Social Perspectives on Antihomophobia Education: Capitalism and LGBTQ Identities

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The Antihomophobia Workshop

"Thank you for the great presentation. Now I appreciate gays, lesbians and bisexuals more."

"I don't have any questions, but the stories were good. I can't believe his parents kicked him out."

"Were you ever gay bashed?"

"No questions, thank you. I like your hair."

"How did you know that you were gay or lesbian?"

"How can two men have sex?"

"Hey guys, I think you are cool. But do you know that God hates homosexuals? I'm sorry but you will probably go to hell."

"I thought it was a great lesson you taught us and I hope you influence a lot more people with your speeches so there will be no more hateful comments."

Our antihomophobia workshop is coming to an end, and our small team of facilitators is working through a hat full of student questions. We have given each person in the class a chance to put in an anonymous question or comment, and we will discuss as many as we can before we leave. This batch of questions and comments is typical for a high school group. Most of them thank us for our excellent guest-speaker manners, a few comment on our fashion or hairstyles, one cautions us on the state of our eternal souls and one or two questions are about sexuality or personal experiences. We start with the most common question: "How did you know?" I give them our usual careful answer and encourage my facilitators to jump in.

It's been a strong workshop and another good day for our organization, which is called SpeakOut: Youth Education Against Homophobia. Over the past 45 minutes, we shared our standard workshop with this big group of Grade 10s. We've generated definitions for key terms, such as *LGBTQ*, *homophobia*, *heterosexism* and *discrimination*. We've brainstormed pejorative terms and stereotypes, and worked to debunk or challenge these. We've discussed sources of and influences on our ideas about LGBTQ people, such as families, peers and popular culture. Drawing on students' empathy, we've explored the potential negative consequences for LGBTQ youth experiencing discrimination. A few key statistics have come up; for example, a significant portion of street-identified youth are LGBTQ, and LGBTQ youth are much more likely to die by suicide. We have also explored positive consequences, such as finding allies and personal empowerment. Finally, we've shared personal stories of coming out to our loved ones—stories of love and heartbreak, affirmation and rejection.

It has been an intense experience for us facilitators, having worked through difficult and personal issues with the students; this is also typical. The students have generally been respectful and engaged (even when school audiences are hesitant at first, the stereotypes and slang portion of the workshop usually gets them interested), and they have tackled some tough topics. Our team has been at this Toronto school all afternoon, and we've delivered our workshop four times in a row. After we address the students' anonymous questions, we'll thank the school and return home. The four of us will debrief together on the way, reflecting on the workshops and supporting each other through the complex feelings that they always engender. It's tiring but rewarding work. Most of us are students—all less than 24 years old—and we're all heavily invested in working against homophobia in schools. This work is personal. We hope that our workshops will significantly affect students' perceptions of LGBTQ people, of course, but also of the larger social landscape that they inhabit.

My two years as a peer facilitator with SpeakOut are now a solid decade behind me. I carry those experiences with me. For one thing, those workshops remain some of the toughest teaching I have ever done. They were an integral part of my journey into professional teaching: for my investment in social justice education, for my understanding of what teaching involves, and for my ability to teach from my own personal and social location. However, another key part of what I carry with me from my SpeakOut days is an interest in the question of change. What does it mean to encourage social change? When I took on the challenging work of antihomophobia education, what else was I taking on, unwittingly or not? What contextual factors must be examined if significant social change is to be effected? I have since, as a teacher and as a graduate student, had some time to consider these questions. The dimension that I will take up in this article is that of economics: what is the relationship between antihomophobia work and capitalism? What does it mean to work against homophobia in this socioeconomic context?

This Article: What's Capitalism Got to Do with It?

While sexual identities—and people's prejudices about them—may seem profoundly personal, broader public and social factors are at work in people's experiences of their sexuality and of homophobia. Comprehension of the dynamics that exist between sexuality and socioeconomic contexts is significant for those who work to oppose discrimination against people who are LGBTQ—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer—or otherwise marginalized on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity. Sociological perspectives allow us to pursue this kind of comprehension. As sociological thinker C Wright Mills said in 1959, sociological analyses enable us "to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" rather than to see only our "personal troubles," divorced from context (Mills 1959, para 10). To work effectively for social change requires that we engage at the broader level of social structures. My intention in this article is to examine the interplay between LGBTQ identities, homophobia and capitalism, in order to understand the importance of socioeconomic contexts to antihomophobia work.

As a way into these intricate relationships, I will first take up the question of human rights. Antihomophobia social justice work often, for good reasons, relies on discourses of human rights. As Fudge and Glasbeek (1992) state, "it makes sense for [people] to use the language of rights. The assertion of rights claims by . . . social movements is a natural aspect of any progressive politics. In this sense it is impossible to object to 'rights'" (p 66). However, antihomophobia education work—such as that described above and by scholars such as Collins (2004) and McCaskell and Russell (2000)—is about much more than defending human rights. Further, justifying antihomophobia work only through a discourse of human rights protection would impose significant limitations on this work. I will argue here that discourses of human rights are caught up in the ideological structures of capitalism, and are inadequate, by themselves, as a basis for significant social change. It is worth noting that I have never seen antihomophobia work described solely through human rights; again, I am simply using the example of human rights as an entry point for my wider exploration of the relationships between homophobia and socioeconomic contexts. Social justice work combating homophobia, I argue, must take into account capitalism's role in shaping oppression against LGBTQ people in order to locate possible sites for change. Ultimately, of course, the economic aspect will be only one dimension in this complex undertaking.

