrated by discussions in the focus groups about what defined people who could be seen as potential residents in LGBQ-specific elderly housing. The analysis revealed that these discussions were framed toward the permeability of the social and symbolic boundaries between the LGBQ community and the general society. Overall, the discussions led to the conclusion, with which most of the participants agreed, that the LGBQ island in the form of elderly housing should not exclusively include persons who identify themselves as LGBQ. This was synthesized by one participant in a statement: "LGBQ-specific elderly housing—yes, but it should not be orthodox."

The permeability of the boundaries between the LGBQ community and the general society was illustrated through the question: "Will my friend not be allowed to live there?" This question was brought up in each of the focus groups, referring to close heterosexual friends of the participants. Elaborating on who could be included in the LGBQ sense of community, the participants draw from the experiences from the Stockholm Pride festival as an LGBQ island. They discussed that heterosexual persons who entered an assigned festival area were not perceived as a threat to the sense of the LGBQ community. This was contrasted to the current Pride festival, which was not perceived as a LGBQ island, since the LGBQ community was diluted when a substantial part of the people attending regarded the LGBQ people as an exotic group, rather than a group that they associated with. By picturing LGBQ-specific elderly housing as an assigned LGBQ arena, the discussions led to the conclusion that the LGBQ-specific qualities of elderly housing were not seen to be at risk through also having a limited number of heterosexual residents. The participants stressed the importance of the fact that people who identify as heterosexuals but who want to live in LGBQ-specific housing for older people will probably be individuals who do not have any problem conforming to the "norm of not living the norm." The term *like-minded* was repeatedly used to define people who belong to the LGBQ community. When asked by the moderator to describe what the participants thought about when they used the term *like-minded people*, one participant responded:

P1: LGBQ people. Or LGBQ …in my opinion it doesn't mean that everybody has to be fags and dykes, in some way, but people who like to mix in those kinds of circles and have no problem with it. Because there really are a lot of those people too. (Focus group one)

We found that the elaborations on the boundaries that define the LGBQ community were connected to discussions about whether the LGBQ island would allow for the diversity within the LGBQ group. One participant stated that "it is not very likely that gay men and lesbian women would want to live together in a housing for older people when we do not go the same clubs at younger ages." Most participants argued that gender diversity was advantageous for everyday practices and relationships, and therefore wanted gender diversity to be manifested in LGBQ-specific elderly housing. However, a few men and women stated that they preferred exclusively same-sex housing, which points at potential tensions within the LGBQ community as being viewed as "one single community." This was also confirmed in the two focus groups consisting only of women, where power structures between men and women were discussed. The numerical balance between men and women in LGBQ-specific elderly housing was here stressed as important. For example, one woman said that by mirroring the power relations between men and women in society as a whole, equal numbers of men and women would lead

to a situation still dominated by the men. Therefore, she argued for a larger number of women in the potential LGBQ-specific elderly housing to create an equal power balance between men and women.

Discussions about diversity illuminated the fluidity and permeability of the boundaries that define the LGBQ community, in relationship to the fluidity and complexity of sexual and gender identity through the life course. This was discussed toward the fact that people might change sexual orientation during their life, or might have lived in accordance with the heterosexual norm most of their life and changed their way of living at an older age. Through these discussions, the participants came to the conclusion that whether a person belongs to the non-heterosexual community or not can be decided only by the person himself or herself. They agreed that the manifestation of the LGBQ community in LGBQ-specific elderly housing must therefore include flexibility for a fluid sexual identity.

Discussion

Responding to the aim of this study, the findings identified that the non-heterosexual island—a sanctuary from an excluding society simultaneously sparkling from the gold medal of LGBQ exclusiveness—served as a metaphor for the manifestation of symbolic resources and associated collective identities that can define qualities and characters of LGBQ-specific elderly housing. Drawing from theories on boundary work and collective identities, these findings illustrate how symbolic resources and collective identities are developed through dialectic interplay between internal and external definitions in a process that spans over historical and sociopolitical changes (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Pachucki et al., 2007). The LGBQ-specific symbolic resources and collective identities highlighted in the findings had been developed throughout a history of oppression and were thereby closely connected to the excluding symbolic and social boundaries created and maintained by the general society. The connection between oppression and the development of social resources among people who identify as LGBQ has been identified and discussed in previous research, suggesting that people who identify as LGBQ develop capacities to handle disempowering situations, discrimination, and oppression through their experiences of meeting such situations through their life course (Schope, 2005). It has been widely argued that engagement in the LGBQ movement and other non-heterosexual communities is crucial for the development of such competencies and other social and psychological resources for non-heterosexual people (Heaphy, Yip, & Thompson, 2004). By highlighting boundary work as a dialectic interplay of processes of internal and external definitions (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Pachucki et al., 2007), the present study shows how people who identify as LGBQ, through their boundary work,

