# Bisexual Spaces: Exploring Geographies of Bisexualities

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## Abstract

Since the 1990s, geographies of sexualities have evolved into a body of work which is able to provide an overview of everyday life experiences of sexual minorities, especially of gay men and lesbians. A review of the literature, however, observes that bisexuality is often neglected. I argue that this is the result of an approach to sexualised space that immediately links the sexual coding of space with the dominant sexual identity. This paper aims to theorise bisexual spaces as a result of bisexual practices, which are derived from the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid. I will also stress the importance of linguistic practices in *practicing* (or *doing*) bisexuality. This paper concludes with a call to investigate bisexual geographies in the mundane, everyday realities of bisexual citizens.

## Introduction

The 1990s witnessed the breakthrough for geographies of sexualities, especially lesbian and gay geographies in an Anglo-American context (e.g. Knopp, 2007). Collections such as *Mapping Desire* (Bell and Valentine, 1995a), *Queers in Space* (Ingram et al., 1997), and *Geographies of Sexualities* (Browne et al., 2007) show the variety and diversity within geographical studies towards sex, gender diversity, and sexualities. These collections provide a wide range in foci. However,

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the common denominator is a dedication to incorporate the sexual *Other* and their lived experiences into geographical research (e.g. Binnie, 1997; Brown, 2000; Brown et al., 2007; Hubbard, 2008; Kitchin and Lysaght, 2003; Knopp, 2007; Phillips, 2006). Queer geography is one of the most important approaches within contemporary geographies of sexualities, which aims to incorporate space, scale, and geography into the humanities-based queer theory (see Brown, 2000). Queer geographies, as a dominant approach in contemporary geographies of sexualities, "highlight the hybrid and fluid nature of sexual subjectivities, and it reimagined the geographical dimensions of these accordingly" (Knopp, 2007, 22). Browne (2006) characterises the adjective *queer* in queer geography as an attitude that aims to render fluid categories of sex, gender, sexualities, and space (see also Brown et al., 2007; Oswin, 2008).

Summarising Knopp (2007) and Browne (2006), queer geographies provide opportunities to question, challenge, transgress, and deconstruct the spatialities of the sexualities binary. As such, it opens up the potential to incorporate sexual identities which fall outside the dichotomous heterosexual/homosexual boundary[2]. A 1999 review of geographies of sexualities, however, concludes that bisexuality and bisexual subjects are rarely included within geographies of sexualities (Binnie and Valentine, 1999). This remarkable invisibility of bisexuality still exists because attempts to explore geographical contributions to bisexual theory are limited (see Hemmings, 2002; McLean, 2003). This paper aims to contribute to a theorising of bisexual geographies and bisexual spaces. Before theorising bisexual spaces and geographies, this paper will first outline geographical studies which aim to theorise bisexual geographies and spaces. After this geographical exercise, the paper continues with a discussion on bisexual studies which incorporate notions of space, scale, and geography. I will conclude this paper with a proposed new theorising of bisexual spaces and identify potentials for future geographical research. As concluded by Hubbard, "the challenge ahead is to consider how sexuality is performed and practised, spatially" (2008, 654).

## Geographies of bisexuality?

From a geographical perspective, several studies have been conducted to incorporate bisexuality within cultural geographies and geographies of sexualities (Bell, 1995; Hemmings, 1995, 1997, 2002; McLean, 2003). In *Queers in Space*, Hemmings (1997) reflects on the invisibility of bisexual geographies and bisexual spaces which she relates to the tendency to link spaces to identity. According to Hemmings, "a bisexual's identity is never the dominant identity being produced, delineated, or contested in either gay or straight spaces" (1996, 147). The problem

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[2] Just recently, geographies of sexualities explored the everyday life experiences of trans people and, thus, opened up research potential to explore the lives of people who fall outside the sex and gender binary (e.g. Browne and Lim, 2010; Browne, Nash and Hines, 2010; Hines, 2010; Nash, 2010).

in here is not only the dominance of the heterosexual/homosexual binary[3] in society, but also the existential problem to identify a bisexual identity and the 'inauthenticity' of bisexuality as sexual identity (Hemmings, 1995, 2002). There are multiple conceptualisations of a bisexual identity (e.g. Halperin, 2009), as will be demonstrated later in this paper. Not surprisingly, Bell (1995) advocates for strategic essentialism to identify one conceptualisation of bisexuality as basis for social and political claims.