A Brief Note on Terminology

In this paper, I use the initialism LGBTQ, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. As innumerable others before me have noted,

the question of appropriate terminology is complex, and it is difficult to choose one general label that fits this type of discussion (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, viii). The initialism I have chosen here, for instance, does not represent everyone; it may exclude transsexual, intersex, two-spirit and questioning people, and people who do not fit neatly (or at all) into these categories. Many supposedly general terms, such as *lesbian* and *gay*, *homosexual* or *queer* have been widely contested over decades of activism and theory (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, viii). I agree with others such as Knegt (2011) that it is not only cumbersome to use very specific sets of terminology for the sake of inclusivity—for example, to spell out LGBTTI2SQQA each time—but also inaccurate. I am not, in this paper, addressing the nuances of two-spirit perspectives, which are differentially rooted in distinct Indigenous cultures and are concerned with decolonization (Driskill et al 2011). Nor am I addressing the particular concerns of transsexual or transgender people: being trans is about gender identity, and not (necessarily) about queer sexuality, so that trans people do not always share the same concerns as lesbians and gay people (Knegt 2011, 108). I have chosen the shorter acronym, LGBTQ, as a recognition that my arguments here do not focus comprehensively on particular communities' concerns. My intent in this paper is to focus on antihomophobia education; that is, programs and teaching that work to counter stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and violence arising from the fear of nonheterosexual people (McCaskell and Russell 2000). This is a basic framework. As scholars such as Jeppesen (2010) have noted, homophobia itself is ultimately too small a target for activism and education; heterosexism and heteronormativity—including assumptions that heterosexuality is normal or natural—represent a wider problem (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008). Antihomophobia education, however, often chooses to be strategic; compared to transforming normative gender roles, for instance, working against homophobic bullying in schools may be a relatively achievable goal (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008).

Rights in Toronto's Early 2000s Antihomophobia Education Initiatives

The kind of antihomophobia work that I took part in through the SpeakOut program was well supported by human-rights-based rationales. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB), whose equity department created the SpeakOut program, adopted a human rights policy in 2000. This document points to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code, and outlines the board's "duty to maintain an environment respectful of human rights and free of discrimination and harassment" (p 2). It includes "gender," "gender identity," "same-sex partnership status" and "sexual orientation" as "grounds" on which it will not allow discrimination (p 3). In 2000 (revised 2002), the TDSB also published a document entitled *What Is Antihomophobia Education? A Fact Sheet*, primarily aimed at parents, to address questions and concerns specifically related to antihomophobia education (Toronto District School Board Equity Department 2002). This fact sheet cites the protection of human rights as one of the primary goals of antihomophobia education: "Anti-homophobia education is about respect of difference and recognition of the human rights guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code to lesbian, bisexual, and gay persons" (TDSB Equity Department 2002, 2). Likewise, McCaskell and Russell (2000), writing about their antihomophobia work in Toronto public schools, cite human rights as a significant justification for the work. For instance, they suggest that, when educators balk at taking on antihomophobia initiatives for fear of parent or public reactions, the "challenge is to remind school staff of their responsibilities under Board policy and the Human Rights Code" (McCaskell and Russell 2000, 47). The board policy to which they refer includes the human rights policy I cited above and the *Equity Foundation Statement and Commitments to Implementation* adopted in 1999. This latter document states that harassment violates human rights and refers back to the board's and the province's human rights policies. In the time of my experience with antihomophobia education in Toronto, human rights were a relatively solid foundation on which our work could stand. Human rights were upheld by provincial and national legislation and by international agreements, and these rights were solidly backed by school board policy.

I am not trying to argue that human rights were the only justification for this work. To avoid suggesting this, I will take a moment here to point to some of the other rationales described in the documents discussed above. For instance, a notably different focus appears in the TDSB's *Equity Foundation Statement and Commitments to Equity Policy Implementation* (1999). This comprehensive document (taken together) does not focus extensively on the human rights

rationales that it cites. It acknowledges that "certain groups in our society are treated inequitably because of individual and systemic biases" and that "such biases exist within our school system" (p 4), then proceeds to explain how the board will ensure that "fairness, equity, and inclusion are essential principles of our school system and are integrated into all our policies, programs, operations, and practices" (p 4). It dedicates one section to "antihomophobia, sexual orientation and equity" (sec 3), which goes beyond simple antiharassment. There are dozens of commitments outlined in this section, including "ongoing, constructive, and open dialogue in partnership with [LGBTQ] communities" (p 23) and enabling LGBTQ students "to see themselves reflected in the curriculum" (p 24). Like the rest of the Commitments document, this section is organized around 10 areas such as "Leadership," "Curriculum," and "Guidance" (TDSB 1999). The degree to which these extensive commitments have actually been implemented is not my focus here (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008; McCaskell 2005, 2013).

