Disrupting Heterosexual Space?
The Implementation of a Campus Positive Space Campaign

by

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on a growing literature on the interconnection of queer theory, sexuality and space, this thesis critically assesses the development, implementation and impact of a campus-based Positive Space Campaign aimed at raising the visibility and number of respectful, supportive, educational and welcoming spaces for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, two-spirited, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) students staff and faculty. The analysis, based on participatory action research (PAR), interrogates the extent to which the Positive Space Campaign challenges heteronormativity on campus. I contend that the Campaign, in its attempt to challenge dominant notions of sex, gender and sexuality, disrupts heterosexual space. Further, as I consider the meanings of ‘queer’, I consider the extent to which Positive Space Campaigns may be ‘queering’ space, by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination. The case study contributes to queer theory, the literature on sexuality and space, the literature on queer organizing in educational spaces and to broader queer organizing efforts in Canada.
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This thesis is dedicated to all those who continue to struggle to create queer visibility in their everyday lives.
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INTRODUCTION

During my first few days as a graduate student in the Social Justice and Equity Studies program at Brock University, I was unsure whether I felt comfortable being ‘out’ on campus or in the wider city of St. Catharines. Despite my program’s title, I was not immediately convinced that ‘coming out’ to my new classmates and program faculty was necessarily the safest thing for me to do. As many scholars have noted, homophobia and heteronormativity continue to intersect with other forms of oppression (i.e. sexism, racism, classism, etc.), to marginalize people who do not conform to a narrow understanding of ‘normal’ (read ‘heteronormative’) identities and behaviour. Despite increased legal protection, it remains the case in Canada that many who identify themselves or are identified with sexual and gender identities that exist outside of heteronormative constructions experience a range of marginalizing and sometimes violently exclusionary acts (Warner 2002). It was partly out of fear for my own safety that I initially kept my ‘queer’ identity to myself.

Thankfully, it did not take long for me to feel comfortable enough to be out among my peers and colleagues. I did not, however, come out as quickly to students in the seminars that I ran as a Teaching Assistant (TA). In the seminar setting, I was never asked explicitly about my sexuality so did not have to deny it, but it was not until my second year as a TA that I made a point of coming out.

The ways in which my queer identity intersected with my roles as a student and TA at Brock were linked to the invisibility of sexual and gender diversity on the Brock campus. My reflections on these intersections and what it meant to have an ‘invisible’ identity (i.e. that my students could not necessarily know my sexual identity just by looking at me) provided an
important part of the impetus for initiating and documenting the implementation of a Positive Space Campaign.

This thesis critically assesses the development, implementation and impact of a campus-based Positive Space Campaign at Brock University aimed at raising the visibility and number of respectful, supportive, educational and welcoming spaces for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, two-spirited, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) students, staff and faculty. An increasing number of university and college campuses across Canada and the United States are implementing Positive Space Campaigns, Safe Space Programs or other similar programs. The University of Toronto’s Positive Space Campaign has an online document entitled “Creating a Positive Space Campaign On Your Campus or School?” which outlines how to go about such a project (LGBTQ Resources and Programs 2003). The University of Guelph has their “Project Vision” which outlines how members of the campus community are striving to create an environment free of harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation (Human Rights and Equity Office, University of Guelph). While there is considerable diversity in their titles and the activities, they are all committed to the explicit goal of raising visibility while also addressing discrimination based on sexual and gender diversity inside post-secondary institutions.¹ As the University of Toronto’s Positive Space website explains:

There is still widespread reluctance to speak out about sexual and gender diversity, which stands in stark contrast to the routine talk of the sexual and emotional bonds of heterosexual people. LGBTQ people grow up in and work in environments rife with signs that same-sex attraction is repugnant. Stereotypical and rigid male and female gender roles limit the freedoms and rights of those whose gender identity is outside of these boundaries. LGBTQ students, staff and faculty are routinely surrounded by the silence of others — a silence born of misinformation and stereotypes leading to fear, ignorance, uncertainty, and sometimes hate. “Positive Space” stickers and posters visibly break that pattern. (Positive Space Campaign, University of Toronto)

When I began to consider how I might go about implementing the Positive Space Campaign on campus, I wondered how such a campaign might be received. Same-sex issues were at the forefront of national media coverage in Canada due to the debate over equal marriage. The Liberal MP for St. Catharines was outspoken against equal marriage, and my initial impression of the political climate at Brock University was that it was rather conservative. Launching a campaign that might challenge people to consider sexual and gender diversity on the university campus was important, but also had the potential to be deemed controversial and might be actively contested and resisted.

At the same time, however, in his message posted on the main university website, Brock University President David Atkinson described Brock as a “diverse and inclusive community” which “provides the most supportive environment possible for success.” Further, Brock’s Mission Statement stipulated that Brock is committed to providing “through the conduct of the
faculty, students and staff, and through its policies and administration, an atmosphere free from sexism, racism and all other forms of stereotyping, harassment and discrimination” (Brock University 2003). It seemed to me that there was an implicit, if not explicit institutional commitment to creating an atmosphere free from homophobia. A Positive Space Campaign, I felt, might further this by working to ensure that sexual and gender diversity were included under the umbrella of ‘diversity’ as well as explicitly working to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, two-spirited, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) students, staff and faculty.

Positive Space Campaigns are one kind of activist response to pervasive societal homophobia and heteronormativity. As Mary Louise Adams (1994) notes, heteronormativity is “the institutionalization and privileging of particular forms of heterosexuality [emphasis added]” (37) because it dictates that heterosexuality be articulated in particular ways. In this sense, heteronormativity can be understood as oppressive not only to those who fall outside of heterosexuality but also to those who identify as heterosexual. By encouraging the increased visibility for LGBTQ people on campus, the Campaign is also challenging heteronormativity.

In this thesis, I document and analyze the Positive Space Campaign at Brock University. Using examples from my participatory action research I examine the ways in which the Campaign encourages people to rethink dominant constructions of sex, gender and sexuality and to help to eradicate discrimination toward sexual and gender diversity in campus spaces. Participatory action research allowed me to act simultaneously as both a researcher and an activist and therefore to both help organize as well as analyze the Campaign. I argue that this and similar campus-based Campaigns begin to disrupt heterosexual space, as well as begin to open
up new kinds of spaces, including what might be imagined as ‘queer space’.

Chapter One locates this study within four relevant bodies of scholarly literature. The first is queer theory, particularly the work of Judith Butler (1991; 1993; 1999). Queer theorizing is central to this research because it probes, questions and challenges dominant understandings of sex, gender and sexuality, which is necessary for the disruption of heteronormativity. Queer theory is useful for this analysis because it moves beyond the lesbian and gay studies from which it emerged to challenge both heteronormativity and homonormativity – the normative social control exerted on queer communities (from inside and outside of those communities) and on individuals to perform a normalized, moralized, commercialized and “acceptable” lesbian or gay identity or behaviour (for further discussion, see Padva 2002). The Positive Space Campaign attempts to raise visibility and inclusivity for a broad range of sexual and gender identities and in so doing confronts heteronormativity and homonormativity. I draw on the work of Judith Butler and queer theory for my analysis of the dynamics of the Campaign.

The second area of scholarship that informs this study is the geography literature on sexuality and space. The writing of Gill Valentine (1993a; 1993b; 1993c; 1994; 1995; 1996; 2000) has been especially important because she focuses on the heterosexualization of space and its implications for queer bodies. Valentine’s work provides a framework for my analysis of a Positive Space Campaign which sets out to raise visibility and awareness of sexual and gender diversity by explicitly challenging heteronormative campus space.

Because I focus on sex, gender, sexuality and space in the context of the university campus, I also draw on the literature concerning queer identities and activism in educational spaces. Most of this literature addresses issues at the elementary and secondary school level, but
there is some research on the post-secondary level which is useful for my analysis.

It is also important to locate the increasing prevalence of Positive Space Campaigns on Canadian campuses since the mid-1990s within a wider history of the politics of queer activism and organizing in Canada. To this end, I use the work of David Rayside, Miriam Smith and Tom Warner on the history of Canadian queer organizing in order to provide some of the necessary context for Positive Space Campaigns. Unfortunately, there appears to be no published research on Positive Space Campaigns to date, a gap which this project begins to remedy.

In Chapter Two, I describe the participatory action research (PAR) methodology used for this research. As an activist and researcher, I find this methodology appealing because it offers a means to conduct research activities conducive to social change, in this case, the initiation and implementation of a Positive Space Campaign at Brock University. As a direct participant in the Campaign, I was able to conduct participant observation in Committee meetings and workshops and to document the Campaign through fieldnotes and journaling. I use this data to provide an overview of the trajectory of the Positive Space Committee at Brock University.

As a part of the research methodology, I also conducted interviews with the organizers of Positive Space Campaigns (or similar campaigns and programs) at the University of Toronto, the University of Guelph, the University of Manitoba and Centennial College. These interviews allowed me to contextualize the Brock Campaign and to offer some initial comparisons with related campaigns at other campuses (See Appendix A).

Chapter Three offers an in-depth critical analysis of the Brock Campaign. Here, I analyze the production of Campaign materials, aspects of the Campaign workshops, postering efforts and the Campaign's launch in Orientation Week to explore how the Campaign attempts to challenge
or disrupt heteronormative campus spaces. Each of the examples provides evidence that while members of the university community can be encouraged to think critically about sexual and gender diversity, and new kinds of spaces can be created, there continue to be restrictions on the degree to which space and thinking can really change.

Chapter Four is an analysis of the politics of Positive Space Campaign organizing. I draw a comparison between Brock’s Positive Space Campaign and the launch of a similar ‘Safe Space’ Program at the Royal Bank of Canada. The Royal Bank of Canada’s Safe Space Program was attacked by certain factions of the religious right with an organized boycott aimed at forcing the bank to rescind the program. The program was in fact cancelled less than two months after it was launched.

I use a comparison of the RBC’s Safe Space Program and Brock’s Positive Space Campaign to demonstrate the kind of hostility queer issues continue to encounter in Canada and despite clear differences, there are also increasing similarities between university (public) and corporate (private) spaces. Further, as I consider the meanings of ‘queer’, I consider the extent to which Positive Space Campaigns may be ‘queering’ space, by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination.

I think it is important to make a comment in this introduction about the terminology used to refer to a range of sexual and gender identities in this research. At times, I will use the acronym LGBTQ used in the Brock Campaign. At other times, I use the phrase ‘gay and lesbian’ when referring to earlier periods of time for which this terminology is more appropriate and/or to reflect the language used by other scholars. In terms of my own analysis, I tend to use the term ‘queer’ which is most often used as an umbrella term for LGBTTTIQQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual,
transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning) identities. I do this while recognizing that “LGBTTIQQ” is itself not a finite list of sexual and gender identities and that not all who do claim these identities also identify as ‘queer’. While my use of the word ‘queer’ is intended to be inclusive, I am aware that, as Marla Morris (2003) argues, “Queer . . . is at once too inclusive and yet not inclusive enough” (194). Following participatory action research methodology, which encourages a self-reflexive and self-evaluative process, I continue to be self-consciously engaged with the utility and limitations of the term ‘queer’.
CHAPTER ONE – THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Several bodies of literature are useful to an analysis of a Positive Space Campaign. I begin by exploring queer theory, particularly the theoretical work of Judith Butler as she asks important questions about normative understandings of sex, gender and sexuality. Despite the fact that Butler does not focus explicitly on spatial issues, her work has been used by geographers interested in issues of gender and sexuality. I then explore this geography literature on sexuality and space, with a focus on the work of Gill Valentine, whose work has been foundational in this area of scholarship. Following this, I contextualize this project within the literature on queer educational spaces. I end the chapter with some discussion of queer organizing in Canada to situate Positive Space Campaigns and related programs within a broader national context.

These bodies of literature combined assist in addressing the main questions raised in this research. To what extent and in what ways does the Positive Space Campaign challenge heteronormativity on campus? What kind of spaces did the Campaign open up? In opening up these spaces, did the Positive Space Campaign actually disrupt heterosexual space? To what extent did the Positive Space ‘queer’ space by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination?

Judith Butler: Challenging Sex/Gender/Sexuality

Judith Butler is one of the key thinkers in queer theory. Here I discuss her argument regarding the need to i) trouble universalized categories of ‘woman’ and ‘gender’; ii) challenge gender and sex dichotomies; iii) disrupt assumed correlations between sex, gender and sexuality; and iv) explore how identity categories can be both limiting and liberating. Butler’s theorizing provides a useful framework of analysis for the Brock Positive Space Campaign which is
engaged so directly with issues of sex, gender and sexuality.

In her influential work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, originally published in 1990, Butler challenges the conventional categories of ‘woman’ and ‘gender’. In the preface added to the 1999 edition of the work, Butler points out how many understandings of ‘woman’ in the late 1980s were heteronormative and that “under conditions of normative heterosexuality, policing gender is sometimes used as a way of securing heterosexuality” (Butler 1999: xii). According to her argument, heterosexuality can dictate a particular normative gender expression, and so while one’s sexuality does not control one’s gender identity, the social control of heteronormativity expects a particular expression of gender which complements that expression of sexuality. Therefore, Butler (1999) asks “how do non-normative sexual practices call into question the stability of gender as a category of analysis?” (xi). In a later related work, Chrys Ingraham (2002) uses the term ‘heterogender’ to highlight the control that heterosexuality exerts over gender expression and to call the accepted social construction of both gender and heterosexuality into question (80).

Butler (1999) has written that “gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts” (179). For Butler, gender is a performance and is not a fixed or natural part of one’s identity. The gender category of woman is then understood as fluid and flexible, not stagnant. Butler is interested in various ontological understandings of gender, and in how our understanding of gender informs how we function on an individual level and how we collectively normalize our social expression, behaviour and the behaviour of others.
Butler (1999) moves beyond the discussion of the category of ‘woman’ to challenge gender dichotomies. She argues that gender constructions of ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ are linked to the construct of a binary system of sex, based on ‘male’ and ‘female’ bodies. She argues that such binary understandings of the sexed body are cultural constructions and not fixed by biology. This is made evident by the intersex body which defies a normative understanding of ‘male’ and ‘female’ as the only articulations of sexed bodies. As a culture, we impose meanings on our ‘biological differences’ which in turn affects how we perceive sexed physical differences.

Further, Butler challenges binary constructions of not only male/female and masculine/feminine, but also of hetero/homosexual. As in the case of gender and sex where dichotomies of masculine/feminine and male/female exclude other possibilities, the hetero/homosexual binary, she argues, excludes a range of sexualities. Butler also suggests that there is a disconnect between one’s sex, gender and sexuality. David Gauntlett (2002) provides a diagram of this disconnect. The first diagram illustrates the normative understanding of the connection between sex, gender and sexuality (Gauntlett 2002: 137):

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You have a fixed sex (male or female) . . . ----> builds a stable gender (masculinity or femininity) . . . ----> your desire (towards the 'opposite' sex).
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The second diagram construes how Butler deconstructs this normative understanding (Gauntlett 2002: 137):

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You have a body. You may perform an identity. You may have desires.
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The statements without arrows in the second diagram remove the link between the body, identity and desire. For Butler, it is important not to assume that, for example, a person is born ‘female,’ is ‘feminine,’ and is attracted to the ‘opposite’ i.e. ‘male’ and ‘masculine.’ Rather, there are many other possible connections between gender, sex and sexuality.

Butler (1993) argues that the normative connections between sex, gender and sexuality need to be challenged because people continue to be oppressed by culturally imposed linkages. She argues that we need to first recognize and then challenge the ways in which dominant correlations of sex, gender and sexuality are used against those who do not ‘fit’. As a result of these imposed linkages, those who, for example, express same-sex desire are subjected to a homophobia that includes a simultaneously gendered denigration. Butler (1993) writes that

Precisely because homophobia often operates through the attribution of a damaged, failed, or otherwise abject gender to homosexuals, that is, calling gay men ‘feminine’ or calling lesbians ‘masculine,’ and because the homophobic terror over performing homosexual acts, where it exists, is often also a terror over losing proper gender (‘no longer being a real or proper man’ or ‘no longer being a real and proper woman’), it seems crucial to retain a theoretical apparatus that will account for how sexuality is regulated through the policing and the shaming of gender. (238)

Butler’s theorizing points to the challenges facing a Positive Space Campaign aimed at disrupting heteronormative subjectivity and socialization of members of the university campus.

Butler is critical of the culturally dominant correlations between sex, gender and sexuality
and struggles with the limitations of identity categories. For example, while she has identified herself as a lesbian, she grapples with the problematic suggestion of there being a shared ‘lesbian’ experience and any (homo)normative definition of ‘lesbian’ even when this emerges from within the so-called lesbian and gay community. Butler points instead to what she sees as the instability and tension of identity categories. She writes:

I’m permanently troubled by identity categories, consider them to be invariable stumbling-blocks, and understand them, even promote them, as sites of necessary trouble. In fact, if the category were to offer no trouble, it would cease to be interesting to me: it is precisely the pleasure produced by the instability of those categories which sustains the various erotic practices that make me a candidate for the category to begin with. (Butler 1991: 14)

She also, however, recognizes that in the context of a heterosexist world, it can be politically necessary and important to recognize the specificity of a lesbian experience and identity vis-à-vis the experiences of those identifying with other sexualities (Butler 1991: 14). Butler’s example of the lesbian experience might be interpreted more broadly to speak of what could be called a ‘queer’ experience based on sexual and gender diversity (or queer politics). It is significant that despite her emphasis on the necessary troubling of sexual and gender categories and identities, she nevertheless argues that identity politics are an important basis for activism as people who have experienced similar forms of discrimination based on sexual or gender identities can together challenge dominant or ‘normalized’ identities based on sex, gender and sexuality (what
might be termed a 'queer' politics).

Judith Butler's theorizing is important to my study of a Positive Space Campaign. It is important because the Campaign is motivated by an understanding that dominant constructions of gender, sex and sexuality do not reflect the experiences of all members of the campus, and that these constructions therefore need to be challenged. At the same time, Butler's theorizing of the troubles of identity politics is useful for my analysis of the Positive Space Campaign's effort to both organize and advocate for those in a range of sexual and gender identity categories.

**Queer Theory and Politics**

Judith Butler has made an important contribution to a broader literature now known as 'queer theory'. Nikki Sullivan (2003) argues that "Queer (Theory) is constructed as a sort of vague and indefinable set of practices and (political) positions that has the potential to challenge normative knowledges and identities" (43-44). Part of the vagueness of queer theory stems from the term 'queer' itself. Historically used as a word to shame, queer has been reclaimed and used as a means of self-identification by LGBTQ people since the late 1980s and early 1990s. As Jagose (1996a) notes, the term has expanded beyond lesbian and gay to include a wide variety of sexual identities and culturally marginal gender self-identifications. The term 'queer' as used in Canada or the United States in 2005, for example, might include (but is not limited to) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, queer and questioning identities. While queer is often used as a noun or adjective, it is also "used as a verb, to queer. To queer is to seek to trouble, undo or unfix categories" (Peters 2005: 102).

