Policing Gender Through Housing and Employment Discrimination: Comparison of Discrimination Experiences of Transgender and Cisgender LGBQ Individuals

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ABSTRACT  Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community experience higher rates of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts. However, discrimination might not occur equally across all members of the community. This article examines the prevalence of and factors associated with experiences of discrimination for cisgender LGBQ individuals and those who identify as transgender. Findings suggest that as compared with cisgender participants, transgender individuals experience a higher frequency of discrimination related to housing and employment. Factors associated with experiencing discrimination include gender identity; length of time being out, that is, openly disclosing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity; age; and race. Results of this study make clear that it is imperative for social workers, educators, and other human service professionals to be aware of and actively work against transphobic policies and actions that affect the quality of life for transgender individuals beyond the already increased discrimination risks faced by the LGBTQ community.

KEY WORDS: transgender, cisgender, discrimination, housing, employment, LGBTQ
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A majority of states in the United States do not offer legal protection from discrimination for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. To date, only the District of Columbia and 21 of the 50 states have enacted laws that prohibit housing and employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, whereas only 18 of these states (and
the District of Columbia) offer legal protection from housing and employment discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity (National LGBTQ Task Force, 2014a). Regardless of state legal protections, LGBTQ individuals continue to experience discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Pizer, Sears, Mallory, & Hunter, 2011). Although some instances of discrimination are reported and brought to court in those states with antidiscrimination laws, a large percentage of the LGBTQ community experiences housing or employment discrimination, most of which is never legally challenged (Esses, 2009; Pizer et al., 2011). Policies regarding housing and employment are often discussed, debated, and created in tandem, and experiences of discrimination in one area can inform access to the other. Therefore, we sought to examine both housing and employment discrimination as forms of discrimination that are illegal in some states, but which continue to occur. Both the dearth of legal protection based on gender identity and gender expression, as well as the social stigma experienced by transgender individuals (i.e., those whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth; Bockting et al., 2013), raise the question of whether members of the transgender community experience higher rates of discrimination as compared with the already heightened rates of cisgender LGBQ individuals (i.e., those whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth).

**Discrimination in Housing**

The federal Fair Housing Act, originally enacted in 1968 following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 2014a), protects individuals from housing discrimination based on a number of characteristics (i.e., race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status), but notably does not include protection for sexual orientation and gender identity (HUD, 2014b). However, as discussed, state-level policies prohibiting biased behavior have been enacted by some states and the District of Columbia (HUD, 2014b). In addition, some scholars have argued that transgender individuals should be protected by the Fair Housing Act’s prohibition of sex-based discrimination (e.g., Esses, 2009). Although the Fair Housing Act does not include sexual orientation or gender identity, the Equal Access to Housing in HUD Programs Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity (Equal Access Rule; 2012) became effective March 5, 2012, and stated that eligibility for HUD-assisted or HUD-insured housing must not be influenced by “actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status” (p. 5663). Further, the Equal Access Rule prohibits owners of such assisted or insured housing from inquiring about an applicant’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status unless a person’s sex must be known for specific, limited purposes (e.g., determining the number of bedrooms for which a household is eligible; Equal Access Rule, 2012; Klimkiewicz, Kinnaird, & Koukourinis, 2014).
In a meta-analysis of the victimization and discrimination experienced by cisgender LGB individuals, Katz-Wise and Hyde (2012) found that 9% of their sample had experienced housing discrimination. Similarly, Herek (2009) found that 11.2% of cisgender LGB participants had experienced housing discrimination, employment discrimination, or both. Upon further analysis, Herek found statistically significant higher rates of employment and housing discrimination experienced by gay men (17.7%) and lesbian women (16.3%) as compared with bisexual men (3.7%) and bisexual women (6.8%).

Although the progress made by HUD to protect transgender individuals from housing discrimination is encouraging, as well as policies enacted in some states to provide anti-discrimination protections above and beyond federal requirements, recent research has indicated that transgender individuals continue to experience housing discrimination (e.g., Bradford, Reisner, Honnold, & Xavier, 2013). Moreover, transgender people not only face discrimination in accessing new housing but also face the possibility of losing or being evicted from housing because of discrimination based on gender identity or gender expression (Esses, 2009). A national study of transgender individuals found that 19% of participants were denied access to housing for which they had applied and an additional 11% of participants reported they had been evicted from existing housing because of their gender identity. These statistics suggest that almost a third of the respondents in this national sample had experienced some form of housing discrimination (Grant et al., 2011). Further, in a recent study of 350 transgender-identified people in Virginia, 9.1% of participants reported they experienced some form of housing discrimination related to their transgender identity (Bradford et al., 2013).