Likewise, McCaskell and Russell (2000) cite homophobic and sexual harassment in schools—including the killing of a gay teacher, Ken Zeller, by homophobic students in 1985—as justifications for antihomophobia work, but they, too, describe broader reasons. They share a story about a student, harassed for years, who "became confident, centered, and enthusiastic about life … found friends, had relationships and became active in community work" (p 29). This student's story reaches beyond safety into affirmation and activism. McCaskell and Russell (2000) also explain the value of workshops like the ones I used to teach, of support programs and of curricular changes. They consider the "effective pedagogy" that was put into play through such equity initiatives (p 34). Justifications for the antihomophobia initiatives I am discussing here were by no means limited to human rights; again, I am focusing on human rights as an example, as a way into looking at the broader social contexts of antihomophobia education.

Rights and the Individual in Capitalism

I intend to argue here that the notion of human rights is part of and even complicit with the potentially oppressive workings of capitalism. Because of this complicity, it may ultimately be inadequate—on its own—as a tool for creating significant social change in a capitalist context, and can even be a distraction from the more hidden workings of oppressive structures. I will first examine how, through the historical process of shifts into modernity and capitalism, the notion of an "abstract individual" emerged, accompanied by ideological and juridical equality and freedom (Sayer 1991, 66). This examination will lead us toward the functioning of rights in capitalism.

In examining the emergence of the free and equal abstract individual, I will draw primarily upon Sayer's (1991) analyses of Marx's writings. Sayer (1991) states, first, that the abstract idea—or ideal—of an individual as it exists today did not exist before capitalism, but rather only became "conceivable" within a modern, capitalist context: "it is this solitary individual—'the individual' in the abstract, without any distinction of, or reference to the 'accidental' particularities of concrete circumstance—who is the moral subject of the modern world" (p 58). The conceptualization of this abstract individual is shaped by the workings of capitalism, specifically commodity exchange, which posits, along with "exchange values," the "subjects as exchangers" (p 58). The conceptualization of an abstract individual, separately from society, came into existence through capitalist modernity. Clarke (1982) explains this formulation as well, stating that "the realization of human rationality through capitalist relations . . . derives moral imperatives from the rational self-interest of the abstract individual that can serve as the basis of education, enlightenment, and legal regulation" (p 60). This notion of the individual, fundamental to the notion of human rights, emerged through the economic and ideological workings of early capitalism.

Just as the individual was established as a concept, equality and freedom are established as the rightful conditions of the individual. These notions are posited as integral to the nature of the individual in capitalism: "in exchange they [the subjects], like their products, are 'socially equated' as equals," and, further, based on the equality inherent in exchange relations, the individual is posited as participating freely (Sayer 1991, 59). On the basis of the capitalist economy, then—in which subjects are posited as equal and free in their ability to engage in exchanges of commodities, wages and labour—the abstract individual operates in a context of presupposed equality and freedom. These notions, based in the material conditions of the economy, become ideological and juridical as they are entrenched in legal systems (Sayer 1991, 59).

Of course it is fundamental to understand the materialist basis of Marx's formations in order to understand this argument. By this basis I mean his tenet that consciousness is based on the material conditions

of existence. Marx and Engels (1845/1998) make this tenet clear in *The German Ideology*, for example:

> The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. (p 42)

This framework, connecting how we think to the material conditions in which we live, helps to delineate the origins of the legal and moral notions linked to the individual in modern, capitalist society. Rooted in the material conditions of capitalism, then, are the ideological notions of the individual and his equality, freedom and rights. This gendered pronoun, "his," is intentional here, as Sayer (1991) explains: "much of what Marx wrote concerning 'individuals' in *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* [civil society] openly applied … only to (some) men"—to working men, specifically (p 58).

Although equality and freedom as concepts originate in capitalism and are entrenched in its ideological and juridical workings, they do not actually materialize for all of the real individuals who exist in the capitalist context. Sayer (1991) states that "just as the material specificity of use value is effaced in exchange value, so are the differential material circumstances of real individuals ignored in this *fictio juris* [fiction of law] who is the ideal subject of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* [civil society]" (p 60). In other words, the legal and ideological ideals are not reflected consistently in the actual experiences of individuals. While equality and freedom are espoused, they are not manifested in a "real" form. Freedom, for Marx, means maintaining power in relation to the conditions of one's life, "and capitalism, from this point of view, represents the apotheosis of unfreedom" (p 61). Under capitalism, people are not less dependent than they were before capitalism. Rather, they are dependent in a different, more universalized way, and, further, the mediation of this dependency by "material things" disguises how it works (p 63). In other words, "people appear to be independent of one another because their mutual dependency assumes the unrecognizable form of relations between commodities" (p 64). Thus capitalism entails and creates the idea of freedom at the same time as it counteracts real freedom, as it disguises a lack of freedom from oppression with a freedom to sell one's labour and purchase commodities.