In an attempt to identify bisexual territories and spaces, Hemmings (1997) concludes that bisexuals "currently occupy space within queer and straight spaces, and that an individual's desire for people of more than one sex (as well as gender) may be expressed in those spaces, even if their identity is "misread"" (Hemmings, 1997, 157). Hemmings concludes that specific, demarcated, bisexual spaces appear not to exist, with the exception of some specific support groups, bisexual organisations, and networks. As such, bisexuals can be read as living their lives (unrecognised) within everyday straight, gay, lesbian, and queer spaces – a conclusion which will be challenged in this paper. Bell offers a powerful (political-based) critique against the idea that "the place of bisexuality is a not-space, a theoretical and actual nonexisting thing" (Bell, 1995, 130). He convincingly argues against a placelessness and homelessness of bisexuality and bisexuals in society (see also Binnie and Valentine, 1999): to ignore the multiple places and homes of bisexuals in everyday public space supports biphobic notions and views of bisexuals as tourists within gay/lesbian and straight spaces.

James McLean (2003) extends Bell's critiques on the homelessness and placelessness of bisexuals in contemporary society as McLean concludes that his participants access, and take advantage of, both heterosexual and homosexual spaces. As such, bisexuals are seen as tourists in these spaces. McLean concludes that bisexual men perform different sexual identities in different spaces: workplace, home, bars, internet, sexual spaces, etc. It should be said that these different sexual identities are in essence heterosexual and homosexual, and less bisexual. As such, the gay/straight binary seems to organise space and the sexual identity negotiations of bisexuals within those spaces. McLean argues that he has "uncovered no discrete bisexual spaces here, *only partial and temporary claims to and use of space*" (McLean, 2003, 125: *emphasis* added). This conclusion draws firstly upon the assumption that the sexual coding of spaces is fixed and determined – discrete spaces. Bisexuality as minority sexuality, *and* an inauthentic sexual identity, gets lost in spaces as normative identities prevail (McLean, 2003). As such, McLean concludes that bisexuality only temporarily claims or occupies parts of these discrete gay, lesbian, and straight spaces. The temporal and site-specific nature of bisexual spaces confirms the before-mentioned conclusion of Hemmings (see also

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[3] I am aware of the heterogeneity within sexual identity categories such as heterosexuals and homosexuals. For the purpose, and readability, of this paper I use essentialist categorisations of these sexual categories.

Brown et al., 2007), and indeed challenges Bell's attempt to identify bisexual geographies.

Feminist and bisexual theorist Hemmings (2002) provides an extensive account on bisexual spaces in which she questions the existence of such spaces. Hemmings identifies eight potential conceptualisations of bisexual spaces, which are positioned in relation to gay/lesbian and straight spaces. The point here is not to elaborate on these different conceptualisations of bisexual spaces, but to argue that "each starting point, or conclusion, provides a different reading – not just of bisexuality, but of sexual and gendered space as a whole – and that these readings are political readings" (Hemmings, 2002, 47). There are two difficulties which need to be addressed before bisexual spaces and bisexual geographies can be explored. In the first place, this requires a conceptualisation of bisexuality and bisexuals – a difficulty which will be dealt with later. The second difficulty, not unknown to geographies of sexualities (e.g. Binnie and Valentine, 1999; Brown et al., 2007; Oswin, 2008), is the definition of gendered and sexualised spaces, which seem to rely on a one-to-one interaction with sexual identities that prevail in certain spaces. Altogether, it is no surprise that Hemmings concludes that "bisexual and spatial theorising do not always sit comfortable with one another, and in many ways the overlaps raise more questions than they solve" (Hemmings, 2002, 46).