developed shared feelings of similarity and group membership and associated symbolic and social resources that not only serve to deal with difficult situations, but also manifest the LGBQ identity and sense of community as a "gold medal." This type of ingroup pride based on a collective identity has also been shown to enhance the recognition of disempowering situations and also initiate collective actions to change such situation (Górska & Bilewicz, 2015). Górska and Bilewicz also showed that the dissolution of social and symbolic borders as part of a striving to include subordinated groups in a superordinate category—for example, common humanity or nationality—decreases the recognition of disempowering situations and the motivation for change among the more disadvantaged. This framework can be used to deepen the understanding of the dilemma between normality and exclusiveness in the LGBQ group, found in this study to be manifested in elaborations on what defines the exclusiveness of the LGBQ group and how openness still can be achieved without losing this exclusiveness. This might be understood as an act of balancing the maintenance of symbolic borders that define the LGBQ identity with a drive to dissolve the social borders that exclude LGBQ people from many arenas of the general society. The conflict between the queer movement that highlights the uniqueness of a non-heterosexual life and the normalization movement has been addressed in politics as well as in research (Vogler, 2016). Parallels can be drawn to the debate on mainstreaming of power issues in relationship to various disempowered groups in policy, law, and practice. Such debates have raised concerns about mainstreaming increasing the risk to acceptance of disempowered groups within the normative groups, rather than a shift of agenda-setting that changes the norms in a more substantial way (Walby, 2005). This study demonstrates how this conflict or dilemma between exclusiveness and normalization not only may take the form of polarization between groups with conflicting standpoints, but also is present as part of the elaborations and negotiations of identity and boundaries within the LGBQ community and connected to elaborations and negotiations on housing issues in older ages. Additionally, the ingroup pride associated with a strong trust in an LGBQ sense of community found in this empirical study indicate that these resources can serve as LGBQ-specific qualities in elderly housing. If such qualities are successfully manifested, such housing can potentially meet the call for interventions that may reduce loneliness by enhancing social resources and reducing risk for internalized stigma (Kim & Fredriksen-Goldsen, 2016).

Given that the participants for this study were recruited primarily at the Stockholm Pride festival, it is reasonable to assume that the included participants were relatively open about their sexual orientation and in formal or informal ways also were connected to the LGBQ movement, i.e., already

represented a collective identity and ingroup pride associated with their identity as LGBQ. Thereby, the "gold medal" aspect of the LGBQ identity and community might be at closer hand to them, compared to other individuals who may not be as open about their non-heterosexual identity, or for other reasons do not consider themselves as part of the LGBQ community. This needs to be considered when interpreting the findings from this study, and when drawing conclusions for policy and interventions. It might be that the norm of not living the norm and the LGBQ sense of community lacks relevance for individuals who associate with other processes of boundary work. For example, a study by Rosenfeld (2009) showed that, in a U.S. context, lesbian women and gay men who identified as homosexual before the advent of the gay liberation movement in 1969 regarded openness with an LGBQ identity as a threat, based on their experiences of personal and political dangers associated with not passing as a heterosexual. Further, in the view of this age group the gay liberation movement reproduced negative stereotypes of homosexuals as "licentious, gender-transgressive and generally unrespectable" (Rosenfeld, 2009, p. 629). This is relevant to consider also in the Swedish context of this study. In spite of the focus on elderly housing, the present study did include only a few participants with potential experiences of deviating from the heterosexual norm already before the gay liberation era. The boundary work identified in this study might therefore rather be understood in relationship to the situation of future aging LGBQ generations rather than for the generation that identified as non-heterosexual in the 1950s and 1960s and who may today face the dilemmas of moving to elderly housing. The challenge of framing a picture that also includes people who are less open with their non-heterosexual orientation is commonly repeated in research related to LGBQ topics generally, and in relation to aging, which calls for the development of research methods to include this group (Addis et al., 2009; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Muraco, 2010; Goldberg et al., 2005; Rosenfeld, 2009). Some methodological improvements in this direction have been taken in recent research (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Kim, 2017; Siverskog, 2016).