Similarly, while the idea of equality is espoused—for example, politically, "universalistic, rational, consistent law provides a level playing field" within capitalism (Sayer 1991, 74)—people have varying material experiences and therefore varying social power. This disparity arises from the fact that material things mediate social power. Sayer (1991) explains Marx's ideas like this:

> Power is externalized, residing now in objective forms outside of people rather than in their differential subjective identities. It is, literally, disembodied. . . . Its essential character as a relationship of persons is obscured by the "material" forms through which it is mediated. (p 67)

So while these social relations and power are rendered external to identity and theoretically accessible to anyone who can own a material thing, in practice they are not equally shared. Some people are rich and powerful while others are poor and lack social power. With exploitation—and therefore the uneven distribution of social power—at the heart of how capitalism functions, real equality is not possible in a capitalist society (Marx and Engels 1848/1967). While anyone can own and exchange material things, according to Marx, some people are going to own the means of production and make profit off the labour of others. This profit, or surplus value, is inherently exploitative, in that the workers do not receive the full value of their labour (Marx 1867/1976; Marx and Engels 1848/1967). Freedom and equality, then, are troubled concepts, rooted in but disconnected from the material realities: their prominence within capitalist society not only contradicts but also masks its inherent inequities.

The notion of individual rights is a corollary to these notions of equality and freedom. Rights become the terms according to which "social redress" is imagined within capitalism, as Spivak states (1999, 85). Like equality and freedom, rights become entrenched in law in a capitalist context and are, in Marx's terms, a "political" basis for emancipation that capitalism sponsors (Sayer 1991, 65). This political emancipation is limited in scope, in that it does not extend to "that arena which [Marx] considered the foundation of all human beings, the 'production of life'" (Sayer 1991, 66). In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels go so far as to say that "political power . . . is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another" (1848/1967, 105), further emphasizing the limitation of such operations on a political level. Furthermore, rather than emancipating people through a collective enterprise that opposes the real (material) conditions of their oppression, rights actually separate people from each other

in an abstracting process that considers each citizen individually, in opposition to others. Marx believed that people needed to come together, collectively, in order to challenge their oppression. However, political society, with human rights, in fact protects only "egoistic man," and is actually a "restriction of their original independence" (Marx 1844, para 102). So the abstract individual is protected politically through human rights, but real individuals are in fact alienated from each other, and most are also alienated from the material power that could change their situation (Marx and Engels 1848/1967). Political rights, on a functional level, are bound up within the limitations of their capitalist context.

As we saw with freedom and equality above, the conditions promised by the discourse of rights do not extend in actuality to all of the members of capitalist society. Sayer (1991) emphasizes that the modern state is founded upon an exclusive conceptualization of citizenship: "the 'political' citizenship Marx discusses (and the 'civil' rights which go with it) have never extended to all individuals who live within civil societies"; rather, "these exclusions . . . have been fundamental to the ways in which that community has been imagined" (p 84). Sayer's argument here is linked to what Fraser (1997) sees as a "nonrealization in practice of the bourgeois ideal of open access," resulting in exclusions on the bases of "gender, property, and race" (p 77). Rights are limited in their conception, scope and practice; in Marxist terms, the notion of rights is not a tool that can effect fundamental social change. To take Audre Lorde's (1984) famous words somewhat out of context, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p 112). The notion of rights is a tool provided by capitalism, and inevitably limited to the possibilities therein: from this perspective, the oppressions inherent in capitalalism will continue to be perpetuated despite all of the best efforts made under the appeal of rights. Brown (1995) supports this contention: for example, she states that "to the extent that the egoism of rights . . . obscures the social forces producing rather than merely marking particular groups or behaviors as subhuman, rights appear to discursively bury the very powers they are designed to contest" (p 115). The prominence of human rights discourse within capitalist society can be seen as not merely contradicting, but even disguising the real oppressive workings of capitalism.

Sexual Identities in Capitalism

My brief exploration here of Marxist perspectives on human rights and the individual has suggested that meaningful "human emancipation" (Marx 1844, para 27) cannot be achieved through political protection of human rights alone. Efforts aimed at social change must engage with the material conditions of existence. What does this insight mean for our consideration of homophobia?

In order to pursue this question, I will examine how LGBTQ identities are also fundamentally bound up within a capitalist context. In order to do this, I need to take up the notion that sexual identities are essential forms of identity that have existed in a pure, unchanging form throughout all of history. Instead, they must be seen as socially constructed (Weeks 2003). Halperin (1993), building on Foucault's (1978) analysis in *The History of Sexuality*, interrogates an essentialized view of sexualities through an examination of power and sex in Ancient Greece. He argues that sexuality, or sexual identity, as we understand it today, is constructed within contemporary social contexts. Although it is currently regarded in Western contexts as a "positive, distinct, and constitutive feature of the human personality" (p 417), sexuality is "a cultural production" (p 416), and in fact only exists as such after the rise of modernity and capitalism. He states, "far from being a necessary or intrinsic constituent of human life, 'sexuality' seems indeed to be a uniquely modern, Western, even bourgeois production" (p 427). Cloud (2001) also discusses the social construction of sexuality, examining the development "and persecution of homosexuals as a category" (p 82). While diverse sexual acts have taken place over geographies and histories, distinct sexual identities are particular to this early modern capitalist context. Paralleling the emergence of the "abstract individual" discussed above then, we can envision the emergence of constitutive sexual identities through a process of shifting social relations, as Foucault (1978) argues about the emergence of figures like "the hysterical woman" or "the perverse adult" as produced identities (p 105). Sexuality itself is "a historical construct" (Foucault 1978, 105); likewise, sexual identities emerged through mechanisms of knowledge and power in particular socioeconomic contexts.