Recently, research opened up possibilities to rethink the conceptualisation of gendered and sexualised spaces as concrete, demarcated, and fixed spaces. Gorman-Murray (2008), notes for instance that the family home, although often seen as heteronormative space, is not necessarily an exclusive heterosexual or heteronormative space. Coming-out stories of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youngsters provide a more nuanced view of acceptance of sexual others within the parental (heterosexual) home: "heterosexual identity does not automatically or necessarily pre-determine heterosexist reactions and attitudes" (Gorman-Murray, 2008, 39). Browne and Bakshi (2011), following Visser (2008), go one step further and argue that nightlife spaces are not exclusively heterosexual or exclusively homosexual (see also Oswin, 2008). The authors argue that "space is sexualised, not necessarily in oppositional and exclusive ways (straight or gay), but rather at times as simultaneously gay and straight. In this way, it is possible *to conceptualise the diverse practices* that make dominant sexualities visible" (Browne and Bakshi, 2011, 192: *emphasis* added). Albeit the authors still work within the sexualities binary of gay and straight, this argumentation opens up possibilities to shift away from an exclusive way of coding sexualised spaces, and to focus on practices as means to conceptualise sexualised space. Later on, I will go into more detail on *practices* when I discuss a new theorisation of bisexual spaces. The point here is that to code sexualised space as either heterosexual or homosexual does not reflect the everyday complex reality of spaces as temporal and dynamic – this also challenges Hemmings' and McLean's conclusion that bisexual spaces are not concrete spaces.

**Bisexuality in social science: focus upon community**

Studies into bisexuality promote bisexuality as an authentic sexual identity, which has to deal with the monosexual logic of contemporary society. Someone is either heterosexual or homosexual: same-sex desire makes someone gay or lesbian, opposite-sex desire results in a heterosexual identity. This monosexual logic "has been so pervasive, so powerful, that many people, including scholars and critics, have had difficulty thinking outside of or beyond the gay/straight binary" (Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Alexander, 2009, 207). Bisexuals as non-monosexuals fall outside the monosexual logic of contemporary society, however they still need to live within the world divided in heterosexuality and homosexuality.

In *Make me a Map*, sociologist Rust (2001) explores the positioning of a bisexual community in relation to heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender communities. This geographically-informed sociological exercise to explore bisexual communities starts with the question: "if geographic proximity and overlapping social and economic networks no longer define most people's experiences of community, what are the modern bases of community[4], and do bisexuals have them?" (Rust, 2001, 50). Bisexuals (men and women) were asked to draw a map of the before-mentioned sexual communities and to elaborate on the existence of a bisexual community. Rust concludes that the existence of a (bisexual) community relies on the individuals' perception of such a community. Nevertheless "outside these areas [areas known as centres of bisexual activism], many bisexual men feel isolated or rely on the Internet or books and newsletters for knowledge of a bisexual community that exists elsewhere" (Rust, 2001, 104; see also Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2011b). Whereas Bell and Valentine (1995b) suggest that there might be a strong connection between the rural and bisexuality, it appears that the bisexual community is mainly an urban reality (see also Eliason, 2001).

In *Remapping a bisexual geography to self-acceptance*, Walker (2010) analyses the sexual identity negotiations and social isolation of a bisexual main figure in the famous book *Invisible Life* (Harris, 1994). Walker aims to "take a probing look into how Harris explored and problematized inauthentic bisexual practices and identity politics" (Walker, 2010, 140). Raymond, the Afro-American main character of this book, migrates from the South of the USA to the North to live a bisexual life in the big city[5] (New York City). This move is seen as an escape from the masculine heteronormative society of Birmingham, Alabama. Walker concludes that the writer "has chartered a geography of (bi)sexuality that unravels

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[4] See e.g. Van Kempen (2010): From the Residence to the Global: The Relevance of the Urban Neighbourhood in an Era of Globalization and Mobility. Paper for the ENHR-conference "Urban Dynamics and Housing Change", Istanbul, 4-7 July 2010.