At the same time, however, to use 'queer' as an umbrella term has limitations insofar as it may resonate for some people and not others in generationalized, politicized, racialized,
sexualized and gendered ways. While queer challenges dominant categories of gender, sex and sexuality, it can “simultaneously [reinforce] the marginalization of other markers like race” (Kumashiro 2003: 366). Gloria Anzaldúa (1991) asserts this when she argues that

Queer is used as a false unifying umbrella which all ‘queers’ of all races, ethnicities and classes are shoved under. (250)

However, she then adds that

At times, we need this umbrella to solidify our ranks against outsiders. But even when we seek shelter under it we must not forget that it homogenizes, erases our differences. (250)

As Anzaldúa suggests, ‘queer’ may also serve as a basis for political identification and mobilization. Again however, the political positionings of ‘queer’ are not fixed. As Butler (1993) notes, the very term ‘queer’ “has been precisely the discursive rallying point for younger lesbians and gay men and, in yet other contexts, for lesbian interventions and, in yet other contexts, for bisexuals and straights for whom the term expresses an affiliation with anti-homophobic politics” (230). This could be expanded beyond anti-homophobia politics to also suggest the inclusion of anti-heteronormative politics.

At the same time as some have pointed out, in certain cases the term ‘queer’ has been disassociated from some of its more provocative and political usages. For example, in reference
to the television program *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, Jaap Kooijman (2005) writes that

What is most problematic is how [*Queer Eye*] appropriates the term *queer*, depoliticizing it by turning it into a commodity. While *queer* in itself denies any essentialist categorization, its juxtaposition with *straight* [in the show’s title] makes it the equivalent of the “(openly) gay male” category, reinforcing this essentialist [hetero/homosexual] binary opposition. Moreover, the way the program uses *queer* is nothing more than a fashionable accessory. (107)

So while ‘queer’ is used provocatively and humourously for the show’s title to grab its audience’s attention, it may not challenge dominant perceptions of fixed identity categories (such as hetero/homosexual).

Anzaldúa and Kooijman point to some of the potential limitations of a queer politics and their insights are useful for my analysis of the politics of Brock’s Positive Space Campaign. In opening up spaces on campus, did the Positive Space Campaign manage to challenge heteronormativity on campus as a part of wider queer politics?

**Sexuality and Space**

The last decade has seen the emergence of a rich literature on the intersection of sexuality and space that includes attention to LGBTQ issues. Geographers have explored sexual identities in both public and in private spaces (see Day 2001; Duncan 1996; Iveson 2003; Podmore 2001)

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*Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* is a weekly TV series about five gay men who, over the course of an episode, transform a straight man from “drab to fab” by giving him a style makeover in the areas of fashion, food and wine, interior design, grooming and culture.
including, for example, the different ways that gay men and lesbians occupy space in
neighbourhoods and cities (see Adler and Brenner 1992; Bell 1991; Brickell 2000; Elwood 2000;
Lo and Healy 2000; Namaste 1996; Nash 2001; Peake 1993; Podmore 2001). Arguably one of
the most foundational geographers in this area is Gill Valentine (1993a; 1993b; 1993c; 1994;

Valentine’s work grows out of a feminist geography that analyzes how gender has an
impact on conceptions, perceptions and experiences of space. Feminist geography maintains that
spaces are reflections of the power imbalances between men and women. Valentine (1993a)
argues that space is also a reflection of a power imbalance between different sexualities and that
a dominant heterosexuality is “powerfully expressed in space” (395). Not only is space
heterosexualized, but contrary to an assumption of sexuality as ‘appropriately’ located in private
space, heterosexuality is also on display and performed in ‘public’ space. She writes that the
cultural dichotomy locating sexuality in private rather than public space, is based on the
false premise that heterosexuality is . . . not expressed in the public arena. . . . [and] such
is the strength of the assumption of the ‘naturalness’ of heterosexual hegemony, that most
people are oblivious to the way it operates as a process of power relations in all spaces.
(Valentine 1993a: 396)

Valentine (1996) develops her ideas in a discussion of ‘the street’ as a heterosexual space.
She offers many examples to illustrate how ‘the street’ is heterosexualized through heterosexual
couples holding hands or kissing in the streets, heterosexual relationships and ‘nuclear’ families
portrayed in advertisements and billboards, heterosexualized conversations that can be overheard by anyone at a bus stop, and/or music that plays over the speakers in a store which confirms heterosexual desire (146).

Based on her interviews with middle and working class women in England, Valentine (1993b) argues that lesbians feel ‘out of place’ in everyday spaces because the spaces are organized around a dominant heterosexual normativity. She points to how public displays of sexuality that fall outside of the framework of heterosexuality are considered not only to be ‘out of place’, but are also more noticeable since they challenge dominant forms of sexual expression. While she writes specifically about the lesbian experience, some of her conclusions can be applied to the experiences of queer people more generally. She and others have documented how non-normative sexual and gender identities may be ‘policed’ or modified in heteronormative spaces (see Browne 2004; Valentine 1993b; Valentine 2000). Kath Browne (2004) for example, writes about the bathroom experiences of those with gender ambiguous bodies. She argues that women who are misread as men in bathrooms are often subjected to abusive and violent reactions by other women.

Despite experiencing marginalization or even exclusion from so-called public spaces however, many queer people have navigated through, disrupted, and/or reclaimed heteronormative spaces. An interesting example of taking up public spaces is found in Valentine’s (1995) discussion of how performance artist k.d. lang’s music has the ability to not only “articulate sexual identities and communities but also... facilitate the production of [non-hetero]sexualized space” (474). Valentine illustrates this potential when she recounts a story told by one of her lesbian respondents. This interviewee described standing in a store and hearing
one of k.d. lang’s songs playing on the speakers. The woman recounted how she smiled to herself because she heard ‘lesbian’ music in a public space. She looked up briefly, and caught the eye of another woman in the store, and they shared a knowing look. Valentine argues that the two women momentarily created a queer space within heterosexualized space (479-480). While Valentine presents this example in order to demonstrate the possibility of momentarily queering space, the degree to which simply catching someone’s eye is enough to challenge heterosexualized space, let alone create an alternative queer space (or in this case, ‘lesbian’ space) is open to question.

This issue is further explored by David Bell et al. (1994) who draw on Valentine’s work to explore the performance of sexual identities in space. They argue that all space is socially constructed and that socially and culturally constructed space interacts with a person’s assumed and performed sexual identity. Using examples of what they call the hypermasculine ‘gay skinhead’ and the hyperfeminine ‘lipstick lesbian’, they examine what it means to actively ‘queer’ a space by appropriating it in some way. They suggest that performances of identities like the gay skinhead and the lipstick lesbian in particular offer parodies of heterosexuality in public space (33).

This point draws on Judith Butler’s (1999) argument in Gender Trouble where she discusses the “potential for transgressive politics within the parodying of heterosexual constructs” (32). As Butler argues that drag performances can unsettle heterosexuality, likewise Bell et al. argue that the lipstick lesbian and the gay skinhead parody straight space. While lipstick lesbians and gay skinheads are coded as heterosexual to those who do not perceive the skinhead as gay or the woman in lipstick and stiletto heels as a lesbian, their performances offer
the potential to transgress and redefine public space to those who are ‘in the know’ (34).

In the same way that Butler argues that masculinity is not restricted to men and male and femininity is not restricted to woman and female then, Bell et al. argue that public ‘straight’ space is not restricted to heterosexuality (33). They break down the assumed correlations between heterosexuality and public ‘straight’ space with the use of the gay skinhead and lipstick lesbian, who may perform and ‘pass’ to some as straight in public ‘straight’ spaces but who are not heterosexual and are visible as gay and lesbian to other gays and lesbians.

A number of people have pointed to the limitations of the analysis presented by Bell et al. For example, they have been critiqued for neglecting a racial analysis of the performance of the skinhead identity and for a heavy reliance on the power of the white male gaze which “both ignores the dynamics of the gaze between lesbians and reproduces stereotypes of the feminine” (Walker 1995: 74). While Bell et al. argue that these particular identities are redefined for people who are ‘in the know’, the analysis of the lipstick lesbian only considers this identity in the context of the straight male gaze and does not consider the meaning of the identity in queer or lesbian spaces. However, the work of Bell et al. is useful as it begins to suggest something of the complexity of defining, let alone challenging heterosexual spaces.

Some work has also been done on what are more explicit examples of claiming public spaces as ‘queer’. Geographers, for example, have examined Pride Parades (see Brickell 2000; Podmore 2001), more established gay neighbourhoods or ‘gay ghettos’ (see Myslik 1996; Nash 2001), and bathhouses (see Nash and Bain forthcoming; Tattleman 2000) all of which might be viewed as examples of ‘queered space’. Brickell’s (2000) study examines media representations of Pride Parades in New Zealand and argues that media representations suggest that gays and
lesbians have left the privacy of the home and have invaded the public streets, and further, that they have invaded the private minds of heterosexual people. Brickell uses the analysis to demonstrate how because public spaces are constructed as heterosexual, it is expected that people found in them are heterosexual. When queer identities are made public, as in the case of Pride Parades, they are understood to be out of their rightful, private or closeted place.

The geography literature on sexuality and space is very useful for my research. My own inquiry is connected to this body of research since my experience of Brock University’s campus space was that it was largely a ‘public’ heteronormative space. While I began to uncover more evidence of queer people and queer organizing on campus, it was still within a largely heteronormative framework. I am interested in the extent to which heterosexual campus spaces are disrupted by the Positive Space Campaign and to what extent the Positive Space Campaigns may be ‘queering’ space, by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination.

**Queer Issues in Educational Settings**

My analysis of a campus-based Positive Space Campaign also draws on some of the literature on queer issues and the education system. Most of the research on queer issues in education seems to focus on the elementary or secondary school classroom. There appears to be less written on the experiences of queer students or staff in the post-secondary setting.

In the context of elementary and secondary level education, there is some work on the need for a more inclusive curriculum that addresses queer issues (Brintzman 2000; Griffin 1995; O’Conor 1995; Rogers 1994), the role that educators can play in combatting homophobia in the classroom (Epstein 1994; Epstein and Johnson 1994; Sanders and Burke 1994) and the

In the post-secondary setting, a number of writers explore what it means for faculty to be in or out of the closet on campus. Elenie Opffer (1994) argues that for queer instructors in North American post-secondary institutions, coming out is still a very difficult issue. While there are many convincing reasons to come out, many queer faculty are still apprehensive about doing so for fear that their careers may be threatened by bad evaluations from homophobic students or departments. Opffer is critical of the lack of literature on the topic and makes a compelling argument for the need to explore what it means for college faculty to ‘come out’ (see also Tierney 1997).

Based on their own experiences, Kate Adams and Kim Emery (1994) have discussed some of the challenges facing lesbian faculty or instructors in Texas who do come out in the classroom, noting that they may become targets of stereotypes or preconceptions and their authority in the classroom may be compromised because, as they write ironically, “a lesbian teacher must be unnaturally biased” (32). Sally Munt (1992) has also written of the challenges of teaching lesbian issues in the UK:

The pressures of being out and teaching lesbian material include dealing with students and staff to whom you collapse personal identity with theoretical integrity in a totalising motion which can only work against you, whether you are patronised, idealised or stigmatised. The problem of the personalising of lesbian discourse within the academy
(‘... is she or isn’t she?’) is that it leaves women vulnerable, caught between being reified and colluding with their own invisibility. (xiv-xv)

At the post-secondary level in Canada, Didi Khayatt (1994, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002) describes her experiences as a lesbian professor, and specifically her struggles with the pedagogy involved in coming out in the classroom. While she understands her potential as a role model for lesbian and perhaps other queer students, she questions what kind of pedagogy she would be practising with a declarative statement about her sexuality in her classes. On the one hand, outing herself in the classroom would contribute to increasing the visibility of queer bodies on the university campus, but on the other hand, she wonders whether outing herself reinforces a constant visibility as ‘lesbian’ that negates her racialized, gendered and/or classed identities (1994: 212). She also considers how making a declarative statement about her sexuality in front of a classroom fixes a sexual identity which she understands to be “continually in flux” (1999: 108). She offers a helpful articulation here of the tension of trying to create queer visibility but not fixing that queer identity in limiting ways. Her discussion is useful for my thinking about the possible tensions inherent in a Positive Space Campaign which works to raise the visibility of sexual and gender identities, while attempting not to ‘fix’ such identities in constraining ways.

Along with examinations of the positioning of queer faculty there is also some literature on heteronormativity in the university classroom. For example, Linda Eyre (1993) explores what happened when she included the topics of homophobia and heterosexism in class assignments and discussions in a Canadian Maritime university level course on health education for prospective teachers. She describes how her attempt to challenge heteronormativity was met
with homophobic and heteronormative oral and written assignments by students who resisted her curricular innovation.

Didi Khayatt has also addressed the issue of curriculum noting how, for example,

the tension between wishing to normalize the subject of queer sexuality so as to present it to presumably straight students and using it to disrupt heteronormative assumptions is faced by all of us who choose to include it in our syllabi. (1999: 112)

Khayatt is articulating how in the presentation of queer issues in course work, there is a tension between presenting LGBTQ identities as “unthreatening” on the one hand and unsettling normative assumptions on the other. There were similar tensions in the development of the Campaign in terms of the presentation of workshop materials. Should we, as Khayatt (1999) asks, “couch [them] in normalcy so that [they] can be swallowed more easily?” (112) or use them to disrupt both heteronormative and homonormative assumptions.

Also useful for my research is Susan Talburt’s (2000) analysis of the introduction of a gay/lesbian/bisexual support office at a university in the United States. Her analysis is concerned with what it means for GLB identities to be the ‘new diversity’ in a time and place where conservative backlash against ‘special-interest’ groups is particularly strong. The institutionalization of a GLB support office, she suggests, occurred in the context of conservative institutional policies and practices which tended to “construct group identities as having fixed meanings that pose specific problems to be accommodated and managed” (62). This argument is important for my analysis of Positive Space Campaigns given that the available information (and
my interviews) suggests that queer organizing is at least partially institutionalized in Student Services, Equity Offices, or other related departments in university or college communities. In the case of Brock, as will be discussed later, the Positive Space Campaign was incorporated into the Harassment Prevention Office. While the institutionalization of queer resources on campus may be useful for increasing visibility for sexual and gender diversity, Talburt points out that such initiatives may be motivated by institutional goals of ‘managing diversity’ in ways that work against more progressive possibilities.

*Niagara and Canadian Context*

It is important to contextualize Positive Space Campaigns within the broader context of queer activism in Canada. David Rayside’s (1998) and Miriam Smith’s (1999) examinations of sexual orientation and human rights legislation in Canada discuss the 1985 inclusion of Section 15 to the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 15 included protection based on equality and nondiscrimination, and while it did not explicitly include sexual orientation, legal courts have interpreted Section 15 of the Charter to include sexual orientation under its protection. Sexual orientation was added to the Ontario Human Rights Code in 1986 and to the Canadian Human Rights Act in 1996. These were important legislative steps in ensuring basic human rights for sexual minorities. The implementation of legislative protection, while undoubtedly important did not end discrimination (Rayside 1998). Despite the decrease in what Rayside calls ‘anti-gay rhetoric’, he discusses how queer issues remained on the fringe of Canadian politics through the 1990s (the period of his study).

Positive Space Campaigns can be understood within the wider framework of these currents in Canada. Positive Space Campaigns are built on the assumption that LGBTQ people
have a right to live, study and work on campuses that are free of discrimination and harassment, an assumption supported by legislative advances. At the same time however, such Campaigns are responding to ongoing challenges faced by queer people as they attempt to implement these rights in everyday spaces that remain heteronormative in marginalizing and exclusionary ways.

Tom Warner’s (2002) book *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada* is a history of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer organizing in Canada. Included in this historical account is some discussion of the role that university organizations have played in Canadian queer activism. For example, the Campus Gay Club, which formed in 1972 at the University of Manitoba, soon renamed Gays For Equality, was immediately involved in a human rights act amendment campaign to have sexual orientation included in the Human Rights Act (Warner 2002: 74-75). Other groups, such as the University of Western Ontario Homophile Association, founded in 1971, were primarily interested in creating spaces in which gays and lesbians could meet socially (87). The University of Waterloo’s Gay Liberation Movement, founded in 1971, was a particularly active and important part of the city of Waterloo’s gay and lesbian community (88). University campuses have been significant sites of lesbian and gay activism in Canada. Positive Space Campaigns can be linked to this history of linkages between campuses and broader community building and politics.

It is particularly significant to consider the implementation of a Positive Space Campaign at Brock University, which is located in the Niagara region, a region often described as politically and socially small ‘c’ conservative with respect to sexual and gender diversity issues. One of the federal members of parliament for the area, Walt Lastewka, is one of a small minority of Liberals who voted against the equal marriage bill (Bill C-38). On 8 June 2005, *Niagara This Week* (a
free weekly newspaper delivered to homes in the Niagara region) pointed out that a rainbow pride flag was flown for the first time over St. Catharines City Hall as a part of the region’s 2005 Pride activities. The chair of OUT Niagara, an umbrella group of queer resources and services in the area, was quoted as saying that the flag might still be too provocative for some people in the area, and OUT Niagara’s director of public relations remarked that the area does not hold a Pride parade and was unlikely to in the near future because while:

there are always more radical thinking people [who want a parade] . . . there are also less radical people who think we’re going too far as it is. (Zettel 2005)

Using some of the insights of queer theory, the geography literature on sexuality and space, literature on queer issues in educational spaces, and the literature on wider queer organizing in Canada, I explore the attempt of the Brock University Positive Space Campaign to highlight the need to welcome and support sexual and gender diversity. I ask to what extent and in what ways did the Positive Space Campaign challenge heteronormativity and/or disrupt heterosexual space on campus? As I consider the meanings of ‘queer’, how might Positive Space Campaigns may be ‘queering’ space, or contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination?
CHAPTER TWO – METHODOLOGY

During the early part of my graduate education at Brock University, I was particularly aware of the invisibility of sexual and gender diversity on campus. In contrast, at the University of Toronto where I completed my undergraduate degree, queer visibility was much higher perhaps due in part to the fact that the campus is located close to a significant gay neighbourhood in Toronto. The central queer student group on campus had an active, audible and visible presence and the proliferation of Positive Space stickers and posters around campus meant that visiting faculty offices, student residences, and various administrative services involved visual indicators that these campus spaces aimed to be welcoming towards and supportive of LGBTQ people.

As I walked the halls at Brock, the lack of visibility was glaring. Exploring the campus looking for space and people involved in activism, I found OPIRG Brock (the Brock chapter of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group), which describes itself as “a non-profit, student-funded and student-directed organization which encourages and supports research, education and action on social justice and environmental issues” (OPIRG Brock 2004). OPIRG’s mandate includes an explicit commitment to working against homophobia and promoting justice around queer issues. The activities of OPIRG Brock, however, reflect the interests of a transitory membership and so the work that they do on queer issues may vary from year to year.