If sexual identity is a "modern, Western, even bourgeois production" (Halperin 1993, 427), then it is useful to examine more specifically the ways in which LGBTQ identities emerged historically within the workings of a capitalist economic context. With the growth of capitalist industrialism came a new way of conceptualizing those who engaged in same-sex acts, as is suggested by the fact that the word *homosexual* appears around 1870 (Foucault 1978, 43).

Notably, as the Oxford English Dictionary shows, the term *homosexual* emerged before *heterosexual*, which is indicative of the ways in which otherness is often identified as a precursor to identifying the self, or that which is normalized. Scholars such as Hennessy (2000) and D'Emilio (1992) have explored the phenomenon of sexual identities developing in capitalist contexts. D'Emilio (1992), for instance, argues that this rooting of homosexual identities in capitalism seems to be tied to the changing functions of the family with the development of a capitalist economy. He contends that "the expansion of capital and the spread of wage labor" led to significant changes in "the structure and functions of the nuclear family, the ideology of family life, and the meaning of heterosexual relations" (p 6). Before capitalism, the family was different, in that it served different kinds of economic functions. D'Emilio (1992) argues that in 17th-century New England, for example, the family functioned as an "interdependent unit" within an economy that relied on "household family-based" production (p 6). The slow shift from this type of economy to a "capitalist free-labor economy" entailed a change in the family from being an interdependent, economic basis for subsistence to being the "setting for a 'personal life,' sharply distinguished from the public world of work and production" (D'Emilio 1992, 6–7). Only with these economic changes, D'Emilio (1992) contends, did it become "possible for homosexual desire to coalesce into a personal identity—an identity based on the ability to remain outside the heterosexual family" (p 8) The advent of wage labor influenced the nature of the family and of personal life. It shaped how people thought about sexuality, helping to produce the sexual identities that we discuss today.

I would like, at this point, to consider further contemporary relations between sexual identities and capitalist economic contexts. Capitalism does not look today like it did at its beginnings. What, for instance, are the implications of economic globalization on sexual identities? We teach our students that globalization makes people in the world increasingly interdependent. Does it make us more collective-minded, however, or do the material conditions of global capitalism still support the idea of an abstract, discrete individual? What are the effects of global shifts in labour, such as the fact that a large proportion of manufacturing is carried out among the global poor, and often among women? Spivak (1999) was already able to state more than a decade ago that "the subaltern woman is now to a rather large extent the support of production" (p 67). What are the consequences for conceptions of gender and sexual identities of these kinds of global dynamics? Scholars like Binnie (2004) and Knegt (2011) have examined sexuality in relation to contemporary national and global economics and politics. However, these kinds of questions are ultimately outside the scope of this paper.

I have argued in this section that capitalism and sexual identities are interconnected; next, I will explore what that means for homophobia. If LGBTQ identities are tied to the context of capitalism, then the oppression of LGBTQ identities is also tied to the context of capitalism. Just as we have been able to examine the emergence of sexualities, we can examine the emergence and functioning of homophobia and heterosexism within capitalism. In order to approach this examination, I want to explore more closely the roles and functioning of the family.

One Model of the Family in Capitalism

First, to be consistent with my previous examinations, I will examine one model of the heterosexual nuclear family, as it might have been conceived in the early days of capitalism. (I am by no means invoking this model as a current, natural or desirable model of the family, as I will explore further below.) Ideas about families, like sexual identities, are not eternal and unchanging, but are shaped within particular contexts (Cloud 2001, 75). One model of the heterosexual nuclear family, or, "what is popularly (and erroneously) understood in present-day North America as the 'traditional' family of the male breadwinner with female and youthful dependents" is tied to a capitalist economic context in particular ways: it "presumes commodity production on the basis of wage labour" (Sayer 1991, 36; Marx 1867/1976). The family exists in this form because of the way labour works in capitalism. Its functioning of course relies on the unwaged labour of women, or a gendered division of labour; that is, capitalism relies on the private, "unpaid, uncommoditized labour of women in the home" (Sayer 1991, 32). Cloud (2001) contends that "capitalism produced and requires the separation of household labor from relations of production and commodity exchange so that it will not have to pay for the services performed in the domestic sphere" (p 78). These "services" include, among many others, the reproduction of future male workers (Marx 1867/1976, 275; Sayer 1991, 31). The reproductive heterosexual family thus supports the capitalist economy.