[5] Migration is often seen as a way to come out of the closet (e.g. Brown 2000; Gorman-Murray 2009). In the Harris book, however, the bisexual character remains in the closet as a bisexual and prefers the anonymity of the big city to live his bisexual life(style).

the psychology of the DL[6] sexscape. He succeeds in making visible the marginal lives and experiences that [behaviourally bisexual] men like Raymond have lived and continue to live at the risk of psychological, biological, and communal harm" (Walker, 2010, 159; see also Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2006, on bisexual youngsters). The bisexual character, Raymond, lived a secret 'gay life' in Alabama. He later also lives a secret life in New York – a bisexual life. The city provides him the anonymity he needs to hide his desire for men (living a DL life).

Swim et al. (2007) investigate lesbian, gay, and bisexual encounters with heterosexism, with a focus on heterosexist hassles. They conclude that: "[a]lthough little research has been done on the nature of bisexual experiences, it seems plausible that such individuals would often be better able to navigate the heterosexuality that our society enforces" (Swim et al., 2007, 45). The authors further suggest that "it may be that bisexuals are more adept and comfortable at publicly displaying their heterosexual preferences and suppressing their homosexual preferences in a situation where homosexuality is likely to be met with hostility" (Swim et al., 2007, 45). Several studies, however, contest this conclusion and argue that bisexuals face both hostility and discrimination from heterosexual, and homosexual and lesbian communities (e.g. Deschamps, 2008; Eliason, 2001; Herek et al., 2010; Mohr and Rochlen, 1999; Mulick and Wright Jr, 2002; See and Hunt, 2011; Welzer-Lang, 2008). Both beforementioned conclusions by Swim et al. (2007) need to be placed within a wider discourse in which bisexuals are seen as sexual subjects who still seek the privileges of heterosexuality or are not yet out of the closet. It is argued that bisexuals are often seen as too straight for lesbian and gay communities and to queer for straight communities (Bradfort, 2004; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2011a).

Swim et al (2007) argue that bisexuals live their lives within heterosexual environments and tend to succeed in assimilation to heterosexuality. Nevertheless, bisexuals are often seen as part of the lesbian and gay community – a position which  should be questioned (e.g. Balsam and Mohr 2007). McLean (2008) explores bisexual lives within gay and lesbian communities in Australia. She argues that for her participants "going out to social or cultural events was their only contact with the gay and lesbian community" (McLean, 2008, 70). One important conclusion is that bisexual men and women have a complex janus-faced relationship with the gay and lesbian community in which they gained insider status by 'passing' as gay or lesbian. Identification as bisexual within the gay and lesbian community results in risking an insider status in both communities. As such, prevalent biphobia and binegativity within gay and lesbian communities can limit bisexuals ability to publicly come out as bisexual.

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[6] Down Low (DL) is American slang for men who identify themselves as heterosexual, but who also engage in same-sex sexual activities.

Communities are not necessarily spatial, however the socialising of communities or activities undertaken by communities and/or community members have a spatial impact. For instance, gay communities can have their own spaces such as clubs, organisations and, in some cases, neighbourhoods. One example of the spatialities of communities is given by Mclean (2008) and Hemmings (2002) who describe the struggles of the bisexual community to become part of Pride Marches. It is argued that Pride Marches are the one day in the year in which heteronormativity is not the norm in public space (Johnston, 2005). Bisexuality has been contested, challenged, and victimised by organisations of the Prides together with members of gay and lesbian communities, to prioritse the interests and visibility of the lesbian and gay communities.