When I arrived at Brock, OPIRG’s office at the time (the fall of 2003) while technically located on campus was in fact located in a separate building a ten minute walk from the centre of
campus and removed from any other buildings on campus. I found it interesting that some of the more radical student organizing was located in this peripheral space, and wondered if this was an indication of how integrated (or unintegrated) activist organizing was with the wider Brock community.

A few weeks after my arrival at Brock, I noticed some posters up around campus advertising Brock Pride, the campus group for gay, queer, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender students, staff, friends and allies. When I tried to learn more about this group, I found that the Brock Pride website was not linked to the Brock University website, but rather, was only accessible through the community organization Niagara Pride, one of the groups now affiliated with the umbrella group OUT Niagara. I also learned that Brock Pride had no physical space on campus and held its meetings in different locations depending on what space was available. As far as I could determine, it was this nearly imperceptible group that was the hub for queer activism on campus. I wanted to help change the climate of the university campus by launching a Positive Space Campaign.

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3 A year after my arrival at Brock, in September of 2004, OPIRG Brock was relocated to the central part of campus, next to The Brock Press (the student newspaper) and the Brock University Student Union. The aging farmhouse on the edge of campus in which they previously resided had been deemed unfit for use due to structural problems.

4 In September of 2004, Brock Pride’s website became linked to the Brock University Student Union (BUSU) websites (www.busu.net/pride).

5 Feminist scholars use the phrase ‘chilly climate’ in reference primarily to the experiences of female academics in Canadian universities. The ‘chilly climate’ refers to the explicitly and implicit institutional policies of discrimination within academia which disadvantage women and other ‘minority’ groups. For further discussion, see The Chilly Collective 1995.
Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) is a form of qualitative research that engages in inquiry and action simultaneously. PAR has three main methodological features that make it distinctive from other methodologies. First, it involves a participatory or collective effort. The objectives are to bring a group or community into the research process and to encourage those participants to take action for themselves (Park 1993: 1). This can involve collaborative work between researchers and participants to strengthen connections within groups or communities (Barnsley and Ellis 1992).

As a second key methodological tenet, PAR encourages self-reflection on the research and participatory processes, and so it encourages those involved in the research to reflect and act on their own or their community’s problems and issues and to engage in a research process. PAR involves a constant and continuous process of self-reflection and (re-)examination. In some cases, PAR takes the form of a collective research effort, and thus a collective reflexivity on the research effort, while in other examples it is primarily the researcher who engages in a more "solitary process of systematic self-reflection" (Kemmis and McTaggart 2000: 595).

The third major feature of PAR is that it is explicitly oriented towards facilitating some kind of social change and therefore is employed by researchers who are interested in empowering those who are marginalized within the wider society. This social justice orientation means that participatory action researchers engage in projects that are directly about creating change and helping to improve the world around them. The three features of collective effort, reflexivity and facilitating social change arise in the course of what feminist researcher Alice McIntyre (2000) calls "a cyclical process of exploration, knowledge construction, and action at different moments"
throughout the research process” (15).

In terms of my own research, these three features were evident. First, I worked collectively with the Positive Space Committee to empower university community members (including students, staff and faculty), to get involved with the Campaign. Second, as a researcher, I was self-reflective about my own positioning during the trajectory of the Campaign and the research process. Finally, the research was explicitly engaged in social change, working to implement a Campaign to raise the visibility and number of welcoming and supportive spaces for sexual and gender diversity on campus.

In my dual capacity as a researcher and Committee member, I was a participant-observer in the activities of the Campaign. For example, I participated in Committee meetings, acted as a workshop facilitator, and was part of other activities such as staffing the table at Clubs Day during Orientation week. While I did not conduct an ethnographic research project, the methodology of ethnography was similar to my own approach to PAR.

Recent work by ethnographers has explored what it means to be a queer researcher engaging in issues involving queer communities. Contemporary gay or queer ethnography, for example, often involves including “the identity of the ethnographer as a lesbian or as a gay man [or a queer person] as an explicit and integral part of the text” (Wafer 1996: 261). Suzanne de Castell and Mary Bryson (1998) have argued in favour of a ‘queer ethnography’ which they describe as involving a researcher’s explicit “repositioning from a hegemonic to a queer-centred frame” (98). They focus on “the inversions effected when queerness occupies a subject-position in ethnographic accounts and accounting practices” (98).

This newer work contrasts with older research, which often consisted of the study of
lesbian and gay people or queer sexualities as the object of research outside of the researcher’s positionality (Wafer 1996: 261; de Castell and Bryson 1998: 98). My research on a Positive Space Campaign was conducted from the position of a queer participatory action researcher, engaged in an analysis of queer organizing on campus. My positioning was significant because it meant that I had already established a degree of legitimacy as an ‘insider’ and I was already linked into queer organizing networks.

My role as a participatory researcher in a Positive Space Campaign was shaped by more than my ‘queer’ identity. It was also shaped by my other gendered, racialized, classed, etc. identities, as well as by my status as a graduate student working in collaboration with professors, staff and student leaders.6

As a graduate student, I did not have as much access to avenues of power within the university (for example, in terms of access to funding or connections to the senior administration of the university) as some other members of the Committee. Despite my relative lack of status, I did find myself in the position of initiator which also had implications. Because I had been responsible for bringing the Committee together, I was often placed in a leadership position in the early stages of organizing. While I found this motivating, it was also challenging. I had served on a variety of campus committees before and usually represented a student voice, whereas now, my role was quite different. I found that it was a challenge to combine my role as a researcher and my role in the Committee. As a researcher, for example, I wanted to back off and spend more time observing and taking notes, but as an activist, I wanted to get involved and

6While I recognize the importance and significance of the intersections of gender, sex and sexuality with race, ethnicity and class, among other axes of identity, these are issues that I hope to address in further analysis.
share my opinions. While PAR prompted the combined roles, I thought that it was important not to overly influence the direction of the Committee organizing efforts, a view that perhaps reflected some of my training in more traditional research methods which encourage the researcher not to interfere with the object of study.

Because I understood my role on the Committee as one of helping to organize the work rather than direct it, I provided initial impetus for the Campaign process, but tried not to be the one always initiating organization or action. This became a point of difficulty and frustration as I sometimes felt as though others expected me to call meetings and set our goals and tasks. Once the process had begun however, I consciously decided to avoid leading the discussion and organizational efforts of the Committee. This was partly because of uncertainty about where I belonged as the researcher, but also because of my commitment to more egalitarian, de-centralized forms of political organizing. I also was aware that the sustainability of the Campaign would depend on the long-term involvement of those at Brock and that as a graduate student, I would not be there beyond the summer of 2005.

The Committee was engaged in a project involving sexual and gender diversity, and all of the Committee identified as either LGBTQ or LGBTQ-positive. The Committee was a new initiative, with no official support or funding, and as a Committee dealing with LGBTQ issues and homophobia, it began from a position of marginality within the university. However, after one of the Committee’s early meetings, the President of the student group Brock Pride commented to me that I was lucky because from his perspective, the inclusion of the staff and faculty on the Committee meant that I was able to get the organizing off the ground and acquire logistical and financial support more quickly and effectively than all-student organizations such
as Brock Pride.

Certainly, the presence of more powerful and better connected members than me served the Committee well when it came time to access funding or support as these members could go to their administrative departments for necessary assistance. Despite the fact that the Positive Space Committee could be viewed as marginal within the structures of the university, it nonetheless was better positioned in the university hierarchy relative to student groups.

While the Campaign began as a grassroots effort outside of existing university structures, by the end of the spring term in 2005, the administration of the Campaign was assumed by the Harassment Prevention Office thereby, becoming much more institutionalized. I discuss the possible implications of this later.

Creating the Positive Space Campaign

As I began to explore the possibility of creating a Positive Space Campaign at Brock, a member of my thesis committee suggested that I speak to an Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences who was involved in some similar kinds of organizing. I met with her and learned that in fact there had already been some early organizing around the creation of a Brock Positive Space Campaign, but that because of a lack of time and resources, the campaign had fizzled out. She then recommended that I speak to the Director of the Student Development Centre (SDC) and the Associate Director of Residence and Food Services in the Department of Residences (RFS), who I knew through a mutual acquaintance.

As I learned from my initial meetings with these three individuals, there had been an attempt to create a Positive Space Campaign at Brock University during the previous fall semester of 2002. Indeed at that time, two sessions had been organized in the fall of 2002 by the
Director of SDC and the Associate Director of RFS in which presentations were made about LGBTQ issues first to a group of interested faculty and staff, and second, to a group of student leaders. At the end of the presentations, the organizers had distributed Positive Space stickers which the Associate Director of RFS had made herself. At the top of the white stickers, the text read “Positive Space,” in the centre was a rainbow pride flag and underneath this, the text read:

This is a place where human rights are respected, and where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, two-spirited, queer and questioning people, their friends and allies are welcomed and supported.

The language on the sticker was based on an early version of the University of Toronto’s Positive Space sticker, which has been borrowed by a wide variety of organizations since. Approximately forty to fifty stickers were distributed at the two sessions and there were a few still visible on the doors of some of the offices in the Student Development Centre and on a small number of office doors around campus. After these two presentations, work on the Positive Space Campaign dwindled out, not for lack of interest, but for lack of time and resources. My desire to initiate a Positive Space Campaign was fortunately timed because these three individuals were enthusiastic about renewing their work on the project. Networks were already in place that I was able to uncover and mobilize.

In individual and separate meetings with the three above-mentioned individuals, I expressed my interest and potential involvement as a researcher in reinvigorating the Positive Space Campaign. Each expressed interest in continuing to work on the project, and consented to
the possibility that I might use the project for my thesis research. Given the experience of the previous year however, there was some concern that the effort to reinvigorate a Positive Space Campaign might involve more work than they had time for given their current responsibilities.

The Director of the Student Development Centre was in charge of a range of student services including Personal Counselling Services, Aboriginal Student Services, Campus Ministries, Leadership Programs, Services for Students with Disabilities, Non-Academic Student Discipline and Learning Skills. The Associate Director of Residence and Food Services in the Department of Residences was heavily involved in the student residence life. The Assistant Professor in the Social Sciences was busy with research, teaching and committee work. Despite these constraints, however, these individuals were willing to get involved in the Campaign in the short-term in the hopes that in the long-term the Campaign might be supported by a full-time staff position. The four of us became the co-founders of a new Brock University Positive Space Committee which eventually grew to a group of about seven to nine regular members.

We had our first meeting in February of 2004 when I was in the early stages of writing my application for ethical clearance of my research by the Research Ethics Board at Brock. I called the meeting so that we could discuss our visions and goals for the Campaign collectively rather than one-on-one. We also considered what my involvement as a researcher might look like and we discussed some of the details that I needed for my research ethics application. Despite the fact that I had not ‘officially’ begun my research, I was already engaging in participatory action research by exploring collaboratively with the group how we wanted to proceed and what role they wanted me to play as a researcher in the project.
**Ethics**

My ethics application took much longer than expected to be approved. I submitted my application in early March 2004, and it took two months to hear back from the Brock Research Ethics Board (REB). Fellow graduate students who applied after I did were approved more rapidly. I wondered whether my project was considered ‘sensitive’ perhaps because of the LGBTQ content of my proposed research or because of my less conventional proposed participatory action research methodology.

By April 2004, it was clear to me that organizing around the Positive Space Campaign needed to begin. If we were going to actually launch the Campaign in the next academic year, we would need at least a few months to get ourselves organized, to create and distribute materials and to develop workshops envisioned by the Committee. While at our early meeting we thought we might launch the Campaign towards the end of September 2004, we later decided to launch in early September during Orientation Week. Orientation Week is a week of activities organized and designed to introduce new students to Brock University. Because we were eager to get organizing, we met in April 2004 before my ethics application was approved. The delayed ethics approval meant that I lost some of the opportunity to document the progression of the work done by the Positive Space Committee from its new inception. I was able to refer to minutes from the meeting, however, to regain some of this.

I contacted the Research Ethics Board in April and was told that my proposal had been rerouted to full review. It took another few weeks before the application came back to me requiring two points of clarification. In my initial application, I had proposed, with the early verbal consent of all of the Committee members, that I would tape record all of the Committee
meetings. The REB responded that if a participant in the project did not want to be tape recorded, that this would nullify any tape recording I might want to do and therefore that I would only be able to record fieldnotes.

By the time I got this feedback from the REB, I had already begun to reconsider tape recording our Committee meetings. I was concerned about a number of issues. I never had the intention of transcribing the tapes from Committee meetings in their entirety, but initially I had wanted to record the meetings so that I might re-play some of our conversations and possibly transcribe some conversations of particular interest. However, if a participant wanted to review and subsequently change or edit a transcript, I would be required to transcribe the meeting in its entirety. The change, edit or removal of any of one person's words could potentially change much more than simply the contributions of that one person.

I was also concerned about the tenor of the relationships that might develop over the period during which the Committee organized the Campaign. Not tape-recording our meetings allowed me to side-step my concern that an analysis of the internal dynamics of the Committee and might possibly create rifts with my fellow Committee members who I came to consider as friends and/or might 'expose' the internal dynamics of the Committee to people interested in discontinuing the Campaign. I was therefore not resistant to the idea of reworking my ethics application by removing the proposed recording of meetings. I was satisfied instead with making field notes during meetings and later supplementing these with journal notes based on personal reflection.

The second clarification required by the REB involved my proposal to interview individuals involved in Positive Space Campaigns or other related anti-homophobia organizing
on other university or college campuses. The REB suggested that I would need to go through the Research Ethics Board of each of the other institutions involved. When I clarified that I would contact individuals through personal networks and connections rather than through official university or college avenues, the REB approved my application.

This point of clarification caused me some frustration as it seemed to me that the individuals whom I wanted to interview consisted of professors and professionals who were hardly 'vulnerable' subjects being senior to me in terms of age, authority and positioning within their respective institutions. While it was certainly important to respect the interviewees' ethical rights, it seemed to me that ethics approval from my own university should be sufficient. I had not considered the challenges of multi-institutional research sufficiently.

While I was eventually able to satisfy the requirements of the REB, I continued to grapple with ethical issues throughout the research and writing. Of particular concern to me were issues of confidentiality around Committee members. I was unable to guarantee anonymity for members of the Committee because joining the Committee was not done in secret, and so regardless of my research, it would not be difficult to determine the membership of the Committee. In consultation with those involved, I resolved this tension by removing all names and in some cases, providing non-identifying descriptors of university positions. While this did not entirely resolve the issue, (and may not be resolvable), at the very least it provided a degree of anonymity.

While I had made the decision to be out on campus, I realized that involvement not only in the Campaign but in my research put a significant amount of pressure on Committee members to be identified according to their sexual or gender identity. This served as an important
reminder to me of the literature on queer education and particular accounts of the often challenging pressure and potential experiences of faculty (as well as staff and students) who are ‘out’ in university spaces. It also highlighted the need for the Positive Space Campaign at Brock.

In the case of the interviews conducted with organizers on other campuses, I decided (with the permission of those involved) to include their names and institutions. My rationale for including the names and institutions of these interviewees is the importance of documenting the history of Positive Space Campaign or related campaign organizing in Canada. Most of the people I interviewed had been a part of Positive Space or similar campaign organizing efforts from the beginning, thus their names are an important part of this history.

The ethics application played an important role in helping me to articulate the goals of my proposed research, however some of the questions asked on the application seemed more clearly oriented towards quantitative rather than qualitative research. For example, while I was asked to submit a list of interview questions as part of the application (see Appendix B), I found that the application did not adequately reflect the dynamics of semi-structured interviews in which questions and answers sometimes went in unanticipated directions. As Van Den Hoonoard (2001) points out, “the nature and direction of questions in in-depth interviews are, in large part, dictated by the interviewee him- or herself, not by the researcher who defines the broader research dimensions” (23). This was also my experience. I found in my research that when interviewees wanted to share a story that they did not want me to use for my research, they simply asked that we go off the record which was easily done either by turning off the tape recorder or eliminating the account from the interview transcript.
Forms of Data

I conducted participant observation and recorded field notes during and after twelve Positive Space Committee meetings between May 2004 and December 2004. The Committee agreed to have a rotating chair to conduct our meetings, a role from which I was exempt so that I could act as the secretary. This allowed me to produce minutes based on my field notes.

I also conducted participant observation at Campaign workshops in which I acted as a co-facilitator. The workshops began at the end of September of 2004. I collected data informally during six of eight fall Positive Space workshops, including one session to train workshop facilitators. Because I did not seek permission from workshop attendees, I did not take detailed field notes about the content of the workshops or about those in attendance. I did however, record field notes after these events in which I documented more generally how the materials that we had developed for the workshops were working. I also conducted participant observation during other Positive Space events, for example during the Orientation Week events and postering efforts.

As mentioned I also conducted five 1-1½ hour, semi-structured interviews with people involved in Positive Space Campaigns (or similar organizing efforts) at four educational institutions in Ontario and Manitoba. These interviews provided information for the Brock Committee as the interviewees shared information about the work done on other university and college campuses. These earlier interviews were helpful for the development of the Brock Campaign because I could pass along advice from other Campaign organizers to the Brock Committee. The information from my research interviews directly supported the Brock organizing effort and provided me with a comparative framework for own analysis of the Brock
University Campaign (see Appendix A).

Through personal networks, I got in touch with five people in Southern Ontario and Manitoba. I interviewed Jude Tate, the Coordinator of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Resources and Programs at the University of Toronto whom I knew from my undergraduate years at the University of Toronto. The University of Toronto’s Positive Space Campaign was the first in the country and therefore many of the Campaigns across Canada are based in some ways on its work. The Brock Campaign, for example, adopted the goals of the University of Toronto’s Campaign. It is also unique as it is the only Campaign of those researched that does not make use of a training or workshop format. I also interviewed Dr. David Rayside, an activist, professor of Political Science and Sexual Diversity Studies, and one of the founders of the Positive Space Campaign at the University of Toronto. I had met David Rayside when I was an undergraduate at the University of Toronto and wanted to learn more about the history of this Campaign from him.

A third interview was conducted with Laurie Sanci, the Sexual Harassment Officer at Centennial College in Scarborough, Ontario. Laurie Sanci and I met in March 2004 at a conference at the University of British Columbia where she told me that she had just started up a new Positive Space Campaign at Centennial College. Sanci had conducted a lot of research to initiate the Centennial College Positive Space Campaign and many of the materials that we developed for the Brock Positive Space Campaign workshops were based on materials provided by Sanci.

I also interviewed Barry Townsend, the Entering Student Transition Specialist at Student Life and Career Services at the University of Guelph. I had met Barry Townsend through a
friend while visiting the University of Guelph years before. At the time of our initial meeting, Barry Townsend was working in Residence Life and was very actively involved in anti-homophobia work on campus.