Pursuing this model of the family further, another of its functions within capitalism is that of maintaining the split between the private and the public. This split, so "fundamental to the modern state" and to the workings of capitalism, entails the separation of supposedly public, "external" parts of society—such as the economy, political life and the abstract individual—from supposedly private entities—such as the family and the real, private individual (Sayer 1991, 75). This separation of the economy from the family helps to perpetuate labour: the family becomes entrenched as a private realm in which the male worker, as imagined above, can escape the public world of work (Adams and Sydie 2002). It distracts him from the "brutal and unforgiving world of wage labor" (Cloud 2001, 78). Warner's (1999) ideas support this analysis, as he argues that thinking of marriage as a personal act masks its profoundly public—that is, political and economic—functioning, including the social inequalities that inequitable access to marriage produces. As a private realm, the family becomes sanctified as "an affective unit" that provides "emotional satisfaction and happiness" as well as the setting for a "personal life" (D'Emilio 1992, 7). D'Emilio (1992) says that "the ideology of capitalist society has enshrined the family as the source of love, affection, and emotional security, the place where our need for stable, intimate human relationships is satisfied" (p 11). Notably, the private space of the family is also a space for consumption; one supposed form of freedom for individuals in capitalism is the freedom to purchase goods and services (Kumar 1997). Most important, the family is an escape from the power relations of the public realm. In his private life, the male worker can be the master, given how the male domination of women has been integrated within capitalism (Cloud 2001, 78–79). As Sayer (1991) argues, "capitalism has so far been, amongst other things, a patriarchy, and integrally rather than merely incidentally so" (p 37). The public/private split in capitalism discourages people from recognizing the larger workings of society and their direct relation to them; they become, as a result, less likely to resist capitalism itself (Marx and Engels, 1848/1967, 92). In these ways, the family is a necessary and valuable structure for capitalism; it upholds the capitalist economy, while its members believe its function to be a profoundly personal, private one, outside of the economy. Again, I am working here with only one model of the family—one that generations of feminists, queer theorists and other critics have discussed and challenged. This model was never a universal, even in early modern capitalism (Cloud 2001; Marx 1848/1967), and is even less so now (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001). It is only one model. Having discussed the way this model works in capitalism and is universalized (though never universal), I must next look at how homophobia in capitalism connects to its functioning.

Homophobia and the Family in Capitalism

Using the model and functioning of the family model I just described, I will next explore connections between the family, capitalism and homophobia. First, if the heterosexual family is the site of labour's reproduction, it follows that the heterosexual family will be valued and deviations policed: non-reproductive relationships would constitute a threat to the imperative to participate in a heterosexual family (Cloud, 2001, p. 101). Of course, this argument only works if one presumes that only the heterosexual family can produce future workers—a presumption that has little place in contemporary society (Knegt, 2011; Weeks, Heaphy, & Donovan, 2001). Certainly heterosexual sex does not always "lead to procreation" (Weeks, 2003, p. 13), but, further, reproduction is changing, as "the possibilities for parenting, motherhood and fatherhood, are being innovatively explored, to the extent that parenting practices do not necessarily depend on biological relationships, and gendered notions of mothering and fathering are held up for scrutiny" (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, 198). Nonheterosexually-coupled people have children too. Scholars have examined the functioning of this presumption about the heterosexual family and reproduction, however, given its social impact (Cloud 2001, D'Emilio 1992; Hennessy 2000). D'Emilio (1992), for instance, suggests that homophobia and capitalism fit together if the heterosexual family is assumed to be the site of reproduction: "the elevation of the family to ideological preeminence guarantees that a capitalist society will reproduce not just children, but heterosexism and homophobia" (p 13). Persecution of LGBTQ people reinforces the supposed reproductive value of the heterosexual family.

Homophobia functions less clearly in relation to the second function of the heterosexual family outlined above; that is, the creation of a private realm away from work and the economy. Do LGBTQ identities threaten the sanctity of this private realm? Not necessarily. LGBTQ people, too, can participate in wage labour and build private lives that provide

respite from the exploitations inherent to capitalism. LGBTQ people can of course also be consumers in this context: many scholars have explored the notion of the "pink dollar" (Walcott 2004) and other phenomena where capitalism may welcome or exploit LGBTQ identities (Cloud 2001; Gluckman and Reed 1997; Jeppesen 2010). It is possible that LGBTQ people constitute an abstract threat to the supposed sanctity of the family, however, in that, just by existing, they suggest that the heteronormative family model is an arbitrary or socially constructed model, rather than a "natural" or "universal" ideal (D'Emilio 1992). For one thing, same-sex relationships may challenge the asymmetrical gender roles attributed to men and women in the heterosexual family model I have employed here, in that, at a bare minimum, which spouse will work and which spouse will provide unwaged domestic labour is a point that must be negotiated, rather than assumed in accordance with sexist values. Sexism and homophobia are of course importantly linked; Almaguer (1991), among many others, has explored this connection, for instance, by examining how gay men are condemned for supposedly acting more like women, during sex or otherwise. If capitalism incorporates sexist structures—including but not limited to those discussed above—then homophobia may, again, act to defend the heterosexual family as one of its structural elements.