Housing discrimination among transgender individuals is found in a variety of contexts, not just in the rental and homeownership markets. For example, in an analysis of higher education housing that used data from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (N = 2,772), Seelman (2014) found that nearly one fifth (19%) of all respondents were not permitted to live in on-campus gender-appropriate housing based on their transgender or gender variant identities even though they were enrolled as on-campus students. Moreover, many transgender individuals without permanent housing have encountered discriminatory policies and practices at homeless shelters because most shelters are segregated by binary sex such as male/female (Mottet & Ohle, 2006).

Research has indicated that although transgender individuals of all backgrounds experience housing discrimination, transgender people of color appear to experience particularly high rates of housing discrimination. Results from Xavier, Bobbin, Singer, and Budd’s (2005) exploration of issues faced by transgender people of color (N = 248) in the District of Columbia indicated that 19% of participants reported they did not have their own housing, with “housing staff insensitivity or hostility to transgender people” (p. 38) being one of the main reasons
cited for their lack of housing. In Fletcher, Kisler, and Rebacks’s (2014) examination of transgender women in Los Angeles ($N = 517$), among all participants who reported homelessness ($N = 180$), Hispanic/Latina women experienced the highest prevalence of homelessness (32.9%), followed by African American/Black (30.5%), White (22.6%), Native American/Alaskan (10.4%), and Multiracial/other (3.7%) women. Despite Hispanic/Latina transgender women demonstrating the highest prevalence among the subsample, Fletcher and colleagues (2014) noted that this ethnic group was actually underrepresented among homeless transgender women.

Although prevalence studies have indicated that transgender people of color report high levels of housing discrimination, statistical comparisons of housing discrimination experiences of White transgender people and transgender people of color have been less clear. A recent study that used data from a Colorado-based sample found LGBTQ people of color experienced higher levels of housing discrimination than White LGBTQ people; 19.7% versus 9.4%, respectively (Whitfield, Walls, Langenderfer-Magruder, & Clark, 2014). Similarly, results from the Virginia Transgender Health Initiative Study ($N = 350$) indicated that 9.1% of respondents experienced housing discrimination; however, participants who identified as racial/ethnic minorities were significantly more likely to report having experienced housing discrimination than were White participants (Bradford et al., 2013). Contrary to these findings, Seelman’s (2014) analysis of housing discrimination in higher education settings did not find differences by race (i.e., White students compared with students of color). Given the conflicting results in the extant literature, more research is warranted to explore racial and ethnic differences in housing discrimination experiences of transgender persons.

**Discrimination in Employment**

As with housing discrimination, evidence exists showing that LGBTQ individuals experience elevated rates of employment discrimination as compared with their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Anastas, 1998; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2012; Ragins, 2004; Woods, 1993), including being fired because they “failed to demonstrate normal, heterosexual values” (Elliott, 1993, p. 217). LGBTQ individuals often factor potential employment discrimination and coping strategies into their career choices, and might avoid certain career paths based on perceptions that discrimination is more likely to occur in certain industries (Chung, Williams, & Dispenza, 2009). Out of fear of anti-LGBTQ discrimination, LGBTQ people often use different strategies to cope with hostile work environments; two such coping strategies are quitting jobs that discriminate and being silent in response to discrimination (Chung et al., 2009). Another common strategy is to change workplace behavior, including “passing” so as not to be identified as LGBTQ (Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005). However, these behavior changes can negatively affect psychological well-being (Ragins, 2004).
According to the National LGBTQ Task Force (2014a), individuals in 32 states and the District of Columbia might fail to be hired or might be fired because of their gender identity. Similar to the progress with housing discrimination, strides have been made to end employment discrimination for LGBTQ individuals, most notably the U.S. Senate’s passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2013 (ENDA; 2013), which prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. However, the Senate version of ENDA (Senate Bill 815) includes an exemption for religious organizations that protects these employers from penalties for noncompliance with the Act’s nondiscrimination provisions; in other words, this exemption allows religious organizations to continue discriminatory employment practices based on applicants’ LGBTQ status (National LGBTQ Task Force, 2014b). Moreover, although ENDA was passed by the Senate, the bill has been stalled in the House of Representatives and has not been brought to a floor vote (National LGBTQ Task Force, 2014b). Recently, U.S. President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 11478, which includes gender identity as a protected class under Equal Employment Opportunity for federal employees (The White House, 2014). Although legal protections against employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity have yet to become a reality on a federal level for individuals in all states, President Obama amended Executive Order 11246 to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected identities for employment in the federal government (Hudson, 2014; The White House, 2014).