Bell already argued in 1995 that he is "sick of having to keep nudging, coughing, raising eyebrows to remind people to include me [bisexuals] in their discussions" (Bell, 1995, 131). Only recently the demographics of bisexuality have started to become more documented (Green et al., 2011). However, the point remains that bisexuality remains invisible in a society based upon heterosexuality and homosexuality. The next section will elaborate more on the invisibility of bisexual space and offers a proposed new theorising of bisexuality within public space.

**Towards a theory of bisexual geographies: the problem of identity**

From the above review it becomes clear that the spatialities of bisexuality and bisexuals' everyday life experiences are a challenge which remains largely untouched within contemporary geographies of sexualities. I would argue that the lack of studies on geographies of bisexuality has to do with the conceptualisation of sexualised space and bisexuality. I will dicuss these difficulties and provide a new approach for geographical studies into bisexuality and bisexuals.

The studies on bisexual spaces have in common the conclusion that concrete bisexual spaces cannot be found. The most striking is that it is argued that bisexual spaces do not exist in the same way as gay and lesbian spaces (Hemmings, 1997). As Hemmings (2002) reminds us, the reading of bisexual spaces depends upon our readings of gendered and sexualised spaces *en general*. The approach used by Hemmings (1997, 2002) and McLean (2003) reveals a focus upon sexualised spaces as coded to the dominant sexual identity which is performed in those spaces. As such, there seems to be an immediate link between sexual identity and sexualised space. The problem with sexual identities within a monosexual society is, however, that only two sexual subjectivities are recognised: homosexuality and heterosexuality.

Bisexuality is a problematic sexual identity as it is not recognised as an authentic sexual identity by gay, lesbian, and heterosexual communities (see e.g. Hemmings, 2002, McLean, 2008). Bisexuality is, within a monosexual society, often seen as a phase towards recognition of someone's homosexuality, or a position in which a bisexual still enjoys the priviliges of heterosexuality.

Bisexuality is contested by the monosexual logic, which results in bisexuals being labeled as inauthentic, and which consequently renders bisexuality invisible. A second point to make here is that a lot of bisexuals do not see themselves as bisexual, often to avoid the oppressive binary system of sex, gender, and sexualities (e.g. Betts et al., 2008; Bradfort, 2004; Bell, 1995; Browne, 2010). The same binary system results in bisexuals who render their bisexuality fluid by opting for straight and gay sexual identities in certain spaces and communities. Lingel argues that seeing bisexuality as a fluid sexual identity "centers on the implication that heterosexuality and homosexuality occupy opposite ends of a psychological spectrum, leaving bisexuality vaguely straddling poles of identity, without specificity, deliberation, or intent" (2009, 382). Thirdly, Halperin (2009) concludes that there are at least thirteen different definitions of bisexuality, which are partially symmetrical but sometimes also quite different. As such, an immediate link between sexual coding of space and a bisexual identity becomes impossible.

To conclude, bisexuality is an invisible sexual identity due to the monosexual logic of society. Bisexuality only becomes visible in certain spaces such as bisexual support groups and bisexual conferences (BiCons). To read those spaces as inauthentic bisexual spaces would be a mistake as such spaces can be a *home* for bisexuals (Bowes-Catton et al., 2011). However, the point is that the one-to-one link between sexual identity and space would essentialise notions of space as either heterosexual or homosexual as discussed above.