Finally, I interviewed Lisa Seymour, an Assistant Professor and Social Worker at the University of Manitoba Student Counselling and Career Centre as well as a founding Member of the University of Manitoba’s Identifying Allies: A Safe Space Project. Seymour and I met during an Ally Training session that she was co-facilitating and which I attended at the University of Western Ontario. I was especially interested in talking to Lisa Seymour about the Identifying Allies project in the context of my research on Positive Space Campaigns. The projects were quite similar as they were based in anti-homophobia work and drew on some similar kinds of activities, but I was curious to see if there were any differences between an “Identifying Allies” project and a “Positive Space Campaign.”

All of the interviews were conducted between July and September of 2004. The first four interviews were conducted in person in the faculty or staff offices of each interviewee. The fifth interview with Lisa Seymour was conducted by telephone, as we were unable to schedule an interview face-to-face. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed. Interview participants were given the option to review transcripts and to make any changes or edits as they saw fit. Four of the interview participants elected to review the transcripts. Only two participants made any edits or changes to the transcript and none of these changes was substantive.

The interviews engaged me in conversations about experiences of organizing anti-homophobia work on different university campuses. This was important both because it allowed for the opportunity to draw on the resources and learning experiences from other campuses and
because it contributed to interconnections between various campus-based organizing efforts. In fact, I provide so much detail about the creation of the Positive Space Campaign at Brock intentionally because some readers might be other organizers looking for information about starting a similar kind of Campaign. My methodology of participatory action research allowed me to combine my roles as both researcher and activist by using the interviews to share knowledge and facilitate further linkages between those involved in Positive Space and those involved in related organizing on Canadian campuses.

**Positive Space Campaign Organizing at Brock**

The Positive Space Committee grew over the months that we did our organizing. As mentioned above, the Committee began with four individuals. In April 2004 we were joined by an Assistant Professor in the Humanities, who helped to diversify the committee’s gender representation. By May, we were also joined by the President of Brock Pride (the student club on campus for gay, queer, questioning, bi, lesbian, trans and two-spirited students and Brock community members) and by another active Brock student leader. Yet another Brock student leader would join us by the end of the summer. Later that summer, we were also joined by the Brock Harassment Prevention Officer, who was newly hired into a new full-time position. The Harassment Prevention Officer was keen to support the Positive Space Campaign, and it was the hope of the Committee that eventually the Campaign would fall under her office, which occurred by the end of the spring 2005.

In an online document available through the University of Toronto, there are suggestions for creating a Positive Space Campaign on a university campus (LGBTQ Resources and Programs 2003). This document served as a guide for our committee as we adopted the goals set
out by the University of Toronto and relied on some of their materials as a basis for our own materials. One of the suggestions made in the document is that a committee be organized and comprised of students, staff and faculty.

In later interviews with Jude Tate, the Coordinator of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer Resources and Programs at the University of Toronto, and David Rayside, a professor of Political Science and Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto, it was recommended quite strongly that a Positive Space Committee needed to be composed of students, staff and faculty in order to access all of the levels of organization on campus. It was also suggested that the Committee be strategically made up of people of a variety of sexual orientations and gender identities including people who identified as heterosexual allies who could rally alongside queer activists on campus.

Brock’s Positive Space Committee represented a mix of student, staff and faculty on campus. It also included a mix of queer and straight people. The Committee was composed of more women than men, all of whom, (although I did not ask them to self-identify racially), appeared to be white.

The Committee met every two to four weeks, beginning in April of 2004. Once the Positive Space Committee began to meet regularly, we were able to more fully establish the goals. As mentioned, after some discussion, the Committee adopted the goals set out by the University of Toronto’s Positive Space Campaign, listed below:

- To create a campus that is free of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- To allow all students to feel included and welcome in their campus setting so that they may focus their energies toward academic objectives as well as partake in
campus life and co-curricular activities.

- To allow all members of the campus community to feel welcome and included in order to create a comfortable work space.
- To rid the campus of fear and disapproval of sexual/gender diversity.
- To encourage inclusion of LGBTQ issues and histories in curriculum, course offerings, and research opportunities. (LGBTQ Resources and Programs 2003)

These goals inspired the subsequent forms of action taken by the Committee. Most obviously, they inspired the decision to make workshops the focus of the Campaign. Workshops involved exercises and discussions, which, it was hoped, would begin to move toward a less discriminatory and more inclusive campus.

Workshops were always facilitated by two members of the Positive Space Committee and the materials used were based on those provided by Centennial College’s Campaign with some minor additions and deletions inspired by other materials that Committee members had utilized before. Facilitators began the workshops by outlining the goals of the Positive Space Campaign and establishing the ground rules for the two-hour sessions. It was explained that the workshop space was one which encouraged questions about sexual and gender diversity, but which also asked that participants be cognizant of the people around them and, despite potential disagreements amongst participants, be welcoming and inclusive of other people in the room. Participants were then given a mix and match ‘LGBTQ Definitions’ exercise sheet (see Appendix C) which listed various terms about sexual and gender identities. Following this, participants were divided into small groups for an exercise called “Myths about LGBTQ People” (see Appendix D) which included discussing statements such as “Bisexuals are all sex fiends, they’ll do it with anyone.”

The workshop then explored issues of privilege and power. The ‘Privilege Checklist’
exercise (see Appendix E) used for this activity was adapted from Peggy MacIntosh’s ‘White Privilege’ checklist commonly used in anti-oppression work. A list of statements such as “I can be confident that I will not be harassed in the washroom that I choose to use” required participants to consider a variety of situations in which they may or may not be privileged.

Next, participants were put into small groups and provided with a case study of a scenario dealing with an LGBTQ issue in a campus-based context and asked to come up with possible responses to the situation outlined. Facilitators tried to tailor case scenarios to the workshop group. If, for example, a number of participants were Teaching Assistants, then facilitators could use a hypothetical case scenario which involved a T.A. so that the exercise might have more practical use for those workshop participants to build tools around how to deal with discrimination. For example, one of the case scenarios, borrowed and adapted from the University of British Columbia’s Positive Space Campaign, went as follows:

Asha is a T.A. for an undergraduate course. She attends all the classes and runs a tutorial group once a week. Until recently, the course was going really well. She had a good working relationship with the students and the professor. However, in the last class, the professor made several homophobic slurs and passed them off as jokes. A few of the students chuckled but others looked uncomfortable. Asha noticed that the class was much quieter than usual afterwards. She has her tutorial group tonight and is wondering if she should address the professor’s comments.

Participants were organized into small groups to address case scenarios and asked to come up
with possible solutions. Each group was then asked to present their ideas to the larger group. Other participants were then asked to contribute any additional ideas. The use of case scenarios it was hoped, would provide an opportunity to explore strategies that participants could use elsewhere on campus to confront homophobia and heteronormativity, thereby contributing to the creation of Positive Space and in this way contribute to the goals of the Campaign.

The workshop finished with an exercise adapted from Centennial College called ‘Beyond Tolerance’ (see Appendix F) where a list of statements such as “I feel comfortable with LGBTQ professors talking about their sexual orientation in class” were reviewed and participants were asked to rate their comfort level with the statement on a scale of one to five. This was a self-reflective exercise and was followed by a conversation between facilitators and participants about the importance of considering what it means to post a Positive Space card or button in living, working or studying spaces. Here, facilitators wanted to highlight that workshop participants who wished to identify their spaces as Positive Space should think carefully about the related responsibility. Participants were then invited to take Positive Space buttons (see Appendix G) or cards (see Appendix H) to post in their working, living or studying spaces to indicate to others that they were contributing to the creation of spaces that welcomed sexual and gender diversity. They were then asked to complete an evaluation (see Appendix I) before they left the workshop.

Providing workshops required that the Campaign be advertised to the university community. During the summer, the Committee designed an information flyer that borrowed heavily from those produced by the University of Toronto and Centennial College. Brock’s flyer included ten questions that the Committee anticipated would be asked about the Campaign, such as “What is the purpose of this campaign?” and “Will a card on my door or a pin on my backpack
make people think I’m lesbian, gay, bi, trans, two-spirited queer or questioning?" as well as information about how to get involved in the Campaign.

The Positive Space Campaign was launched during the first week of September 2004, in coordination with Orientation Week. Volunteers from the Committee sat at a table during Clubs Day, where a variety of clubs, organizations and university services set up tables to encourage new students to browse and get informed about what they could get involved with in the coming year. The Positive Space Campaign table was set up next to the Brock Pride table and very close to the Student Development Centre’s table. During Clubs Day, the Committee distributed the flyers and invited interested people to sign up for Positive Space workshops. There was a fair amount of interest in the Campaign and approximately twenty people signed up to attend a Positive Space workshop.

During the summer organizational meetings, the Positive Space Committee decided to create a few additional materials beyond the flyer. While it had already been decided that only individuals who attended a Positive Space workshop would be offered Positive Space buttons and cards that had the Brock University Positive Space logo on them, in an effort to jumpstart greater visibility for sexual and gender diversity on campus, the Committee also designed a “B U: Celebrate Diversity” button (see Appendix J), that was widely distributed to anyone who wanted one. Many of the “B U: Celebrate Diversity” buttons were in fact attached to the Positive Space flyers. The Committee also produced large 17"x11" posters (see Appendix K) which were hung around the campus in October. The poster announced the Campaign and encouraged people to register for workshops.

In the fall of 2004, the Committee also created a Positive Space website, which included
all of the information from the original flyer, as well as updated information about registering for Positive Space workshops. Other organizations and departments on campus, such as the Student Development Centre and Brock Pride, provided links from their websites to the Positive Space website. Additional visibility for the Campaign occurred when David Atkinson, the President of the University, responded positively to a request to issue an open letter to all members of the Brock University community, encouraging people to get involved in the Campaign. The letter, under the heading “Brock University Positive Space Campaign” was published October 20, 2004, in Brock News a biweekly newsletter for faculty and staff. To have the President of the University respond so positively to the Campaign’s efforts was viewed as a significant success by members of the Committee, who interpreted this as a sign of institutional support for the Campaign.

During the fall semester of 2004, eight workshops were offered to the students, staff and faculty at Brock University. My research covered the launch of the Campaign and the workshops that were offered during the fall semester. Workshops continued to be offered during the winter semester and the Campaign still continues at the time of this writing. Attendance at the workshops ranged from five to thirty-two participants. By the end of the 2004/2005 academic year, over 110 people had attended a workshop.

The methodology of participatory action research, which involved a collective effort, self-reflection and social change, was well suited methodology to this research. It allowed me to act in a dual capacity as a researcher and an activist engaged directly in the organizing efforts of the Positive Space Committee and simultaneously researching those efforts. It was exciting to be so directly involved in the Campaign, which offered a number of rich experiences from which to
draw for my analysis. In the following chapter, I use a number of examples from the Campaign to examine the extent and ways in which the Brock Positive Space Campaign attempted to challenge dominant notions of sex, gender and sexuality as well as homophobia. I am particularly interested in the extent and ways in which the activities of the Positive Space Campaign disrupted heterosexual space and to what extent this and other Positive Space Campaigns are ‘queering’ space by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space that fulfills the goals of the Campaign.
CHAPTER THREE – DISRUPTING HETEROSEXUAL SPACE(S)?

The Brock Positive Space Campaign encouraged the university community to increase the number of welcoming and inclusive spaces for sexual and gender diversity. In this chapter, my analysis draws on queer theory and the geography literature on sexuality and space to argue that the Campaign marks an attempt to challenge dominant heteronormative understandings of gender, sex and sexuality and to disrupt heterosexual campus space. First, however, I want to use my interviews to discuss how the Brock Campaign was similar to several differently labelled campaigns on other campuses.

Naming Campaigns

During my interviews with individuals on other university and college campuses, interviewees reflected on the use of the words ‘positive space’ versus ‘safe space’ used in the different names of the campaigns and projects. The title ‘Positive Space Campaign’ was used at both the University of Toronto and Centennial College, while the title ‘Identifying Allies: A Safe Space Program’ was used at the University of Manitoba. As Guelph did not have a centralized campaign or program, they used neither of these, although the Human Rights and Equity Office has a program called ‘Project Vision’. The University of Manitoba invoked ‘safe’ in their Program title and on their distribution materials, while the University of Guelph used the term ‘safe’ on buttons, which were distributed on campus. Of the five universities in this study (including Brock), only the University of Manitoba uses ‘safe’ or ‘ally’ in the name of its campaign, but others that were not part of this study, such as Carleton University, McMaster University and Concordia University, also use the term ‘ally’.

Initially, I suspected that the aims of a ‘Safe Space Program’, a term that appears to be
more common in the United States, might be slightly different from the aims of a ‘Positive Space Campaign’. Organizers who use the language of ‘Positive Space’ were keen to distinguish this from the language of ‘Safe Space’ because they were critical of what it meant to promote a sense of safety on campus that could not (or should not) be promised. As Jude Tate, the Coordinator of LGBTQ Resources and Programs at the University of Toronto, explains,

I think the language ‘Positive Space’ is brilliant. It doesn’t mean that it’s safe. It doesn’t mean that we can protect you because no one can. There’s no such thing, in my view, as a safe place. (personal interview, July 23, 2004)

Thus, Tate argues that the use of the word “safe” was a claim to a kind of safety that could not be granted or guaranteed. Barry Townsend, employee at the University of Guelph, reiterates this point:

I think sometimes the distinction between the ‘Safe Space’ and the ‘Positive Space’, people treat it as a major distinction, but I don’t know that it is a major distinction . . . Yeah, I guess I’ve often wondered what is the difference between a Positive Space and a Safe Space. And in both cases, when you’re putting up the sign, you’re trying to communicate to people that this is a place that embraces queer people. Whether you label it as “safe”, nothing is ever truly safe, I don’t know that anything is ever truly safe in a social environment. But you’re trying to say that you’re endorsing queer people here and that they would be accepted, welcomed and embraced. And I think both labels try to
communicate that meaning. (personal interview, August 24, 2004)

As David Rayside, professor of Political Science and Sexual Diversity Studies at the University of Toronto, argues, perhaps some kinds of intellectual safety are not appropriate for a university campus. He argues that universities should be a place where ideas are challenged and should not be cocoons of intellectual safety:

I think the word “safe” gets overused on campus . . . I think confronting ideas that make you feel uncomfortable is part of what everyone should go through [during university]. And I think if they’ve never been . . . made to feel uncomfortable, then there’s something seriously wrong. . . . On the other hand, it’s completely inappropriate, on a university campus, or anywhere else, that people are exposed to sexual harassment or harassment based on any other dimension of difference or that they’re physically at risk. But the language of safety can very easily be marshalled to suggest that what we’re creating here is a whole bunch of little cocoons . . . it would be extraordinarily arrogant for anyone like me to put a sticker up on my door suggesting that this was a safe space. (personal interview, September 15, 2004)

Interestingly even the single campus (in my research) that used the term ‘safe’ suggested that this was for pragmatic reasons of funding rather than preference. Lisa Seymour explains that the use of ‘safe’ at the University of Manitoba was related to their application for criminal justice funding from the Justice Ministry:
'Safe' is a much different thing for us... The application was all about prevention, safety strategies, the whole thing. So quite frankly, we thought it was strategic to use that word. 
... So I think we might have actually been more apt to go with "positive" except for the funding. And the [advisory] group kind of liked the idea of having vision, and so the vision would be of safety. But we kind of struggled with what are you saying you’re really providing to people and people can decide for themselves about safety... positive felt more like an affirmation of something rather than an endorsement. But we did ultimately go for safe because of funding. (personal interview, October 1, 2004)

The University of Manitoba also used the expression ‘ally’ in the title of their project. According to Brock’s Positive Space materials, an ‘ally’ is defined as a member of an historically more powerful group who stands up against prejudice aimed at less powerful groups. The organizers at the University of Manitoba thought they could push this definition of ‘ally’ further to encompass a broader spectrum of people. As Lisa Seymour explained,

We rethought it, and we thought couldn’t a gay man be an ally to a lesbian? And couldn’t a transgender person be an ally to a two-spirited person? Couldn’t someone who’s been out awhile be an ally to someone who hasn’t been out? What about skin colour? What about class? And so within that group there were so many differences that there would still need to be alliances within the group... That you could be a straight ally, but you could also be an LGBTT ally. And we also knew that if this at all, on our campus, was perceived as people’s coming out, that people would not get involved because of the
safety reasons. But we also knew that it could be just like a Gay-Straight Alliance, it could be the way that some people get to the meeting, if that makes any sense. So you could put that up, and you could be viewed as possibly a straight ally and not be out. And maybe you were a straight ally. Or maybe you were questioning. (personal interview, October 1, 2004)

The use of ‘ally’ for the organizers at the University of Manitoba was partly an attempt to create visibility on a campus that, according to a study conducted by Dale Smith (co-founder of “Identifying Allies”) was very homophobic while simultaneously maintaining ‘safe’ spaces for people not necessarily comfortable ‘outing’ themselves on campus.

The concern articulated by Lisa Seymour at the University of Manitoba that inclusion in the Campaign might ‘out’ people on campus was also expressed on the University of Toronto, Centennial College and Brock University flyers. For example, included in the list of questions on each school’s Campaign flyer was a question similar to the one on Brock’s flyer: “Will a card on my door or a pin on my backpack make people think I’m lesbian, gay, bi, trans, two-spirited, queer or questioning?” Brock’s reply to this question went as follows:

One of the goals of this campaign is to make that question irrelevant. Straight people are being encouraged to take up these issues alongside members of the LGBTQ communities, and they are doing so in greater and more visible numbers. True, some people still assume that those who talk supportively of sexual diversity are themselves lesbian, gay, bi, trans, two-spirited, queer or questioning. This is often not the case. Also, this campaign asks
people to think about why such labels make people uneasy. Being thought of as
“different” is still a big deal for many, evoking discomfort and fear. The Positive Space
Campaign wants to challenge that. This campaign is for everyone who is, or wants to be,
LGBTQ positive.

Here, it is explained that involvement in the Campaign might imply an LGBTQ identity to some.
The concern that a person might be identified as queer because of their association with the
Campaign (or related program) and the fear and anxiety that came with it only continues to
highlight the importance of such Campaigns. That the Campaign aimed to make this question
irrelevant is indicative of the kind of ‘queer space’ possibilities that I imagine and which I will
return to in Chapter Four.