This situation may seem contradictory, in that capitalism both enables and opposes the existence of LGBTQ identities. However, such contradictions are not uncommon in this terrain. D'Emilio (1992), for instance, explains how capitalism both "push[es] men and women into families" and "continually weakens the material foundation of family life" (p 13), for instance through the expansion of wage labour, which means that the supposedly traditional family model discussed above has become less hegemonic. D'Emilio (1992) and Cloud (2001) contend that LGBTQ people have been "scapegoats" for the "social instability that capitalism generates"—for supposedly threatening the heterosexual nuclear family—when, in fact, "capitalism is the problem" (D'Emilio 1992, 13). Similarly, one could contend that nonheterosexual identities can function—along the lines of Foucault's (1978) arguments—in order to police the heterosexual family. By this I mean that LGBTQ identities, for capitalism, could function as an undesirable "other" in relation to the normative "self" of heterosexuality, reinforcing heterosexism and homophobia. LGBTQ identities may be useful as scapegoats or foils for heterosexual nuclear families, if capitalism relies on these structures. In this sense, the seemingly contradictory relationship between capitalism and homophobia could be integral, rather than accidental. Of course the model of the family I have explored here is by no means the only basis for understanding connections between homophobia and capitalism, but I hope to have illustrated a few ways in which these two concepts are significantly intertwined.

Challenging Homophobia in Capitalism

What are the implications for antihomophobia social justice work if capitalism and homophobia are so interconnected? As the many thinkers cited above have suggested, material factors influence both sexual identities and people's intolerance of these identities. How, then, do we think about antihomophobia education? Such work would benefit from considering the material realm, in order to engage with the dynamics within capitalism that influence homophobia (Fudge and Glasbeek 1992).

This brings me back to the case of human rights, with which I began this exploration of homophobia and its socioeconomic contexts. If the notion of individual rights emerged with early modern capitalism, then is it a useful notion for antihomophobia work? Is this idea of defending the abstract individual at a legal level an effective concept for social justice? I have suggested in this article that the framework of individual rights emerged along with modernity and capitalism (Sayer 1991), and that this framework remains complicit with the workings of a capitalist system. I have suggested that the legal protection of individual rights is not enough to ensure that real people enjoy not only the freedom to participate in the economy as subjects, but freedom from homophobic violence or prejudice in their daily lives. This point fits with common sense: as a teacher, I know that rules are not enough, and that I need to engage my students in dialogue about how we treat each other in a respectful community in order to keep the ideas and values behind the rules alive and meaningful. Human rights, of course, are extremely important; my point here is that they are not enough (Fudge and Glasbeek 1992). They are certainly not enough when it comes to transforming the attitudes and behaviours that lead LGBTQ youth to experience bullying, violence and suicide (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008). Knegt (2011) makes this point about "queer rights" in Canada, suggesting that, while advancements in rights are signs of "progress," they do not

mean that the "overarching and inter-connected problems of homophobia and heterosexism" have been addressed (pp 5–9). Human rights create important social changes: even Marx (1844) argues that "political emancipation"—at which level rights operate—"is, of course, a big step forward. True, it is not the final form of human emancipation in general, but it is the final form of human emancipation within the hitherto existing world order" (para 51). We know, of course, that Marx's suggestion was then to change "the existing world order" by struggling collectively to overthrow capitalism (Marx and Engels 1848/1967). A number of scholars have engaged with this framework, or looked for other ways to oppose homophobia and heterosexism that are informed by materialist or economic analyses.

Shifting further away from the supposed preeminence of the heterosexual nuclear family model is one possible venue for change (Cloud 2001; D'Emilio 1992). Cloud (2001) argues that a "gay and lesbian challenge to 'family values' could point the way toward a strategy of liberation" that links meaningfully to economic contexts (p 107). I should clarify that, in critiquing the concept of "family values," Cloud (1998, 2001) examines how that concept is used, for instance, rhetorically to scapegoat minoritized groups and to privatize social responsibility. As Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) point out, there is a great deal of complexity and contestation when it comes to language about "the family" in social discourse (p 15–18). Meanwhile, D'Emilio (1992) emphasizes that "gay men and lesbians exist on social terrain beyond the boundaries of the heterosexual nuclear family" and are therefore in a good position to "broaden the opportunities for living outside the traditional heterosexual family units" through "programs and issues that provide a material basis for personal autonomy" (p 13). Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) explore, in-depth, shifts in families and intimate relationships, describing what amounts to an "informal revolution taking place in everyday life" (p 187). They argue, citing Foucault, that such "life experiments" constitute "practices of freedom," opening up alternate ethical and personal possibilities, rejecting "models of domination and subordination" (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, 187). Changes in "intimate relationships and families of choice" are allowing people to "reach beyond the heterosexual assumption" (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, 187). If the functioning of homophobia in capitalism is tied to the imposition of one model of the family, as described above, then challenges to this imposition can in turn challenge homophobia and heterosexism.