## Sexual spaces as manifold of 'sexual' practices

Brown (2000), drawing on Lefebvre, provides a good starting point for a more fruitful theorising of sexual spaces in his book *Closet Space*. He argues that "the body *itself* is a factor in the production of space. By producing gestures, traces, and marks in space, the body is made socially visible in the landscape, and hence meaningful" (Brown, 2000, 60: *emphasis* added). Brown (2000) further argues that sexuality not only produces space, but also that commercialised forms of sexuality, generated via capitalist relations, are important in the production of space. However, I would like to put more emphasis on the body as a factor in the production of space. Duff (2010) puts forward that there is a twofold interaction between the human body and space, in which the human body contributes to the production of space and, at the same time, the human body is affected by space. Duff, following non-representational lines of argumentation, takes this discussion further and contends that spaces are products of practices. He interprets practices as "the entire repertoire of dispersed, tactical, and makeshift procedures by which individuals and groups make sense of everyday life" (Duff, 2010, 883). As such, practices are the manifold of actions and interactions (e.g. Anderson and Harrison, 2010), and therefore spatial. These actions and interactions take place during the everyday activities of human beings, and thus *are* the everyday realities of human beings.

Outlining the importance of practices, this paper conceptualises spaces as temporal-spatial stabilisations of social practices. This relational conceptualisation of space means that spaces are always in becoming and never finished. Consequently, sexualised spaces are never essentially heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual; a conclusion that parallels the before-mentioned discussion by Browne and Bakshi (2011) and Visser (2008) on leisure practices and the dynamics in sexual coding of spaces. An important addition here is that the sexual coding of spaces is not only dependent on practices but consequently also on the embodied experiences of these same practices (see Anderson, 2009; Bissell, 2010; Duff, 2010 on affective atmospheres). The embodied experiences directly emerge from the actions and interactions during these practices (e.g. Bissell, 2010; Crouch, 2001; Harrison 2000).

If spaces are spatial-temporal stabilisations of social practices, then there is an urge to identify bisexual practices. Alfred Kinsey developed the idea of bisexual practices as being *equally* sexually attracted to both men and women. This is measured on the basis of the sexual arousal of a sexual subject to men and women. An alternative way of looking at sexual practices is the Klein sexual orientation grid (KSOG), which differentiates between past practices, current practices, and ideal practices (Klein et al., 1985). Sexual *practices* in the KSOG include attraction, sexual behaviour, and fantasies. Other variables that contribute to someone's sexual orientation are emotional preference, social preference, lifestyle, and self-identification (Klein et al., 1985). The identification of the three sexual practices is useful to describe bisexual practices, which can then be conceptualised, using strategic essentialism, as 'attraction to both men and women, sexual behaviour with men and women, and thirdly sexual fantasies about men and women'. This conceptualisation will be complicated in the next paragraphs and self-identification will be added as important bisexual practice in the following section.

This conceptualisation of bisexual practices opens up new perspectives in and through which to explore the existence of bisexual spaces within contemporary society. The conceptualisation of bisexual practices in such a manner thus prevents a narrow definition of bisexuality which would only focus on sexual activities or sexual intimacies, ranging from kissing to the *act of sex* itself. Such a narrow focus would problematize bisexuality as performing bisexuality, at least, 'needs three' – and even then this act is not per definition bisexual (see Hartman, 2013). In this narrow definition, bisexual spaces would probably be limited to sex parties, swinger parties, or spaces in which at least one bisexual has sexual activities with a man and a woman. Such spaces in which bisexual *sexual* practices take place would exclude monogamous bisexuals, asexual bisexuals, and bisexuals who are not open about their desire for more-than-one sex. Broadening bisexual practices to attraction to (and fantasies about) both men and women, is an important step to include these monogamous, asexual, and undisclosed bisexuals.

Referring to Brown (2000), as the body itself is a factor in the production of space, the bisexual body affects the production of space via its particular bisexual practices. Crouch (2001) argues that "spaces, contexts and representations are embodied in practice, through which people construct their spatialities" (Crouch, 2001, 71). As such, we need to incorporate the context in which bisexual practices are practiced. This context, which is not necessarily the dominant mode of experience, is the already mentioned monosexual logic in which opposite-practices are seen as heterosexual and same-sex practices are homosexual. Hemmings (2002) observes that while monosexual sexualities show consistency in time, a bisexual identity requires a time dimension to validate the desire for more-than-one sex (see also Kangasvuo, 2011; Klein et al., 1985).