While discussions with interviewees about naming campaigns illuminated some of the
rationale behind the differences in terminology, I did not in fact find any substantial differences
in the aims or manifestations of the Safe Space and Positive Space Campaigns. Perhaps a more
in-depth examination of these Campaigns in Canada would reveal differences that could not be
uncovered with the small number of universities used in this study. While there continue to be
differences of opinion around ‘safe’ and ‘positive’ for a choice of language, the underlying
understanding of each of the Campaigns is similar. What seemed to be emphasized by everyone
interviewed was that these campaigns were aimed at starting conversations about sexual and
gender diversity on campus and thereby, it was hoped, making sexual and gender diversity more
visible and challenging discrimination.
Implementing a Positive Space Campaign at Brock

Elsewhere I outline some of the trajectories of Positive Space and related campaigns (Appendix A). Here, I return to the Brock Campaign in particular to develop the argument that Positive Space Campaigns challenge heteronormativity and can disrupt heterosexual space through an analysis of a number of key activities and materials of Brock’s Positive Space Campaign, notably the production of Campaign materials, workshops, poster design efforts and the Campaign’s launch in Orientation Week.

i) The Politics of Language and Positive Space Campaign Materials

Queer theory challenges dominant understandings of sex, gender and sexuality by pointing to sexual and gender identities that do not fit normative constructions. As previously discussed for example, Butler disrupts the dominant gender category of woman by challenging the traditional assumption that part of being a woman includes a sexual and emotional attraction to men, who are the ‘opposite’ sex. Instead, Butler argues that an individual’s sex, gender, and sexuality are not necessarily linked or related in ways posited by dominant constructions. By troubling dominant understandings and constructions of sex, gender and sexuality, queer theory offers an analytical basis for examining the effort of the Brock University Positive Space Campaign to challenge homophobia and heteronormativity.

One of the initial tasks of the Positive Space Committee involved coming to some consensus regarding the language about sexual and gender diversity that would be used by the Campaign and how this language would be reflected in its publicity materials. The Committee wanted to ensure that it was clear that this Campaign was about creating visibility and support for sexual and gender diversity and wanted to be explicit about what this could include. Here I
describe and analyze the challenges faced by the Campaign as it worked to destabilize heteronormativity.

While it was clear from the first Committee discussions of language that there was a shared desire to be inclusive in Campaign materials of as many sexual and gender identities as possible, there was also a sense among the members of the Committee that the acronym ‘LGBTTTTIQQ’ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning) that I had used in my ethics proposal was far too long, and perhaps somewhat farcical. The Committee also came to the consensus that to use ‘queer’ as an umbrella term for the Campaign would be problematic, as not all members of LGBTTTTIQQ communities identify with the term ‘queer’.

After some discussion, the Committee settled on the acronym ‘LGBTQ’, the same acronym currently used by the Positive Space Campaigns at University of Toronto and Centennial College. Both the University of Toronto and Centennial College Campaigns use ‘LGBTQ’ to mean ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer’, however our ‘LGBTQ’ at Brock was intended to represent ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Two-Spirited, Queer and Questioning’. This different list emerged in part from Committee discussions, and in part from my interviews with other Campaign organizers.

The decision of the Brock Committee to include two-spirited was prompted by my discussion of the inclusion of two-spirited in the University of Manitoba Project. I had become familiar with this when I attended a workshop about the Manitoba Project at the University of Western Ontario. Later during my interview with Lisa Seymour, I learned that the inclusion of ‘two-spirited’ in the University of Manitoba’s “Identifying Allies” program was the result of a
long period of discussion and was intended to reflect the Aboriginal presence at the University of
Manitoba. When I shared the Manitoba experience with the Brock Committee, it was agreed that
it was important to make the links with the Aboriginal population on Brock’s campus as well.
The decision of the Brock Committee was that one ‘T’ would be used to represent both trans and
two-spirited. While the Brock Committee was keen to be inclusive in this way, there was not a
lot of discussion around issues of race and racism. That the University of Manitoba used two
‘T’s may have reflected greater engagement with an Aboriginal presence and perhaps a deeper
grappling with issues of race more generally.

The Brock Committee also decided that one ‘Q’ would be used to represent both ‘queer’
and ‘questioning’. ‘Questioning’ was thought by the Committee to be particularly important in
the setting of the university campus where many might be exploring their sexuality or
questioning their identity.

The Brock Positive Space Committee also decided to use ‘bi’ rather than the term
‘bisexual’ used by the University of Toronto and Centennial College. The Committee chose the
term ‘bi’ to de-emphasize the ‘sexual’ part of the identity, a move deemed important because
LGBTQ people are often problematically stereotyped as promiscuous and overly sexual by critics
inside and outside queer LGBTQ communities.

Within broader queer movement organizing, the list of queer identities continues to
expand. For example, the identity of intersex has at times been asserted within queer politics.
The Brock Campaign however, did not include the category of “intersex” in its publicity
materials despite the fact that this identity was discussed in Committee meetings and in
workshops. It was decided by the Committee that the ‘queer’ in LGBTQ could be inclusive of all
identities not otherwise named in the ‘LGBTQ’ list.

The use of the original LGBTQ acronym with the explicit expansion of its meanings was, as far as I know, unique to the Brock Campaign. The expansion reflected both the perceptions of the Brock Committee of the particular features of the Brock community as well as the timing of the Committee. The Brock Campaign in 2004 perhaps reflected an evolving queer politics in its attempt to include a wider spectrum of sexual/gender identities than earlier Campaigns on other campuses.

The Committee used ‘LGBTQ’ as a short form in workshops and in the text of the flyer, and used the longer list of ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Two-Spirited, Queer and Questioning’ on the Campaign posters, cards and on the front of the flyer. It was felt by Committee members that it was important to use the complete words to help raise awareness of the issues addressed by the Campaign, as ‘LGBTQ’ might not be an acronym with which everyone on campus would be familiar.

Toward the end of the summer, the Committee was gearing up for the launch of the Positive Space Campaign. The Committee needed to publish the flyer in time for Orientation Week. After a series of unfortunate miscommunications, a rough version of the flyer was accidentally sent to the publisher without the last changes or edits. The draft version of the flyer which was circulated to the Committee was full of errors, the most glaring of which was front and centre on the flyer. The text read ‘Lesbian Gay Bisexual Two-Spirited Questioning’ rather than the agreed upon language of ‘Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Two-Spirited Queer Questioning’. There were some frantic last-minute and late-night organizing efforts, and thankfully, the edits were made to the flyer in time for it to go to printing.
The potential error highlighted for me the significance of our Committee discussions about the list of sexual and gender identities that were to be included in Campaign materials. In my journal, I asked myself why it was that this potential mistake made me so uncomfortable. Upon further reflection, I considered that my reactions were perhaps indicative of my sense of currents within wider queer organizing in Canada in which some identities, such as lesbian and gay, are more well recognized and have more currency than others (such as two-spirited). While it is certainly problematic to marginalize any identity, I noted in my journal that I would have been less anxious about the mistake if it had read “Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer”, where trans and queer were included and two-spirited and questioning were not. Despite my own desire to be inclusive of all identities, I still gave some identities more priority than others. This was also a reflection of trends in current language use. The incident of the incorrect flyer clarified for me some of my own biases in my positioning as a participatory action researcher on a Positive Space Campaign.

I believe that my own struggles and those of the Committee over language use reflected a wider source of tension in queer organizing which tries at once to be inclusive of a range of sexual and gender identities while also trying to maintain a coherent and effective political unity. The history of queer organizing in Canada is evidence of this, as what was once gay organizing then became gay and lesbian organizing, and later lesbian, bisexual and gay (lesbigay) organizing (Jagose 1996b). This list continues to expand, although in more recent years as I have mentioned, the term ‘queer’ has emerged as an umbrella term for the wider range of identities that are potentially linked in coalition even while this term is felt to be too constraining by many.

One of the ways that the Brock Committee tried to address this tension was in the
workshop setting where, for instance, facilitators sought opportunities to bring attention to identities beyond LGBTQ such as intersex and to emphasize the historically specific and fluid dynamics of identity categories (the challenges of this are described below). Ultimately however, the Committee recognized that no matter how hard we tried to be inclusive of all sexual and gender identities, some would always be left out. As soon as categories are constructed, they inevitably exclude others revealing something about the limitations of a politics of identity.

**ii) Defining and Deconstructing Sexual and Gender Diversity in Positive Space Workshops**

Workshops were designed by the Positive Space Committee to work toward the goal of raising the visibility of sexual and gender diversity as a starting point for broader goals of creating more spaces and challenging discrimination. In what follows, I analyze some of the challenges involved in deconstructing dominant notions of sex, gender and sexuality in the workshop setting by discussing how some of the materials were used and received by workshop facilitators and participants. The discussion illuminates limitations and possibilities in challenging heteronormativity.

As mentioned, an important part of the workshops involved familiarizing participants with the broad range of sexual and gender identities. The first activity in the workshops was the ‘LGBTQ Definitions’ sheet (see Appendix C) which was a mix and match exercise to get participants to think through, and ask questions about vocabulary. It also worked as an icebreaker to try and make participants feel comfortable around the workshop language. These definitions were based on a similar exercise from the Centennial College’s Positive Space workshops, but had been edited by Brock’s Committee. As a facilitator, it was fairly easy to assess how familiar workshop participants were with the definitions by simply having
conversations with participants about the words. Participants were encouraged to ask about unfamiliar terminology and many seemed happy to do so. Two of the terms listed on the ‘LGBTQ Definitions’ sheet were ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ which were defined as follows:

**Sex:** A biological distinction referring to whether a person is female, male or intersex.

**Gender:** Behaviour, personality, dress, choice of work, etc. that the dominant society traditionally attributes to, or associates with, biological sex; the cultural expectations of femininity and masculinity.

While these definitions did not immediately strike the Committee as problematic and the materials had been used elsewhere, the challenges of presenting such definitions began to be evident to me in the course of workshop facilitations. The workshop sheet in this case continued to set up a sex/gender = biology/culture dichotomy despite queer theorizing that sees both ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ as constructed and that challenges binaries such as male/female as insufficiently inclusive of all gender identities. While the definition of sex included on the sheet did include the category of ‘intersex’ which challenged the binary of sex somewhat, the definition of gender reintroduced a binary of masculinity/femininity.

From the point of view of the Committee and workshop facilitators, the intention was to explore these definitions so that participants could first understand how sex and gender have been defined according to a biology/culture opposition and then could move on to examine some of the limitations of these definitions thereby (it was hoped), prompting a critical challenge to dominant constructions. At times during workshop facilitation however, it proved difficult to present these definitions of sex and gender to a group of participants to whom these definitions
were new, and then to deconstruct those same definitions. The strength of dominant understandings of previously learned dichotomous gender, sex and sexuality categories worked against the possibility of exploring more deeply some of the more complex theoretical approaches to queer theorizing around the deconstruction of binaries of gender, sex and sexuality in the context of the workshop.

As mentioned, the mix and match ‘LGBTQ Definitions’ sheet also presented definitions for the various identities that fall under ‘LGBTQ’. For example, the definition provided for ‘lesbian’ is “A woman whose primary sexual, emotional, spiritual and intellectual attraction is to another woman.” Again, however, the defining exercise was revealed as fraught as facilitators tried to simultaneously provide a working understanding of LGBTQ identities through the definitions exercise, while emphasizing that the definitions provided were not fixed and therefore open to change and that while some people understood their own identities as fluid and changing, others experienced these as fixed and stable.

From the perspective of workshop facilitators, the ‘LGBTQ Definitions’ sheet was to function as a basis for initiating conversations about sexual and gender diversity, which it was hoped would lead to a critical challenge of dominant constructions. At times, however, it appeared to me that some of the discussion threatened to reinforce notions of deviancy, and to marginalize some identities. My concerns were prompted in particular by the fact that most of the discussions that occurred in this exercise centred around the three terms of transgender, transsexual and two-spirited, all listed on the ‘LGBTQ Definitions’ sheet. Questions about trans identities opened up conversations about the words ‘trans’, ‘transgender’ or ‘transsexual’. As discussed, the Committee used ‘trans’ in the publicity materials to include both transgender and
transsexual identities. This was distinct from the Positive Space Campaigns at the University of Toronto and Centennial College, who both used ‘transgendered’ in their materials. Brock’s use of ‘trans’ was a reflection of more current trends in language and an attempt to be more inclusive of trans/transgender/transsexual identities. The ‘LGBTQ Definitions’ sheet however distinguished between transgender and transsexual and were defined as follows:

transgender: The umbrella term used to include all people who cross gender lines, including but not exclusive to transsexuals, transvestites, drag queens, drag kings, and cross-dressers.

transsexual: A person assigned by the anatomical structure of the body to one sex, but who feels and wishes to function as a member of the opposite sex. Some choose to undergo sex reassignment surgery to change their bodies to match the sex that they feel they really are.

These in turn led to discussions about who might claim which identity depending on body modification and surgeries, and about how trans bodies may exist in varying degrees of transition.

During these discussions, I wondered at times whether the absence of any trans people on the Positive Space Committee and in the development of workshop materials was problematic in the sense that discussion took place without a trans representative. While the Committee saw trans visibility and awareness as important, we were reluctant to simply find a ‘token transperson’ to fill the void. We did make a point of seeking out trans resources, such as Transgendered of Niagara, but this connection was not very deep.

I was aware of and shared concerns that I had heard expressed by other activists working
in educational settings about the direction of workshop discussions about trans identities and transphobia, for example, that efforts to introduce trans issues can often result in a series of "freakshow" questions from the audience or participants about technical aspects of trans surgeries and body parts, which may undermine attempts to focus more critically on transphobia and serve to re-stigmatize trans identities. In my experience as a facilitator, while questions about trans identities (particularly about the difference between transgender and transsexual) were common, discussions around trans issues remained respectful. Sometimes, as a facilitator, I shared some of the concerns that I had heard with participants to provide some more nuance to discussions around terminology.

Questions also arose around the terminology of 'two-spirited', which was the least commonly recognized term by workshop participants. The definition that was provided during the workshop emerged from pre-existing materials from other campuses and Committee meetings, and was defined as follows:

**two-spirited:** A term used by members of First Nations and Aboriginal communities which can mean either or both: a) a person who has same-sex attractions, or b) a person who identifies as being either of mixed gender or as a gender that differs from their biological sex.

Much workshop discussion occurred around the history of the term and facilitators worked to emphasize that 'two-spirited' covers a variety of terms which have different uses and meanings in various First Nations communities. Workshop facilitators also used discussions about this term to emphasize that understandings of gender/sexuality are culturally variable.
As with the discussions of trans issues however, discussions around two-spirited raised some concerns for me insofar as all of the workshop facilitators were white and none identified as First Nations or Aboriginal. During the first workshop offered, one of the participants identified herself as Aboriginal and contributed substantially to the workshop by providing a more concrete understanding of the history and context of the term ‘two-spirited’ to the group. In later workshops, I found that facilitators (myself included) drew heavily on her accounts of two-spirited in our discussions of the term. This always made me uncomfortable in some ways because of the immediate tokenism that occurred. While I trusted this participant’s account of two-spirited and believed her to be a reliable source of knowledge, I was concerned that instead of taking her account of two-spirited as a cue for further research to increase our knowledge-base around the term, we relied entirely on her explanation.

I am reminded of Gloria Anzaldúa’s critique of queer theory and how it does not yet adequately address issues of race. While the Committee had followed the University of Manitoba’s model of including two-spirited, this did not expand to a broader consideration of how sex/gender/sexuality articulated with race/ethnicity beyond this example. The lack of any explicit discussions of race and racism (or class/classism, among other issues) limited the critical potential of the workshops.

While heteronormativity was challenged during workshops which were aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of sexual and gender identities, the extent of this challenge was limited by the continued perpetuation of heteronormative understandings of sex, gender and sexuality. Further, the depth of discussion in the workshops depended on the composition of the group attending a workshop. If a group had a firm grasp, for example, of most or all of the
definitions on the initial mix and match worksheet, this opened up the opportunity to challenge these definitions and to discuss the categories of sex, gender and sexuality in more depth.

We continued to have discussions about these kinds of issues in committee meetings where facilitators (who were all Committee members) shared how well each of the activities were working. While Campaign materials and workshops had limitations nevertheless, these materials and Positive Space workshops prompted discussions around LGBTQ issues. They represented a focussed and strategic intervention aimed at increasing visibility and awareness of sexual and gender diversity and disrupting heteronormativity. From the point of view of the Committee, engaging the university community in critical discussions of sex/gender/sexuality was an important starting point for challenging dominant constructions of gender, sex and sexuality. In the view of the Committee, this was a critical first step toward the larger goal of increasing the visibility and number of welcoming and supportive spaces for sexual and gender diversity. This in turn was understood as part of working toward a campus free of discrimination.

**Spatiality and the Positive Space Campaign**

In considering more carefully the issues raised by the spatiality of Positive Space or related campaigns, the work of Gill Valentine and other geographers on sexuality and space is extremely useful. As discussed earlier, Valentine argues that so-called public spaces are heterosexual spaces, and that for individuals who identify as queer, these spaces can be oppressive. The “spatial supremacy of heterosexuality” is linked to a homophobic and heteronormative culture that enforces rigid understandings of sexuality and thus constrains the experiences of LGBTQ people (Valentine 1993b: 410).
The Positive Space Campaign at Brock worked with an explicit understanding that heterosexuality (and the normative control that heterosexuality has on gender identity and expression) is the predominant display of sexuality on the university campus. The Positive Space Campaign aimed to make visible and create new spaces for other expressions of sex, gender and sexuality. I want to discuss the kinds of spaces that the Campaign opened up and the extent to which it represented a spatial intervention that disrupted spatialized heteronormativity. I return to some of the activities of the Brock Positive Space Campaign to pursue these issues.

**i) Posting Positive Space Campaign Materials**

The Positive Space Campaign created several different kinds of publicity materials. As these were distributed and posted across campus, they became a visible part of campus space. In the case of posters, for example, these were on the walls all over Brock University advertising the Campaign and providing information about upcoming workshops. The Positive Space cards and buttons given to individuals who had attended workshops, were posted on office doors or personal effects. Positive Space Campaign flyers, which provided more substantial information about the Campaign, were also available around campus, for example, in information kiosks and the front desk of the residences.

The distribution and posting of Campaign materials represented a deliberate effort on the part of the Committee to create visibility around sexual and gender diversity. The presence of all of these materials marking campus spaces with the words “Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Two-Spirited Queer Questioning”, and the symbol of the rainbow pride flag can be analyzed in terms of spatialization. The placement of these materials in hallways, offices and residences, I argue, not only contributed dramatically to visibility but worked to begin a disruption of heterosexual
campus space. In important ways, the simple presence of Positive Space markers around campus began to disrupt the dominance of heteronormativity simply by drawing attention to the sexual and gender identities outside of dominant categories.

One important example of a project that has used visual cues to mark spaces as 'queer' was one conducted in 1994 by a group called the REPOhistory Collective. The Collective embarked on a project called "The Queer Spaces Sign Project" in which a group of artists, educators, and activists in New York City installed nine triangular street signs on lamp posts in a variety of locations, marking these locations as 'queer spaces'. Each sign provided information about the importance of that location, bringing about awareness and visibility to an otherwise invisible and unknown history.