Broader improvements for LGBTQ people can also fit within collective social justice work aimed at capitalism itself. Cloud (2001) makes this point by critiquing "identity politics": she argues for more collective work, incorporating "solidarity across 'identities' of race, gender, and sexuality" (p 90) and aimed at "the institutions, structures, and public relations of power" (p 102). She insists that such work cannot focus only on "private, moral, sexual behavior" (p 102) and must incorporate "class" and the "public" realm. Hennessy (2000) similarly critiques attempts at social change that do not consider the influence of capitalism or the material roots of oppression. She believes that recognizing how identities are socially constructed will enable people to move beyond identity-based politics to work collectively. She calls this process "disidentification" and says that it involves "unlearning" and "uprooting" the "identities we take for granted" (p 229). Hennessy (2000) believes that the ability to work collectively against the economic root causes of social inequalities is essential: letting go of identity politics enables "a standpoint that does not claim any single group identity but rather the collectivity of those whose surplus human needs capitalism has outlawed" (p 230). Recognizing that there are economic factors at work behind social injustices, scholars such as Cloud and Hennessy have argued that those economic factors must be the primary targets if social change is to take place.

Another way to work against homophobia and heterosexism involves incorporating analyses of economic contexts into LGBTQ advocacy—in other words, looking at material factors and social factors surrounding sexuality together. This entails recognizing that different systems of oppression "mutually constitute each other" (Razack 2002, 16), and not focusing on class or other material aspects at the expense of gender and sexuality, or vice versa. Fraser (1997) argues that oppressions are related to both "economic disadvantage and cultural disrespect" (p 12). She therefore argues that "redistribution"—or economic approaches—cannot fully address injustices such as those based on gender and race, and so "recognition"—or considerations of identity-based difference—must also be incorporated into social justice work (Fraser 1997, 32). Comparably, Gluckman and Reed (1997) contend that "the fight against homophobia will take on its most liberating forms only if it is conceived as part of a broader vision of social and economic justice" (p 525). Work done to oppose identity-based oppressions cannot erase "history and its constructive social relations" (Bannerji

1995, 38). While it is possible that focusing primarily on challenging the problematic elements of capitalism would lead to a better society for LGBTQ people, this kind of multifaceted approach may be more viable.

Jeppesen (2010) articulates very well the need for forms of antiheteronormative activism that incorporate an understanding of economic contexts. She calls for those that do not replicate consumer-friendly norms: "anti-capitalist queer organizing assumes a critical relation to the new power hierarchies that have been established within queer culture, to unlink queer culture from consumerism, offering critiques of gay villages steeped in commerce, the 'pink dollar,' the gay niche market, and corporate sponsorship of Pride marches" (Jeppesen 2010, 470). She critiques actions such as "Kiss-Ins and Mall Zaps" (p 471), as they do not challenge sociocultural norms: "a Kiss-In emphasizes public kissing, not a norm in all ethnocultural groups. Shopping imagines all queers as middle-class consumers who escalate environmental devastation" (Jeppesen 2010, 472). These kinds of "queer activism," while they are "earnest attempts to challenge heteronormativity," have "inadvertently reinscribed a homonormative subject complicit with capitalism, racism, environmental destruction, ableism, patriarchy, beauty myths and so on. Radical queer activists attempt to move beyond this deadlock without abandoning the notion of queer culture altogether" (Jeppesen 2010, 472). Antiheteronormative activism needs to be critical and "radical," according to Jeppesen; it needs to move beyond seeking inclusion in the economy into challenging problematic aspects of capitalist contexts.

Conclusion: Possibilities for Antihomophobia Education

In this article, I have argued that significant change for LGBTQ people must come from an understanding of the socio-economic contexts that shape homophobia. Efforts at creating change must seek to navigate these contexts. Human rights are an important tool for protecting LGBTQ people from violence and discrimination. However, human rights are caught up within the ideological workings of a capitalist economic structure, which, in turn, shapes the functioning of homophobia and heterosexism. Because of these interconnections, human rights alone are not an adequate tool for bringing about more significant social and economic shifts. Human rights, articulated through terms of capitalist ideologies, cannot by themselves transform the heteronormative structures and attitudes that capitalism enables. Antihomophobia work needs human rights, but it also needs more. It needs to work with an understanding of the historical contexts that make it necessary. My focus in this paper is on economic dimensions; there are of course others that can inform antihomophobia work. Perhaps, if we continue to grasp the threads that make up the fabric of contemporary heteronormative discrimination, we can eventually pull the whole thing apart.

I began this paper by discussing antihomophobia education work being done in Toronto schools in the early years of the new millennium. I have suggested that a range of sociological analyses connect to the importance of that work. My study here of the links between rights discourse, capitalism and homophobia forms only a single example. While it has been years since I participated in the kind of antihomophobia workshop I described at the beginning of this paper, I am no less convinced that such work is intricate, intimate and powerful. Its possibilities have not yet, I believe, been fully investigated. Vast and crucial aspects of its workings need to be explored further, such as the connections formed between teller and listener in telling coming out stories in schools, the multiple levels of engagement and resistance, shock and identification, experienced by students, and the specificities of antihomophobia work here in our province—to suggest only a few ideas. I extend a call to others to continue the significant discussions that are already taking place about antihomophobia education. I intend to do the same.

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