While I still see potential in the narrow conceptualisation of bisexual practices as 'attraction to both men and women, sexual behaviour with men and women, and thirdly sexual fantasies about men and women' the factor of time complicates the visibility of bisexuality in mundane everyday practices and space. For instance, if a bisexual man walks with his female partner, he will be identified (by people who do not know his past, desires, fantasies and more) as a heterosexual man. Also, the household of an undisclosed bisexual married man will not become bisexual because he, for instance, may be afraid to invite bisexual or homosexual men into his house (see e.g. McLean, 2003; Peterson, 2001). Hartman concludes "that [the monosexual logic] renders the concept '*doing bisexuality*' problematic, because bisexuality is not possible at the structural level in the way that 'doing' requires" (2013, 40: *emphasis* added). Here I want to turn to another important bisexual practice mentioned in the KSOG model which has the potential to render 'doing bisexuality' less problematic: self-identification[7].

## Bisexuality as linguistic practices?

The inclusion of self-identification as bisexual practice, as adapted from the KSOG, provides space to incorporate language. Valentine et al. (2008) already notices that "[Identities] emerge through, or [are] an effect of, a set of repeated acts that take place within a regulatory framework and which congeal over time to give the appearance of naturalness. Language or talk is one such element or performance" (Valentine et al., 2008, 477). Language is not only a medium to express meaning or representations, or reflect upon everyday activities, but language itself constitutes daily practices[8]. Brown's (2000) discussion on performative speech acts – language as 'doing by saying' – supports this view of language as daily practices. Language *does*. Viewing language as daily practices, it is obvious that language also enables or restrains the practicing of sexual identities and therefore affects the coding of sexualised space. As stated by Blommaert et al:

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[7] To focus, also, on self-identification as bisexual practice provides space for inclusion of non-sexually active or asexual bisexuals as well.

[8] Many thanks to Hans Fast ResMSc for pointing this out in personal e-mail correspondence.

> [E]very instance of human communication always has an intrinsic spatiality to it as well as an intrinsic temporality. Every communication event develops in some time-frame and in some space, and both, as we know, have effects on what happens and can happen (Blommaert et al., 2005, 203).

To focus upon linguistic practices opens up a whole range of everyday public and (semi-)private spaces in which bisexuality is expressed, negotiated, challenged, oppressed, supported, etcetera. Laurier and Philo (2006) point out that such textual encounters are 'bedevilled by uncertainty and scepticism'; however such passing encounters provide at least a first glance of someone. Focussing upon bisexuality and bisexuals, language provides opportunties to explore how bisexuals negotiate their sexual identities in mundane encounters and contribute to specific codings of spaces. For instance, Bradfort (2004) narrates a story of a bisexual woman who encountered, during a conversation, anger from lesbian women and was accused of seeking the privileges of heterosexuality. Personal stories from bisexual men and women in McLean (2008) reveal the importance of language in inclusion or exclusion as bisexuals are afraid to come out as bisexual in gay and lesbian communities. Studies into coming-out of LGBT youth within the parental house shows the power of language to queer the heterosexual space of the parental house (e.g. Gorman-Murray, 2008: see also Brown, 2000 on coming out).

Language can have both supporting and limiting roles. It is argued that bisexuality has no specific language and that there is a lack of "language choices that are available to bisexuals when trying to communicate their reality with others in the world" (Bereket and Brayton, 2008, 51; also Deschamps, 2008). Bereket and Brayton (2008, 55) argue that "[t]he dominance of binary divisions continues to occur within queer language that supports the belief system that sexuality is an either/or experience and identity. Language continues to reflect the biphobia that exists in gay, lesbian, and heterosexual communities". Similar arguments are evident in Ault (1996), who finds that bisexual women still use binary terms to identify their sexual identity (see also Bowes-Catton, 2007; Bowes-Catton et al., 2011). Albeit I agree with the difficulties of bisexual language within a society based upon heterosexuality and homosexuality, Brown's doing-by-saying provides an opportunity to stress the importance of language in the making of spaces.