One such example was Queer Spaces installation #5 which was located on a lamppost near 30 Charlton Street which read:

The Daughters of Bilitis, one of the earliest lesbian political organizations, had offices at 30 Charlton Street for several years, beginning in 1963. Due to the political climate of the era, many members used assumed names to protect their jobs and families. But the very existence of Daughters of Bilitis was a challenge to invisibility. Together with the Mattachine Society, an early gay men's group the Daughters of Bilitis were in the vanguard of pre-Stonewall gay and lesbian organizing. (Hertz, Eisenberg and Knauer 1997: 362)

Other signs marked the spaces of bars, bathhouses, demonstrations, sites of violence, or other
important queer landmarks in the city and as such were “part of a larger movement to make
visible and validate gay and lesbian presence in the city and in public space” (Hertz, Eisenberg

The REPOhistory Collective made a direct strike on so-called public spaces of the street
and marked them as queer. In doing so, they articulated quite clearly that street space is
heterosexualized and heteronormalized unless otherwise marked. Betti-Sue Hertz, Ed Eisenberg
and Lisa Maya Knauer (1997) argue that “the signs proved to be a powerful intervention in the
routine lexicon of the street” (366). The “Queer Spaces” street signs were an effort to disrupt the
heteronormativity of New York City streets.

There is an important parallel to be drawn here between the Queer Spaces project and the
Positive Space Campaign at Brock University. In particular, the Brock University Positive Space
Campaign works as a “powerful intervention in the routine lexicon” of the hallway or other
university space by reminding staff, faculty and students on the campus that not everyone fits into
heteronormative categories of sex, gender and sexuality. While the Positive Space Campaign
posters are not claiming a history nor claiming fixed spaces as queer, they advertise the presence
of a Campaign aimed at transforming the meaning of campus space.

Related to but somewhat distinct from the posters, flyers and cards in terms of their
spatial potential were the Positive Space buttons, which were also distributed to individuals who
had attended workshops. While sometimes buttons, like cards, are stuck into personal bulletin
boards or other static spaces, buttons could also be more mobile, for example, when a person
puts a button on a bag that is carried all over campus, this seems to mark individuals as a
“positive space” no matter where they are. Arguably, the mere presence of such signage begins
to make campus space not only more welcoming in the sense imagined by the Committee, but also represents the beginning of a disruption of heteronormative campus space.

**ii) Clubs Day Tables**

Another example of how Campaign activities transform campus space involved the setting up of a Positive Space Campaign table at Clubs Day during Orientation Week. The Positive Space table together with the neighbouring Brock Pride table took up concrete physical space in a predominantly heteronormative setting thereby providing a place of welcome for sexual and gender diversity and I argue, a disruption of heteronormative campus space by their very presence. I was positioned to observe the reactions of the people walking by in my dual position as both researcher and activist. Some people, familiar with Brock Pride, came by and expressed enthusiasm for the Campaign. Approximately twenty people registered for a workshop or asked for more information about upcoming workshops. Others indicated some interest in the Campaign, by taking a flyer but not engaging in any way with those sitting at the table. As the materials picked up from the Positive Space Campaign and Brock Pride tables moved through space and were picked up and read by passersby.

What is suggested by these responses about the dynamics of space is that there was a negotiation of the space claimed by the two tables. One could enter the space or keep a distance. At the same time, there were more fluid connections across space. This is quite similar to Gill Valentine’s (1995) example of two people’s eyes meeting in a store in recognition of the ‘lesbian music’ played over the speakers and the potential of this “to transgress or destabilize heterosexual space” (1995: 479), transgressions were made between those sitting at the Positive Space table and some of the people walking by through an unspoken (and perhaps invisible to
others) acknowledgement of shared ‘queerness’ in a predominantly heteronormative setting. These connections I argue, suggest some of the more nuanced and complex ways in which the intervention of the Positive Space Campaign and Brock Pride table disrupted heterosexual space in the Clubs Day setting.

While some people entered the space supportive of the tables, some people would come close enough to read the words “Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Two-Spirited Queer Questioning” but then a look of confusion and/or disgust would register on their faces as they glanced at those of us sitting at the table before walking away. Others seemed careful not to approach the table. Flyers picked up at the table became mobile, in a similar way as the buttons mentioned earlier. The tables at Orientation Week provided an intervention into what might otherwise be described as heterosexual space.

**iii) Workshops**

Much of the effort of the Positive Space Campaign, as mentioned, was directed at workshops which were viewed as a way of educating members of campus about sexual and gender diversity. The hope was that after facilitating workshops, participants would contribute to raising the visibility and number of inclusive and positive spaces on campus. Of course the very creation of workshop spaces represented a move toward this goal. Workshops were held in various classrooms around campus. In contrast to the poster ing and Clubs table, which operated in predominantly heterosexualized spaces, the workshops created more closed and bounded physical spaces on campus. As already discussed, the Positive Space Campaign initiated workshops where two facilitators and a group of interested participants came together in a room to discuss LGBTQ issues. In Positive Space workshops, there was an attempt to unpack
dominant constructions of sex, gender and sexuality in order to prompt critical thinking.

The question of how to understand the kind of space created in workshops leads me to consider more carefully their composition and dynamics (as well as their structure and content discussed earlier). In light of the goal of the Positive Space Campaign to increase visibility for sexual and gender diversity, the issue of who attended workshops is significant. Over 110 people attended the workshops. Over half were students, approximately a third were staff and the remainder were faculty. I did not interview participants and so do not have any evidence for why individuals were motivated to attend workshops, but it is not surprising to me that students comprised the largest number of workshop participants. Not only are students the largest population within the university, but students are used to the classroom setting and being participants in a learning environment. Some of the students who attended were student leaders from residence or student organizing and held positions for which workshop attendance is common. Many of the staff who attended workshops participated when workshops were requested by a particular administrative department. Further, staff regularly attend workshops and sessions as a part of their professional development.

I was surprised by how few faculty members had attended workshops because I expected faculty to show an active interest in the issues addressed by the Campaign. I wondered if faculty were reluctant to attend workshops because they were worried that they might be relied upon to actively participate in a workshop because of their role as educators in the university or whether perhaps faculty also felt time restraints which kept them from participating. It is important to note here that when faculty did attend workshops, this began to address one of the goals of the Campaign, which was to encourage inclusion of LGBTQ issues and histories in curriculum,
course offerings, and research opportunities. Perhaps attendance at workshops encouraged those faculty to attend to this goal.

Also of interest to me was the composition of workshops in terms of gender, sexed, racialized, and classed (etc.) positions. I was unable to collect information about the ways in which workshop participants defined themselves. My impression was that some workshop participants identified as queer and some as straight, that workshops included a mix of gender and represented the larger Brock population in terms of race and class in terms of being largely white and middle class.

In terms of the dynamics of the workshops, the goal of the Positive Space Campaign was that these spaces would as far as possible exemplify Positive Space insofar as they would ensure a welcoming and inclusive space. Because I did not conduct formal research on the workshop dynamics through interviews with participants at the workshops, I rely on my own experiences as a facilitator and the experiences of other facilitators as well as the evaluations of participants to assess the degree to which workshops succeeded in creating the kind of space envisioned.

While some participants, including students, staff and faculty, very enthusiastically signed up for workshops, I had not really considered how anxious other workshop participants might be because I was so caught up with my own concern about acting in my role as a workshop facilitator. I did notice that workshop participants often appeared to be nervous at the beginning of workshops, and on more than one occasion, comments after workshops were about how comfortable participants did or did not feel in the workshops.

As workshop facilitators, we found that smaller groups were limiting insofar as there were fewer people contributing to discussions and so fewer ideas were shared amongst the group.
Smaller groups were also difficult to subdivide for small group exercises. At the same time, however, smaller groups had the advantage of an intimacy that could open up discussions in new ways. Larger groups allowed more ideas to be contributed during discussions and more potential for small group exercises but could not offer the same kind of intimacy and participants might be less likely to ask questions than was the case in smaller groups.

Two of the workshops offered during the fall semester were requested by the Office of Finance and the Brock University Student Administrative Council (BUSAC). It was encouraging to have workshops requested by administrative departments and student organizations as this suggested a commitment to the goals of the Campaign either by the group as a whole or by a person in a leadership position. Participants who attended these workshops often commented that they felt comfortable with the group because they were already familiar with their colleagues, unlike some of the participants at the regular workshops who seemed to take a bit longer to feel comfortable in the workshop setting amongst strangers. I wondered if people might be anxious about discussing issues of sexual and gender diversity among their co-workers, especially if there was tension or animosity among the staff. This may have been the case; however, as far as the workshop facilitators could tell, some feedback indicated that these workshops were enjoyed by participants who felt more at ease amongst a group of co-workers with whom they were already familiar. Certainly Positive Space workshops aimed to provide a setting that was welcoming and supportive and encouraging and in all of the workshops that I facilitated, workshop participants seemed to be at ease once the workshop began.

In terms of the dynamics of the workshops, I wondered how the experiences of heterosexual and queer participants might have been different. I could anticipate that some queer
participants might be anxious about feeling compelled to share personal stories or focus on their own experiences as a queer person, as I felt some of this anxiety as a queer facilitator. I also wonder if there might be apprehension on the part of heterosexual participants concerned about issues of privilege that they might not have fully considered and/or a perception that the workshop space was not for them but instead was a space for queer people on campus, despite the Committee’s attempt to reach all members of the university community.

Workshop attendees however, whether they were previously familiar with LGBTQ issues or not seemed to be generally comprised of groups of people who were keenly interested in the core goals of the Positive Space Campaign and of course it was the hope of the Committee that each person would attend a workshop and take the ideas and materials beyond the space of the workshop and begin to spread the ideas and materials of the Positive Space Campaign to other people and spaces. Most workshop participants in fact did take the materials that were offered, and materials began to become visible around campus. The growing number of cards and buttons visible in different campus spaces provides some evidence that the goal of increasing the visibility and number of respectful, supportive, educational and welcoming spaces for LGBTQ students, staff and faculty is being achieved. It is my argument that the visibility of these spaces begins to disrupt heteronormativity on Brock’s campus.

Using examples of the production of Campaign materials, workshops, postering efforts and the Campaign’s launch in Orientation Week, in this chapter I have argued that the Positive Space Campaign not only aims to but does challenge dominant heteronormative understandings of sex, gender and sexuality and increases the number of welcoming and inclusive spaces for sexual and gender diversity. This marks, I suggest, a concrete challenge to and disruption of the
heteronormativity of the campus.

In the following chapter, I explore the politics of Positive Space organizing and consider the Campaign’s ability to ‘queer space’. As I consider the meanings of ‘queer’, I consider the extent to which Positive Space Campaigns may be ‘queering’ space, by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination.
CHAPTER FOUR - THE POLITICS OF POSITIVE SPACE

Positive Space Campaigns aim to challenge dominant heteronormative expressions of sex, gender and sexuality and to create welcoming and supportive spaces for sexual and gender diversity. I have examined some of the limitations and possibilities of this effort in the context of the Brock Positive Space Campaign. In this chapter, I explore some of the broader politics of Positive Space Campaign organizing. I begin with a brief case study of the Safe Space Program launched at the Royal Bank of Canada in September 2004 and explore the response that it received from some members of the religious right. I use the RBC example in order to illustrate some of the hostility which Positive Space Campaigns and related programs have met in Canada, and use this as a starting point for interpreting the apparent acceptance of and lack of organized hostility to the Campaign at Brock, which may be linked to differences between corporate and public spaces. I then consider the extent to which Positive Space Campaigns may be ‘queering’ space, by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination. I conclude by considering future directions for campus Positive Space Campaign organizing.

The RBC’s Safe Space Program

In September 2004, the RBC Rainbow Space Newsletter announced that the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) had launched a Safe Space Program, to “help foster a safe and inclusive environment for GLBT (gay, lesbian bisexual, transgendered) individuals” which was designed to “provide a non-threatening way to send the message that homophobia and hostility will not be tolerated within RBC” (RBC Service Delivery Central Canada 2004). Initiated by a group of employees at the bank, the program was set up for a three month trial period during which time
employees at RBC were invited to display a Safe Space Sticker in their work spaces. Despite the three month trial period outlined by the bank, by October 15, 2004, the Safe Space Program at RBC had been cancelled.

The cancellation was in response to quick and efficient organizing by individuals and groups from the religious right. The movement against the RBC Safe Space Program was led by the Canadian Family Action Coalition (CFAC), a Christian advocacy group, who promote the restoration of “Judeo-Christian moral principles.” The Coalition called “upon all people of faith, good will and commonsense to boycott the Royal Bank beginning October 4th by closing your personal and business accounts and refusing to invest in their misguided morality” (CFAC, 9 Sept. 2004). In an article in the Western Catholic Reporter, 18 October 2004, Charles Moore wrote, “I’m considering switching banks. That is if I can find a financial institution that is prepared to remain neutral in the culture wars” [emphasis added]. The CFAC described the Safe Space Program as a “militant campaign,” that was part of a larger “fanatical trend” (CFAC, 9 Sept. 2004). The boycott attracted national media coverage and the CFAC credited itself for the cancellation of the Safe Space Program at the RBC.

The claim that a financial institution is or should be neutral, and does not in fact already promote conceptions of normative sexuality is challenged by the work of Gill Valentine and others who have pointed to how heterosexuality is perceived as neutral or normal, while expressions of sexuality outside of heterosexuality are considered abnormal. In the case of the RBC Program, it was only when spaces were marked with a Safe Space sticker that they were deemed to be evidence of a “fanatical trend.” The attempt of the Safe Space Campaign to draw attention to the ways in which LGBTQ staff at the RBC may have been working in homophobic
or heteronormative spaces where there was little acceptance of sexual and gender diversity was undermined by the protest and ultimately shut down completely. The RBC experience is a dramatic reminder of how Positive or Safe Space initiatives may be resisted in Canada.

Support For and Challenges to Positive Space Organizing at Brock

Fortunately, the Brock University Positive Space Campaign did not experience the kind of organized hostility that was aimed at the RBC’s Safe Space Program. There was some Committee discussion about whether a few posters were ripped down out of hate or for personal use, and the intent of one or two of the emails received by the Committee was not clear, but overall the Positive Space Campaign at Brock encountered little direct harassment. The activities were unimpeded and as mentioned, public support was garnered from a variety of locations, including a letter from the University President. Even this was somewhat more limited than it might have been.

As mentioned above, early in the Campaign President David Atkinson published a letter to the Brock community in Brock News, the biweekly paper for staff and faculty at Brock. It was important for the Positive Space Committee, in the early stages of the Campaign, to have such visible support from the President. At the same time, this visibility was limited. Although the letter was also supposed to be published in The Brock Press, the weekly student newspaper, for some reason it never was. While I have no evidence that this was an intentional omission, the letter was not published in a place where the student body, the largest constituency of Brock, might read it. In February 2005, unrelated to President Atkinson, a feature article about the Positive Space Campaign was written and published in The Brock Press (Lowry 2005).

Positive Space materials appeared in increasing numbers and people were expressing
interest in workshop attendance. The Committee was generally satisfied with the number of people showing interest in the Campaign and registering for workshops. In the early organizing stages, the Committee did anticipate that the Campaign might be met with some form of resistance. During October 2004, there was a separate yet related outpouring of homophobia on campus.

On the Brock University Student’s Union Discussion Boards, an online discussion forum for Brock students, a Brock student deliberately posted an animated image of the word ‘Islam’ being smashed with a hammer. He posted this in response to another student’s photo of two men kissing in what he claimed was an attempt to make the point that content to which he took offense (i.e. the expression of homosexuality) was allowed to be posted on the message boards, while the expression of anti-Islamic sentiment, which he claimed was equally offensive to him, was banned from the message boards. He argued that he agreed that the image he posted was offensive, but that along with the image that he had posted, that the image of two men kissing should also be removed. Responses supporting both students flooded the discussion boards, but within a few days, the board’s administrator removed the discussion boards entirely. The student who posted the anti-Islamic content was eventually removed from a number of his duties on Brock student organizations by those organizations.

What was relevant about this series of events for the Positive Space Campaign was the debate that emerged over ‘gay rights’ on campus. Strong homophobic opinions from students who supported the student who claimed to have taken offense to the photo of two men kissing were published in the Brock Press student newspaper. Similarly, a number of students also wrote in to condemn the student involved. While all of this was happening, the Positive Space
Campaign was seeking participants to attend workshops.

One student emailed Positive Space to register for a workshop and explained in the email that he intended to share a belief regarding same-sex sexuality. He explained that while he celebrated diversity, he only did so for what he understood to be biological characteristics such as race, for example, but he did not celebrate sexual diversity because, according to him, sexuality had been scientifically proven to be chosen and not determined by genetics. Further, he explained that according to the tenets of his religion, same-sex sex is immoral and that he would treat an LGBTQ person as a wrongdoer or a thief.

The Harassment Prevention Officer, also a member of the Positive Space Committee, replied to the student in order to answer some of his questions about whether the expression of his opinions would constitute harassment and to respond to his request to attend a workshop. In her response she noted that he should be aware that Brock’s core values include the celebration of diversity, which include the celebration of sexual and gender diversity. In response to a question of his, she also explained the difference between expressing a belief in an affirmative way in order to engage in discussion, and expressing a belief in a negative way, with the intention of demeaning or degrading another person. She named this negative expression of a belief as harassment, and provided various scenarios in which that negative expression, even if communicated with good intention, would become harassment. She also explained that workshops were intended for people who wished to put themselves forward in the university community as a positive space and argued that based on his own expressed religious beliefs, this did not include him. She encouraged him to meet with her or other individuals to learn more about sexual and gender diversity, but indicated that the Positive Space workshop would not be
the appropriate place for this. The individual did not pursue registering for a workshop.

The unfolding of this exchange, which involved an institutional response from the Harassment Prevention Office on behalf of the Positive Space Committee is interesting to consider further because on the one hand, this email marked a formal expression of an institutional commitment to sexual and gender diversity that I had not seen in other official Brock materials. On the other hand, the email raised some concerns that were discussed in Committee meetings. For example, some members of the Committee raised the question of what might have happened if the student had not emailed us the way that he did, but had simply registered for a workshop and saved his views for the workshop setting. After some discussion, the Committee came to a consensus that Positive Space workshops were not intended to be the setting for a discussion on the morality of homosexuality or a setting for the airing of a variety of religious beliefs towards LGBTQ issues, and that if someone attending a workshop began to harass facilitators or participants, that person would be asked to leave. The Committee also discussed the importance of facilitators discussing the ‘ground rules’ for the workshops that included ensuring respect for others in the room at the outset. It was hoped that these efforts would ensure that the workshops embodied the goal of ‘positive space’ for all participants.

The Committee discussions prompted by the email exchange raised some new issues about the politics of space in the Campaign for me as an analyst. I wondered what it meant that we, as a Committee, might be policing the boundaries and content of workshop spaces. Was this consistent with the goals of the Campaign? Personally, I was relieved not to have to face the student who had emailed the Campaign in a workshop setting. As a workshop facilitator, I was always anxious about the initial meeting with participants and tried to quickly get a sense of the
people in the room. As a facilitator, I felt vulnerable as a potential target of harassment being clearly ‘out’ as queer in the workshop setting.