Previous research has contributed important knowledge on how experiences of oppression and discrimination through one's life course shape concerns about aging in general, and in particular in relationship to housing in older ages among individuals who identify as LGBQ (Addis et al., 2009; Fredriksen-Goldsen et al., 2017; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Muraco, 2010; Goldberg et al., 2005; Hughes, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Neville & Henrickson, 2010; Orel, 2014; Schope, 2005; Shankle, Maxwell, Katzman, & Landers, 2003). The findings from this study generate a deepened understanding of how preferences for profiled facilities for older people may be developed through processes that involve collective and historical aspects that define present symbolic and social boundaries. In this sense this study goes

beyond individual perspectives of choice-making in a given situation that otherwise is often applied in relation to choices and preferences of different ageing services (Rudman, Huot, & Dennhardt, 2009). The chosen research question and methods illuminate the complexity and ambiguities associated with LGBQ-specific facilities as an alternative to heteronormative facilities for older people. The findings suggest that the LBGQ identity, expressed through the non-heterosexual norm and sense of community, deeply infuses the whole life of people who identify themselves as LGBQ. This highlights the fact that diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity is profoundly fundamental to one's life situation and cannot be compared to more interest-based diversities, say, for example, music or golf, that are offered as a basis for housing options for older people (Andrews, 2003; Rudman et al., 2009). By pointing toward how boundary work shapes the needs and preferences of groups that deviate from hegemonic norms in the society, this study might provide some guidance on how to identify and support diversity in aspects that are fundamental to the life situation among the aging population in general (Heaphy et al., 2004).

The complex process of boundary work illustrated through this study pointed toward the permeability of social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Pachucki et al., 2007), which was expressed, for example, through elaborations on the question of the inclusion of heterosexual individuals in the LGBQ community. The findings can be interpreted to illustrate that when symbolic boundaries internally defined by the LGBQ community were connected to a strong collective identity, they could "afford" also to include individuals who belong to another social category but who can identify with the symbolic resources and boundaries developed by the LGBQ ingroup. This permeability does not threaten the exclusiveness of the LGBQ identity and norms and is therefore in its construct substantially different from the permeability associated with politics of normalization, striving to include LGBQ people within the social borders that define the general society. As argued by Górska and Bilewicz (2015), the striving to include subordinated groups in a general identity has been applied as a tool to reduce conflict and collective actions among subordinated groups. This study shed new light on the relation between a strong collective identity and permeable boundaries and the politics of boundary work.

The participants in this study were self-selected, resulting in participants primarily of a Swedish ethnicity, who also identified themselves as lesbian women and gay men. Similar ethnic homogeneity is common in LGBTQ research (Atwall, 2005; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Kim, 2017) and may therefore limit the relevance of the findings to more diverse ethnic groups and also risk enforcing the picture of non-heterosexuals as one homogenous group. Similar to a large body of research on LGBTQ topics, this study did also mainly include persons who identified themselves as lesbian or gay. Despite

an aim to include a larger variety of people who do not identify as hetero-sexuals, many research projects still tend to end up with only a few research participants with identities other than gay or lesbian (Atwall, 2005). This is a methodological shortcoming also in the present study, in particular as the focus is on boundary work. The inclusion of non-heterosexual individuals outside the groups of gay men and lesbian women may reveal other elabora-tions on boundaries and identity, which calls for further research on this topic (Sieverskog, 2013).

Conclusion

The present study identified "an island as a sparkling sanctuary" as a metaphor for how symbolic resources that define the LGBQ community can be manifested in LGBQ-specific qualities of housing for older people. The findings also highlight that the complex boundary work underlying this manifestation took the form of dynamic processes including the dilemma between exclusiveness and normality. In addition, the acknowledgment of a shared norm of not living the norm also mirrored reflections on who can share this norm and thus be included in the sense of a LGBQ community. These insights provide valuable knowledge for societies aiming to generate adequate services for older LGBQ people and also for other groups that do not fit into the hegemonic norms related to social relationships and household composition. Furthermore, this study contributes with theoretical and conceptual knowledge on how symbolic and social boundaries are shaped and negotiated through dialectics between symbolic resources within a subordinated group and the symbolic and social boundaries created and maintained by the general society.

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