## Conclusion and discussion: focus upon everyday life experiences of bisexuals

The purpose of this paper is to critically engage in discussions on bisexual geographies and bisexual spaces and to show that bisexuality is not a sexual identity which should be characterised as homeless and placeless (Bell, 1995). Firstly, this paper addressed the one-to-one link between the sexual coding of space and dominant sexual identities which renders bisexual spaces invisible. By providing a new conceptualisation of bisexual spaces as spatial and temporal stabilisations of bisexual practices opens up new geographical perspectives to explore the negotiations of bisexuality in space and the (temporal) production of

bisexual space. Subsequently, bisexual practices are explored and broadened from a narrow approach which only focusses on 'attraction to both men and women, sexual behaviour with men and women, and sexual fantasies about men and women' to a conceptualisation which also incorporates self-identification. I also suggested that self-identification is closely related to language. Thus, language as practice needs to be incorporated as a potential supportive as well as constraining factor to the performance and production of bisexual practices, mainly (but not exclusively) the practice of self-identification, and thus spaces. As such, this paper hopes to contribute to the 1997 call by Hemmings for a coherent theorising of bisexual spaces which are no "series of arbitrary spaces" (Hemmings, 1997, 162).

The review of geography within bisexual studies provides a view in which the position of bisexuality, bisexuals, and/or bisexual communities is explored in relation to gay, lesbian, and straight communities. Such studies have been fruitful (and are still fruitful) to examine the difficulties that bisexuals face in a monosexual society in which sexual identity is one-to-one linked with sexual behaviour and bisexuality is rendered invisible. Several studies focussed on bisexuals' lived experiences in schools (Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2011b), the workplace (Green et al., 2011; See and Hunt, 2011), the (parental) home (Gorman-Murray, 2008; McLean, 2003), and the relationship (Li et al., 2013). Such studies are important as these spaces provide the everyday realities in which people experience life (e.g. Crouch, 2003; Harrison, 2000; Middleton, 2010; Lorimer, 2008). Virtual spaces also seem to be important for bisexuals to explore and perform their bisexuality (Crowley 2010; Daneback et al., 2009; George, 2011; McLean, 2003; Peterson, 2001). I would, however, propose to explore the negotiations of bisexual practices in these everyday spaces to explore how spaces, identities, and activities are negotiated on a daily basis. Sexual identity negotiations, conceptualised as practices, have an effect on what happens, what can happen, why something happens, and why something does not happen.

To focus upon these everyday spaces provides the opportunity to look at negotiations of bisexual practices and identities on an everyday basis. Additionally, it allows geographers for an exploration into how the monosexual imperative is experienced and negotiated in interactions between bisexuals and monosexuals. In relation to language, Brown notes:

> If a performative speech act is 'doing by saying', can its inverse also have performative force? In other words, can one 'do by not saying'? If so, then the performative force of the closet can be read from the variety of times the men's silences about their sexuality sustained their concealment or denial, and others' ignorance (Brown, 2000, 40).

Although Brown discusses here the importance of the closet in the lives of gay men, the core message is that language has a variety of possibilities to deal with sexuality. Not to say that the focus is only on self-identification as bisexual practice, but the point being is that a focus upon linguistics can also provide us

with information about how bisexuality is rendered invisible and how bisexuals struggle to make their sexual identity visible (or invisible and strengthen the naturalised sexualities binary) in everyday linguistic practices and encounters. Extrapolating from this argument, a focus upon the absence or presence of the three other bisexual practices might also provide information on how bisexuality is made visible or invisible in everyday life; and, to conclude with Hartman (2013), how bisexuals *do* and *do not do* bisexuality, and thus create or not create bisexual spaces.

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