As a researcher and activist, however, I continued to be unsure about whether we had made the right decision in asking this student not to attend, even if his intentions were not oriented towards the creation of a Positive Space on campus. While the Campaign encouraged people on campus to be welcoming and supportive, as a Committee we had discouraged a person on the university campus from participating in the workshop, this person was invited to participate through a private meeting. Could the workshop have been a place for him to learn something about sexual and gender diversity? It might have been, but it could have allowed serious harassment of both facilitators and participants. It was important to be protective of a space which aimed to ensure a non-discriminatory environment for a queer minority. Just as the Campaign accepted some compromises in its use of language as politically necessary (such as limiting the ever-expanding list of LGBTQ identities), it was also important to maintain an understanding of what it means to create Positive Space workshop spaces. Given the goals of the workshop, it remained necessary to discourage a person’s attendance at a workshop whose intention was not to work constructively towards the creation of positive spaces on campus, particularly in light of some of the reactions to the RBC Safe Space Program and especially in the closed spaces of the workshop setting. In this way, the Positive Space Campaign could maintain its goal of increasing the visibility of LGBTQ identities on campus and, I argue, could challenge heteronormativity and disrupt heterosexual space.
Campus/Corporate Space?

A comparison of the RBC’s Safe Space Program and Brock’s Positive Space Campaign highlights an apparent difference in overt organized opposition to the former and fragmented challenges to the latter. One explanation might be that the RBC is a corporate institution that functions for profit, while the university is ostensibly a public institution of education and higher learning, an important distinction in terms of to whom each institution is responsible. This distinction is not clear cut however, as universities are increasingly privatized and corporatized. At Brock University, for example, not only is there a Scotia Bank branch on campus, but Scotia Bank Hall is one of the main pedestrian thoroughfares of the university.

Gill Valentine (1996) has discussed the increasing privatization of so-called public spaces. Indeed, she makes the explicit point that she uses the word ‘street’ instead of ‘public space’ for three reasons: first, because many so-called public spaces are now semi-privatized and so ‘public’ seems like an inappropriate designation; second, because despite the fact that many spaces are identified as ‘public’, many people continue to be excluded from those spaces because of discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexuality, etc; and third, because the word ‘public’ complicates the fact that so-called private relationships are often expressed in and are a part of the so-called public space (155).

Canadian university and college campus spaces are, in theory, ‘public’ spaces as they are publically funded and accessible to the public. However spaces of higher learning are increasingly less ‘public’ due to increasing tuition fees and corporatization. They are also places where discrimination continues to operate in exclusionary ways. The continued increase of private funding of universities is having a negative influence on accessibility to the institutions as
well as the integrity of both pedagogy and research (Canadian Federation of Students 2003: 1). There are also concerns about the effects of corporatization on more progressive campus-based initiatives which may challenge corporate interests. This raises particular concerns about the kinds of effects corporate funding might have in university-based initiatives as well as the degree of control corporate funders might have on the kinds of activities and organizing efforts within the university.

At the same time, however, it is clear that corporations can be appropriating aspects of social movements for their own interests. The RBC has also launched at least one gay advertisement, which features two men sitting intimately at a restaurant. The caption underneath reads: “La fierté, je la vis toute l’année. Avec RBC, je peux la partager.” (“I live with pride all year long. With RBC, I can share it.”) (Halpern 2004). The launch of gay advertisements by the RBC then suggests that the corporation has begun to target a new market of middle to upper class gay men. Recognizing a sizeable demographic, many companies have in fact launched ‘gay-themed’ advertisements. While corporations may fear running the risk of offending anti-gay groups (as the RBC experienced with their Safe Space Program), they appear to see a potential profit to be made by appeals to the ‘queer’ market and perhaps a wider constituency interested in a company that appears to be a socially responsible company committed to issues of social justice and new legal realities (such as legal recognition of the rights of gays and lesbians, etc.).

This critical assessment raises questions about the motivation for university leadership to offer support for a Positive Space Campaign. While Brock’s Positive Space Committee and parts of the institution, such as the Harassment Prevention Office, were motivated by a commitment to social justice, institutional support for the Campaign might be motivated at least
in part by a desire to appeal to more diverse ‘clients’ and demonstrate compliance with newer mandates and laws. As I pointed out in Chapter One, Jaap Kooijman (2005) argues that ‘queer’ easily gets commodified and depoliticized through television shows like *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. The surface acceptance and openness to a Positive Space Campaign within an educational institution or bank might similarly represent a commodification and ultimately a depoliticization of queer-friendly spaces and identities.

This possibility was raised by all of the campus organizers that I spoke with in my interviews. While universities may publish their Positive Space Campaigns online, often in conjunction with their equity policies thereby suggesting an institutionalized response to systemic homophobia, there may in fact be more limited support or resources for the challenge to heteronormativity.

When asked about the kinds of barriers encountered while organizing the Positive Space Campaign at the University of Toronto, for example, Jude Tate explained that

we’re in a very sophisticated environment around communication, around equity and diversity, discrimination, where sophistication and subtlety around resistance or, “That’s very nice. Nice to meet you” and you never get a call back. It’s very hard to put your hand on it. Barriers are very hard to get a handle on, to really be concrete about. No one is going to say to me, “Get out of my office. You’re not welcome here.” They’re not going to say those things, right? If anything, they’re going to be very careful to say exactly the right things, the politically correct things to say. So barriers become . . . being able to put the nice words into action. (personal interview, July 23, 2004)
As a respondent in Susan Talburt’s (2000) study in the United States explains, “I think this university in general is very good at constructing messages that are, for lack of a better term, sort of politically correct without really getting at the roots of most of the problems” (61). Both Susan Talburt (2000) and Didi Khayatt (1999) suggest that there can be a problematic normalization of LGBTQ issues and identities within educational settings that does not necessarily disrupt heteronormative assumptions and practices.

During Positive Space Committee meetings, the Committee spent some time trying to predict the possible impact of the Campaign on the university. While the Committee felt that there was a glaring absence of education and awareness around sexual and gender diversity on campus that workshops could begin to address, there was also a sense that the workshops should not be the only source of information and activism on campus. Additionally, it seems important to consider warnings by Didi Khayatt, Susan Talburt and Jude Tate about how queer identities are presented to the wider campus community. Are queer issues substantively integrated into university policy and procedures? Are queer issues “couched in normalcy” or do they disrupt heteronormative and homonormative notions of sex, gender and sexuality?

In the early stages of the development of the Positive Space Campaign at Brock University, it is not yet possible to assess its contribution to long-term institutional change, but even in its initial year, the Committee’s goal to have the Campaign housed in the Harassment Prevention Office was achieved. It is perhaps more telling of the kind of invisibility and lack of support for campus LGBTQ issues that there is still no queer resource office on campus, nor does the student group Brock Pride have an office or a space in which they can meet regularly. There continues to be no physically located space on campus for LGBTQ issues. Postering the
university campus is an easy and cheap way to begin to disrupt heterosexual space on campus, but without sustained efforts to support and expand such disruptions over time the degree to which further change may occur is questionable.

'Queer' space?

As I take into account the kinds of challenges and disruptions to heterosexual space achieved by the Brock Positive Space Campaign – from the workshops to the Campaign launch during Orientation Week to the poster ing effort – I wonder to what extent along with challenging heteronormativity and disrupting heterosexual space (as I have argued it began to do), it also managed to make visible or even create spaces that might be labelled ‘Positive Space’ and/or even ‘queer space’.

Spaces which have typically been considered ‘queer spaces’ are those such as bathhouses, Pride Parades, or gay ‘ghettos’ or ‘villages’. These interventions into heteronormative spaces have been labelled as explicitly queer because of the queer bodies that take up the spaces. Mark Casey (2004) argues that

claims to gay and lesbian [or queer] identified spaces are often about accessing limited spaces in which gay men and lesbians [and queer people] feel they are able to, (and are safe to) perform their sexual identities, relationships and lifestyles. (451)

In part, the creation of these kinds of spaces is about creating a kind of queer visibility. Julie Podmore (2001) writes that
Queer politics places a great deal of emphasis on ‘becoming visible’ as queer subjects. While the primary objective is to be visible to a mainstream public, a secondary aim is to be more visible to each other. (347)

While spaces such as bathhouses, Pride Parades and gay ghettos have certainly played a significant role in the development of LGBTQ community building, some scholars have questioned whether the mere presence of queer bodies can make a space queer. One of the main criticisms of these kinds of queer spaces is that they may reify hetero/homosexual binaries that Butler and others challenge. Affrica Taylor (1997), for example, writes that

from a queer stance, the very idea of a gay or lesbian ghetto, set up in opposition to the straight world, simply reinforces the rigid heterosexual/homosexual binary, and thus limits the possibilities of both our sexualities and the spaces in which we can belong. (10)

In the context of an analysis of Toronto women’s bathhouses Catherine J. Nash and Alison Bain (forthcoming) argue moreover that bathhouse organizers open up a so-called ‘queer’ space of sexual liberation while simultaneously disciplining gendered and sexualized identities through unspoken expectations of expressions of sexuality. This imposed an alternative ‘homonormativity’, that suggests such space falls short of the liberatory queer spaces invoked in queer theorizing.

I am left wondering then about the possible meanings of ‘queer space’. I recall Nikki Sullivan’s (2003) suggestion that ‘queer’ “is constructed as a sort of vague and indefinable set of
practices and (political) positions that has the potential to challenge normative knowledges and identities" (43-44). So what is a ‘queer space’? I would argue that is it more useful to conceptualize queer space less in terms of a physical location and more in terms of the co-construction of meanings or shared imagination in relation to space.

In the context of her analysis of a k.d. lang concert, for example, Gill Valentine (1995) writes that the concert creates a sense of lesbian community which is ‘imagined’ “because all the members of audience... temporarily mentally perceive a bond of comradeship despite other differences (age, ethnicity, political positions)” (479). Further, Affrica Taylor (1997) argues that

when we speak of gay or lesbian communities these days, the radical geographers who insist that we remember the political production of all spatial concepts, will remind us that our communities are in fact ‘imagined’. . . . there is always more to a sense of community than just a spatial location: there is also a fictional aspect to the way that we imagine ‘the community’ to be our home. We dream up communities as utopias of belonging. We dream them up, because we are drawn to imagine a perfect place, a place that is everything that the ‘real’ world is not, a place without homophobia, without heterosexism, a place of tolerance and acceptance, a place where we can celebrate our sexual difference, where we can be ourselves. (10)

Taylor here takes the point about imagined communities a step further to point to utopic possibilities of such insights. Of significance are the ways in which the spaces created by the Positive Space Campaign in turn facilitate a collective vision and articulation of other ‘imagined
queer spaces' – specifically an imagined campus open to sexual and gender diversity and free of discrimination.

This effort moreover actively engages a range of people who identify according to a range of sexual and gender identities, including heterosexual, into this project. Is it possible to see in this effort a kind of ongoing and imagining that 'queer' is about disrupting normative understandings of sex, gender and sexuality, and is not necessarily fixed to LGBTQ identities, but may include a variety of differently positioned people in a coalition to imagine a transformed world (or at least a transformed campus).

In the case of the Brock University Positive Space Campaign, I have argued that it has had some success in spatially intervening on the campus in ways that begin to challenge and disrupt heteronormativity. By posting materials, claiming space at Orientation Week and facilitating workshops, that the Campaign altered spaces is evidenced in limited ways. More significant perhaps is the way in which these interventions allow for an articulation of idealized 'imagined queer space' of what the campus could or should be. Perhaps if the vision of the Positive Space Campaign for an 'imagined queer space' is maintained, it will continue to motivate anti-homophobia and anti-discrimination organizing efforts on the university campus and beyond.

Even as I assert the value of facilitating the articulation of an 'imagined queer space' however, I am aware of a downside of making this an overarching goal. The project of facilitating a vision of an 'imagined queer space' on the university campus would be dangerous if it were to impose a gloss over the continued problems of discrimination, marginalization and exclusion of many expressions of sex, gender and sexuality on the campus, and if it were to
substitute for direct action on these matters. There is a continued need for direct interventions no matter how limited and even contradictory these may be because they offer concrete responses to continued harassment and discrimination based on sexual and gender identities, but also because they foster new imaginings of what is possible.

As Judith Butler (1991) argues, in the context of a heterosexist world, it remains politically crucial to specify LGBTQ experiences and identities as distinct from the experiences and expressions of normative heterosexuality. I, for example, among my many other axes of identity, continue to identify, and believe it important to identify as ‘queer’ even while recognizing the problematic notion of a politics based solely on this identity category. As long as people continue to be excluded on the basis of identity politics, then identity politics will be a significant basis for organizing. As Sky Gilbert so poignantly argues,

"until a leather dyke and effeminate queer are delivering the nightly news, labels ought to be ubiquitous. And queers should claim them, embrace them, and revel in the differences they signal." (Gilbert 2002: 231)

Further, imagining a space free of discrimination is entirely dependent on the elimination of racism, classism, ableism and all other axes of oppression. The Positive Space Campaign is a reminder of the need maintain a vision for what a campus space could or should look like. While it remains important to maintain a narrower understanding of queer politics of identity, while at times popular culture renders queerness apolitical (such as in the example of Queer Eye), and while queer organizing is still threatening to a wider homophobia and heteronormativity, then
Positive Space Campaign organizing is critical and serves to encourage individuals to challenge normative constructions of sex, gender and sexuality and disrupt heterosexual space. Positive Space Campaigns begin to ‘queer’ space by contributing to an ‘imagined’ campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination.

**Visions for the Future**

Positive Space Campaign organizing is one example of organizing aimed at increasing visibility around sexual and gender diversity and challenging heteronormativity on post-secondary campuses. Such campaigns can be an impetus for increased forms of institutionalized support. Some of these were identified by the people who I interviewed when I asked them about what they envisioned for the future of Positive Space organizing. As Laurie Sanci explained,

I’d like to see some really strong work in counselling, supportive counselling services, coming out groups, peer-support groups, I’d like to see that kind of work being done. I’d like to . . . strengthen our Student Services so we can really confidently say that our Student Services meet the needs of that population . . . there’s a lot of work that’s going to have to be done. (personal interview, July 8, 2004)

Similarly, as Barry Townsend explained, “I still want to see that Queer Resource Centre. It’s a dream” (personal interview, August 24, 2004). Lisa Seymour added that she would like to see that the Program first try to sustain itself, second to get more support and education for allies, and third, to reexamine materials used in workshops (personal interview, October 1, 2004).

David Rayside argued that
I continue to think that curricular change is really important and it's really only begun outside of a few humanities departments. So that's pretty important. But just create visibility around the issues. Elementary visibility. (personal interview, September 9, 2004)

When I asked her about her vision for the future of Positive Space organizing at the University of Toronto, Jude Tate expressed some longer term visions. The organizing will have fulfilled its objectives, in her view,

When we don't need it anymore. I think that's probably the obvious answer. When we don't need it anymore and when the discussion of sexual diversity is no longer a weird thing or a thing we need to be cautious about or to be advocating ... the understanding of it as equity issue and systematized in our interviews and our hires of people. You know, we have a long way to go in curriculum. If you look at the other movements, the Civil Rights Movement, the anti-racist movements, the women's movement, we're still having those long conversations and discussions and battles about sexism, right? ... There have been significant changes for women and there have been significant changes for gays and lesbians, LGBTQ people, but on an individual basis.

Positive Space Campaigns are relatively new forms of organizing on many campuses. Their significance as forms of queer organizing is difficult to determine as this point but it is clear that they are contributing to increased visibility of sexual and gender diversity and offering challenges
to heteronormative space in post-secondary settings. Positive Space Campaigns may also contribute to a wider politics of queer organizing in Canada by providing the training ground for future activists as well as offering needed education to a range of campus constituencies that after all are also potentially politically active citizens. It is my contention that the Positive Space Campaign 'queered' space by contributing to an 'imagined' campus space free of sexual and gender-based discrimination.
CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I draw on queer theory, the geography literature on sexuality and space, the education literature on queer issues as well as a literature on queer organizing in the Canadian context to inform my analysis of the initiation and implementation of a Positive Space Campaign at Brock University. This Campaign aimed at increasing the visibility and number of respectful, supportive, educational and welcoming spaces for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, two-spirited, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) students, staff and faculty through the dissemination of cards, posters and buttons and the facilitation of workshops. This study of the Brock Positive Space Campaign offers an analysis of a Canadian Positive Space Campaign and I hope that it will contribute to more scholarly work on this topic as well as support further activist efforts.

My project relied on a participatory action research methodology, which made it possible for me to be simultaneously involved in the Campaign as an activist and as a researcher. Using examples from my experience in posterering efforts, the launch of the Campaign during Orientation Week and Campaign workshops, I analyze these various activities in order to explore some of the challenges confronting dominant and heteronormative expressions of sex, gender and sexuality, and to examine the kinds of spaces that were created and whether these were successful in disrupting heterosexual campus space.

Drawing on the example of the Safe Space Program at the Royal Bank of Canada, I explore some of the challenges facing Positive or Safe Space organizing. I also suggest that increasing similarities between public (the university) and corporate (the bank) institutions may lead to examples of cooptation or even undermining of some of the more progressive impulses behind such campaigns. Finally, I consider in what ways the spaces created by the Positive
Space Campaign at Brock may have facilitated imaginings of more inclusive campuses, thereby motivating concrete actions to work toward this. These insights drawn from one case may have relevance to the broader Positive Space Campaign movement on Canadian campuses. Despite the many limitations and challenges revealed in my analysis, my conclusion based on the Brock case study is that the Positive Space Campaign has had a significant impact.

My involvement in the Positive Space Campaign at Brock was motivated by the desire to disrupt what I perceived to be an invisibility of sexual and gender diversity on campus. As I walked the halls at Brock when I first arrived at the school, there was hardly any evidence of a queer presence or queer organizing on the campus. Almost two years later, walking the halls at Brock is somewhat different. When the Positive Space Campaign began, I knew most of the people attending workshops since many of the students, staff and faculty who attended the first few workshops were friends or acquaintances of mine. As I facilitated a majority of the early workshops, I met just about every person on campus who might be wearing a Positive Space button or posting a card. But as the Campaign unfolded, my centrality to it lessened. I began to notice Positive Space buttons on people whom I had never met. Walking through the academic, residence and administrative spaces of the university, I noticed Positive Space cards posted in office windows and on office doors of many individuals that I did not know. I began to feel like sexual and gender diversity was finally gaining visibility on Brock’s campus, and the dominant heterosexual space on campus was being disrupted.

My sense of the significance of the Campaign was reinforced during my interview with David Rayside when he shared with me an important story about a note that was slipped under his office door that said: “Thank you for having a rainbow triangle. My prof is very homophobic
so it really makes a difference to see some welcome.” Rayside commented on this incident to me, stating, “having a hundred awareness days . . . you never know what’s going to affect people . . .” Rayside has the note framed in his office.

In the Campaign at Brock, a similar communication gives me inspiration. A few days after Brock University hosted its annual open house for secondary school students interested in attending the university, an email came through the Positive Space email inbox from a visiting student who had attended the open house and noticed the Positive Space Campaign posters around campus. The student expressed interest and excitement in the campaign, explaining that he hoped to be able to get involved in the initiative so that he could help out others who might be struggling with their identities on campus. This email and David Rayside’s note serve as a reminder that despite their limitations, Positive Space Campaigns can have an important impact on those who move through the campus spaces.
APPENDIX A – Positive Space Campaign Organizing on Four Canadian Campuses

I use my interview materials to present brief histories of organizing at four universities in Ontario and Manitoba. It seems that while organizing efforts at the four colleges and universities described developed in slightly different ways, all were motivated by the desire to increase visibility around sexual and gender diversity and to challenge discrimination on campus.

University of Toronto

The University of Toronto has a long history of queer organizing on campus, stretching back to 1969, when the on-campus student group, then known as the University of Toronto Homophile Association and now known as LGBTOUT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered of the University of Toronto) formed. The first Canadian Positive Space Campaign was at the University of Toronto on the St. George campus and began in 1996 when Rona Amramovitch, the then Status of Women Officer and professor of Psychology, and David Rayside, professor of Political Science, were inspired by a flyer that Amramovitch had picked up in the United States (the origin of this flyer is unknown). It was a very rudimentary poster in black and white, very text-heavy and was labelled “Safe Place”.

At that time, Rayside and Amramovitch were looking for some new kinds of organizing that would be affirming and would encourage people, whether LGBTQ or not, to get involved in highlighting sexual and gender diversity as an equity issue on campus. In terms of queer issues on campus and in the community, Rayside explains that “we thought that something that was affirming would be good, especially given the importance of visibility of sexual diversity as an equity issue and as a political issue” (personal interview, September 15, 2004).

Based on this early Safe Place flyer, Amramovitch and Rayside created the first
University of Toronto’s Positive Space Campaign materials. They designed a sticker and a poster that read “Positive Space” across the top, had a rainbow triangle in the middle, and at the bottom the text stated: “This is a place where human rights are respected and where gays, lesbians, bisexuals, their friends and allies are welcomed and supported.” They also designed a flyer that anticipated questions about the Campaign, such as “What are the objectives of this campaign?” and “Why single out this among other ‘equity’ issues?” along with answers and contact information for resources on and off campus. Stickers and flyers were distributed widely across campus. Some of the people involved in the Positive Space Committee were invited to do talks about the Campaign in response to invitations from a variety of groups, such as groups in residences.

In 1998 the Committee re-launched the Campaign with an updated sticker with next text which simply read “lesbian gay bisexual transgendered queer” on top and “Positive Space” below. The Committee removed the abovementioned sentence about human rights because they thought that the sticker’s message was clear without it. The re-launch was accompanied by a rainbow triangle painted underneath the ice at Varsity Arena, the campus ice rink. In 1998, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered and Queer Resources and Programs Office, a new Equity Office, was also launched and Jude Tate became the first Coordinator of LGBTQ Resources and Programs. This office, funded by the President’s Office, now includes two staff positions and is located in the Koffler Centre which also houses Student Services, the campus bookstore, and Student Health Services among other student services. The Positive Space Campaign, however, is broader than this office being adopted in a variety of spaces on campus, such as the Status of Women’s Office. As Jude Tate explains:
The purpose of [the Positive Space Campaign] is that you have people from a variety of areas within the university who are invested in making the area or the university a Positive Space. So it just doesn’t come centrally focused out of one Equity Office or from one person, which I think is a stroke of brilliance, frankly . . . there’s some question around does Positive Space rely on this one person because this person goes out and uses education training models. And if those things aren’t offered or if that person isn’t there, who does it? Who has a sense of it? I think [our de-centralized model] promotes an ownership of Positive Space [and] that issues around sexual diversity and welcoming are everybody’s responsibility. (personal interview, July 23, 2004)

The Positive Space Campaign has continued at the University of Toronto and the Positive Space Committee, made up of interested students, staff and faculty continues to meet and organize, providing a network for individuals involved in activism around sexual orientation and gender-related issues.

Individuals who want a free sticker or poster can pick one up at the LGBTQ Resources and Programs Office, the Office of the Status of Women, and a variety of other locations on campus. Flyers and stickers about the Positive Space Campaign are also distributed in all of the frosh kits for all first year students.

Both Jude Tate and David Rayside suggest that there is no simple understanding of what it means to create Positive Spaces on campus and that what is most important for the University of Toronto’s Positive Space Committee is that it starts discussions on campus and gets people thinking and talking about sexual and gender diversity. David Rayside argues about the
Campaign's beginnings:

I think [the Positive Space Committee's] collective view was, if it starts a conversation or it makes one person think, especially if it's in a corner of the campus that you have no access to, then that's better than the absence of it. (personal interview, September 15, 2004)

In addition to the work of distributing materials, the Committee has also taken collective stands on particular political issues. For example, in the summer of 2003, the Positive Space Committee published an open letter to all members of the University of Toronto in The Varsity, the campus student newspaper and online. The letter encouraged members of the campus community to support federal legislation sanctioning equal marriage. The letter linked support of equal marriage to the goal of creating a positive space on campus. Here, the links are made between on-campus organizing and the wider national politics.

**Centennial College**

The implementation of a Positive Space Campaign at Centennial College was the result of a grievance that was launched by a faculty member who had experienced homophobic harassment in 2001. As a result of this grievance, a Climate Report focussed on homophobia at Centennial, was commissioned and published in 2002. This report identified homophobic harassment as a problem at Centennial College's Ashtonbee campus, the campus where the incident from the grievance occurred. Other campuses were not addressed in this report. One of the key recommendations of the report was the creation of a Sexual Harassment Officer position
on the campus. One of the awards of the grievance was the implementation of a Positive Space Campaign.

A Task Force on Homophobia and Heterosexism was created by the college in 2002 and Laurie Sanci, who was hired as the Sexual Harassment Officer became its Chair. Under the mandate of the Task Force, the Positive Space Campaign was launched. This occurred around the same time that an active student on campus had started organizing members of the College around LGBT issues. The student-initiated momentum provided additional impetus and support for the Positive Space Campaign. In my interview with her, Laurie Sanci suggested that prior to her hiring in 2002, there was no anti-homophobia organizing at Centennial College.

Laurie Sanci researched some of the Positive Space Campaign work at Queen’s University, York University and the University of Toronto. She brought that information back to the Task Force at Centennial, and they developed a model for their own Positive Space Campaign. Human Rights training is mandatory training for all employees at Centennial, and so it was decided that they would offer an additional training in the form of a three hour Positive Space workshop. Participation in the Positive Space Campaign training at Centennial is voluntary, but is required before staff or other individuals can receive Positive Space materials for display at Centennial. They are offered a sticker or a ‘table talker’ (a plastic holder that stands on a surface and holds a Positive Space sticker).

At Centennial College, the Positive Space Committee is made up of staff and faculty and the Campaign is aimed at serving the student body of the College. The Campaign is housed in the Sexual Harassment Office. In June 2003 Sanci received funding from the College’s External Projects Funding to hire a temporary LGBTQ Student Co-ordinator to co-ordinate monthly social
events for LGBTQ students. The position and person hired were unsuccessful, and as a result renewed funding was denied. In the summer of 2004, Sanci was approached by the Social Service Worker Program and asked to hire someone from the Program in her office as a student placement, so she decided to reinstitute a student co-ordinator position for LGBTQ issues. At the time of our interview, the new co-ordinator had only recently been hired.

**University of Manitoba**

At the University of Manitoba, anti-homophobia work is organized by the Identifying Allies: A Safe Space Project, which at its inception was run by Lisa Seymour and Dale Porter. Prompted by research that Porter had done which uncovered significant levels of homophobia on campus, Porter applied for funding from the Manitoba Justice Ministry to launch the Identifying Allies Project. The grant application was part of his field placement with the Faculty of Social Work and was incorporated into his course work.

Lisa Seymour, a social worker in the Student Counselling and Career Centre, assisted Porter with his application, and they were granted almost $50,000 in 2004 to run a Safe Space Project at the university. The funding lasted for one year, during which time Porter worked as the paid coordinator for the project and developed a lot of materials and resources. After the first year, the project no longer had funding, but a second year was funded by leftover funds from the first year. Since then, they have been able to get a work study student to work on the project, and have also found partial funding sources for the paid coordinator and for materials from other parts of the campus.

The Safe Space Project at the University of Manitoba uses a two step training model. The first step consists of a two hour anti-homophobia workshop. Once participants have completed
this first workshop, they can then apply to attend the second two hour workshop on becoming an ally. The first anti-homophobia workshop has been made mandatory for some students, including students in social work and medicine.

Once people are identified as allies, they are provided with buttons, stickers and cards with which to mark their spaces. Porter and Seymour have worked and continue to work with a committee to help with decision-making processes and to get more campus involvement. They also have a group of volunteers who facilitate the training sessions. Porter’s role in the Project has decreased in recent years in part due to a decrease in funding, and Seymour continues to act as the unofficial coordinator of the Project. While there is not a specific budget for Seymour’s role in the Project, her work is part of her position in the Student Counselling and Career Centre.

**University of Guelph**

At the University of Guelph, instead of implementing one centralized Positive Space Campaign or anti-homophobia organization, anti-homophobia work is conducted simultaneously by the Human Rights and Equity Office, the residence system, the student group Queer Equality, and the Wellness Centre. The Human Rights and Equity Office at the University of Guelph has Project Vision, which aims to identify “the challenges, barriers and positive developments which affect the participation of lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons in university life and to develop strategies to create an environment free from harassment or discrimination” (Human Rights and Equity Office, University of Guelph).

The major activities of Project Vision focus on the development of anti-homophobia promotional materials such as stickers and posters which are freely distributed on campus. At the same time, anti-homophobia work is carried out within Residence Life. Barry Townsend is a
staff member who is the current Entering Student Transition Specialist and who spent many years working in Residence Life. He and other university employees conduct presentations around campus, and similar to the workshop style of Centennial College and the University of Manitoba, will only make buttons available to those who have attended a presentation. As the organizing efforts at the University of Guelph are not centralized, however, there are times that Guelph Queer Equality, the queer student group on campus, has also distributed the same materials that Townsend and others try to reserve for attendance at workshops, thus there is some fuzziness around the protocols for the distribution of materials.

According to Barry Townsend, the fact that anti-homophobia work at the University of Guelph is not centralized can be both useful and frustrating:

There isn’t one single Positive Space Program that’s coordinated centrally and there are real advantages sometimes to having it dispersed throughout the community. [For example,] there are lots of different people working on it, lots of different kinds of people who think they can work on it at many different levels. There are [university] community leaders, administrators, students, who are invested in doing work around queer issues. Sometimes the downfall though is that because it’s not coordinated, it becomes hard to do those big projects without a resource centre. (personal interview, August 24, 2004)
APPENDIX B — Guiding Questions for Interviews

Title of Study: Building Positive Space on Campus: Creating Visibility for Sexual and Gender Identities

Principal Researcher: Allison Burgess, MA Social Justice and Equity Studies
Faculty Supervisor: Professor Jane Helleiner, Department of Sociology
Interviewer: Allison Burgess

- Who are you? What is your position/connection/role/involvement in Positive Space or anti-homophobia work? How did you get involved in this kind of organizing?

- What brings you to this kind of organizing? How do you see your role in organizing? Why are you interested in this kind of project?

- Who is involved in organizing (faculty, staff, students, volunteers, paid employees, etc)?

- Are you/Is the Positive Space Campaign affiliated with any queer student groups on campus? Do you do any organizing off campus?

- What kind of support does your university provide for the Positive Space campaign and anti-homophobia work?

- What is the history of Positive Space and anti-homophobia work at your school?

- How does the Positive Space program function at your school? Do you use stickers? Buttons? Posters? Why?

- Do you require interested people to attend a seminar or learning session in order to get a sticker or button? If so, how do you run those sessions? How do you keep the sessions current yet accessible to those not necessarily familiar with some of the issues?

- Is there any way to ensure that someone who puts up a Positive Space sticker is actually a positive space? Are there any consequences for not being a Positive Space despite announcing that you are?

- How do you/How does your group navigate through the long and continuously expanding list of members of the LGBTTTIQ communities?

- What kinds of barriers (structural, social, or otherwise) have you encountered in your organizing work?

- What is your vision for the future of Positive Space and anti-homophobia work?
• What kind of advice would you give to someone starting up a Positive Space Campaign on a university campus?
### APPENDIX C – LGBTQ Definitions

Match each definition on the right with the correct term on the left by recording the corresponding number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bisexual</th>
<th>1. A biological distinction referring to whether a person is female, male or intersex.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dyke</td>
<td>2. The umbrella term used to include all people who cross gender lines, including but not exclusive to transsexuals, transvestites, drag queens, drag kings, and cross-dressers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fag</td>
<td>3. An umbrella term that may include lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, transgenderists and other people who challenge the heterosexist boundaries of sexual orientation, sex and gender. The term was historically used as an insult, but now is frequently used as an affirmative political and/or identity statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Transphobia</td>
<td>4. A woman whose primary sexual, emotional, spiritual and intellectual attraction is to another woman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>5. A person who is sexually, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually attracted to both men and women though not necessarily at the same time or in the same way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>6. Behaviour, personality, dress, choice of work, etc. that the dominant society traditionally attributes to, or associates with, biological sex; the cultural expectations of femininity and masculinity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Transsexual</td>
<td>7. A person whose primary sexual, emotional, spiritual and intellectual attraction is to a person of the same sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>8. The conscious or unconscious hatred and groundless fear of people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Based on the assertion that heterosexuality is “normal” and superior, and that homosexuality is deviant, abnormal, criminal or sinful. It may be expressed in overt or covert ways, ranging from subtle forms of behaviour to outright violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>9. A derogatory term for lesbians. In recent years, the term has been reclaimed by lesbians and is considered positive when used playfully and affirmatively among lesbians.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. A person assigned by the anatomical structure of the body to one sex, but who feels and wishes to function as a member of the opposite sex. Some choose to undergo sex reassignment surgery to change their bodies to match the sex that they feel they really are.

11. A derogatory term for gay men. In recent years, the term has been reclaimed by gay men and when used playfully and/or affirmatively among gay men it is considered positive.

12. A term used by members of First Nations and Aboriginal communities which can mean either or both: a) a person who has same-sex attractions, or b) a person who identifies as being either of mixed gender or as a gender that differs from their biological sex.

13. The fear and hatred of crossdressers, transsexuals, transgenderists and other forms of gender benders. Typically demonstrated through disrespect, denial of rights and needs, sometimes involves harassment and violence.
APPENDIX D - Myths about LGBTQ people

1) “I don’t know any lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people.”

2) “You can always ‘spot’ a lesbian, gay man or trans-identified person.”

3) “Being lesbian, gay or bisexual is abnormal.”

4) “All lesbians, gay men and bisexuals ‘flaunt’ their sexual identity.”

5) “Early abuse or problems with brain chemistry cause people to be lesbian or gay.”

6) “AIDS is a gay disease.”

7) “Gay and bisexual men sexually abuse children.”

8) “Transgender people are unnatural. It is wrong to change your sex or gender.”

9) “LGBTQ people are all promiscuous.”

10) “Bisexuals are all just sex fiends, they’ll do it with anyone.”

11) “Homosexuality only exists in Western society.”
### APPENDIX E - Privilege Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. I can talk freely about my sexual orientation or gender identity to colleagues at work, fellow students, co-parishioners, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I can be confident that I will not be harassed for using the washroom that I choose to use.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. I could kiss my partner farewell at the airport, confident that onlookers will either ignore us or smile understandingly.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. I can be pretty sure that the neighbours where I live will be friendly, or at least neutral.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Our families celebrate our partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Our faith communities celebrate our partnerships.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. I can be sure that the name and sex marked on my identification matches my expressed gender (such as on a driver's licence, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. When my partner is seriously ill, I know I will be admitted to the intensive-care unit to visit her/him without question.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. I can find appropriate cards for my friends, children, family or partner to celebrate special occasions like anniversaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. I grew up feeling that my loves and friendships were healthy and celebrated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. Holding hands with my partner is not likely to invoke harassment or a violent reaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. If I am travelling with my partner, we can choose public accommodations without having to worry about whether will be accepted as a couple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. When I fill out a form, I can always check off a box that represents my gender identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. I can speak without hesitation about my sexual or gender identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. The organizations I belong to do not feel threatened by my membership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. I see similar representations of my sexual relationships in popular media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. I can be comfortable and get service when shopping for clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. I feel comfortable talking to my doctor about my sexual activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. I have always known that there are other people like me in the world.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX F – Beyond Tolerance: Thinking About Full Support**

This is a reflection exercise for your own benefit. This information is for your eyes only. Please answer honestly. While you are thinking about these issues, ask yourself why some things may make you feel more uncomfortable than others.

1=strongly disagree  2=disagree  3=mixed feelings  4=agree  5=strongly agree

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>When I hear that Matthew Shepard, an out gay student in the US was beaten to death in 1998, I feel outraged.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I would send out invitations to my friends announcing the marriage of my daughter to her girlfriend.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If I am a member of a faith community, I would feel comfortable with LGBTQ people openly participating in all ways in the religious practices of my community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I would be supportive of student efforts to organize a &quot;Homo Hop&quot; at Isaac's.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I believe that two gay men could be excellent parents to an adopted baby girl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I would be happy if my child were gay.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>When I hear that Aaron Webster was murdered last year in a homophobic attack in Vancouver's Stanley Park, a popular public cruising area for gay men, I feel outraged.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I feel comfortable with LGBTQ professors talking about their sexual orientation in class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I would not feel ashamed if a member of my family had a sex change.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I feel comfortable with two gay male students kissing each other in Isaac's.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>When I see or hear about &quot;Dykes on Bikes&quot; and &quot;Drag Queens&quot; at the Gay Pride Parade every June in Toronto, I think it's a positive part of the diversity of our community.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>If a same sex acquaintance asked me out on a date, I wouldn't feel offended.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G – Positive Space Button
Lesbian Gay Bi
Trans Two-Spirited
Queer Questioning

www.brocku.ca/positivespace
APPENDIX I – Workshop Evaluation

1. What I liked about the workshop:

2. What didn’t work for me:

3. One thing I will do differently as a result of this workshop:

4. How comfortable were you participating in the workshop discussions?

5. Do you have any suggestions for how the facilitators might improve the facilitation of your learning?

6. Please comment on the effectiveness of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOT EFFECTIVE</th>
<th>VERY EFFECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) LGBTQ Definitions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Myths vs. Realities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Privilege Checklist</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Beyond Tolerance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Case Studies</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. One thing I really want to tell the facilitators:
Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Two-Spirited Queer Questioning

To learn more, please visit: www.brocku.ca/positivespace
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Zettel, Mike. 2005. A Matter of Pride: Rainbow Flag to Fly This Friday. *Niagara This Week*, June 8.