Experiences of workplace discrimination have been reported by 15% to 40% of cisgender LGB individuals (Dabrowski, 2014). As in housing, transgender individuals have historically reported high rates of employment discrimination, ranging from 22.3% to 47% (Bradford et al., 2013; Grant et al., 2011; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2002). Bradford et al. (2013) not only found that 9.1% of transgender Virginians had experienced housing discrimination but also found that 22.3% of participants had reported employment discrimination; notably, 5.7% of their sample had experienced both forms of discrimination. Other evidence of workplace discrimination has been gathered from the National Transgender Discrimination Survey (N = 6,436), in particular, which has illuminated many nuanced issues pertaining to transgender employment discrimination (Grant et al., 2011). Specifically, 44% of the survey respondents reported underemployment; 47% reported they had experienced an adverse outcome (e.g., not being hired, being fired, being passed over for a promotion) because of being transgender or gender variant; 26% reported being fired because of their gender identity or gender non-conformity; 71% hid their gender or transition, and 57% postponed their transition specifically to avoid job-related discrimination (Grant et al., 2011).

Similar to housing discrimination, research has shown that transgender people of color experience greater employment-related discrimination than their White
peers. Although the unemployment rate of transgender persons is double that of the general population, the unemployment rate of transgender people of color is 4 times that of the general population (Grant et al., 2011). Racial and ethnic differences are also apparent in job loss because of gender identity discrimination, with particularly high rates found among Multiracial (36%), American Indian (36%), and Black (32%) respondents (Grant et al., 2011). A Colorado-based research study found that White LGBTQ individuals experienced lower levels of employment discrimination than LGBTQ people of color; 37.7% versus 42.2%, respectively ($N = 3,845$; Whitfield et al., 2014). Taken together, these findings demonstrate a need for more information on the experiences of employment discrimination among transgender people of color.

**Being Out and Discrimination**

The term *coming out* (or *being out*) refers to individuals’ disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity. With increasing social acceptance of individuals who identify as LGBTQ, the average age at which individuals come out has decreased; thus, more adolescents and young adults are coming out at younger ages than previous generations (Floyd & Bakeman, 2006; Russell, Ryan, Toomey, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2011). Studies have suggested that coming out is associated with positive psychosocial adjustment and increased life satisfaction (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Semsa, 2007; D’Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2005; Griffith, Hebl, 2002; Kosciw, Palmer, & Kull, 2015); however, coming out has also been associated with a greater risk of experiencing harassment and victimization (Connell, 2012; Gardner, de Vries, & Mockus; 2014; Kosciw, Greytak, Bartiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012; Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009). Therefore, although individuals might have fewer negative psychological effects from coming out, individuals who are out are more likely to experience discrimination, harassment, and victimization. Indeed, studies have found a relationship between a person’s length of time of being out and the likelihood of experiencing discrimination, harassment, and victimization (D’Augelli & Grossman, 2001; Huebner, Rebchook, & Kegels, 2004; Swank, Fhs, & Frost, 2013), suggesting that the longer an individual has been out as LGBTQ, the greater the exposure to possible anti-LGBQ experiences.

**Research Questions**

Based on the emerging literature that has detailed the prevalence of discrimination against LGBTQ people in housing and employment and evidence that has demonstrated the high levels of discrimination experienced by transgender individuals, this study examined whether transgender individuals experience a higher prevalence of discrimination in housing and employment as compared with their cisgender counterparts in the LGBQ community.
In addition, this study sought to identify which factors were associated with the experience of discrimination in employment and housing against individuals in the LGBTQ community.

**Method**

Using secondary data analysis of the 2010 One Colorado LGBTQ Community Needs Assessment Survey (N = 4,619), collected by One Colorado, a statewide advocacy organization, the authors compared the rates of discrimination in housing and in employment between transgender people and cisgender LGBQ individuals. The One Colorado survey study was designed to assess the needs and experiences of the LGBTQ community statewide, including experiences of discrimination. Data were collected using online surveys, available in English and Spanish, advertised to potential participants via One Colorado’s e-mail list, partner organizations’ member lists, and Facebook. The sample included respondents 18 years and older throughout Colorado. Among other questions, respondents were asked if they had ever experienced discrimination in various social situations and contexts. The Institutional Review Board of the University of Denver approved the current study as secondary data analysis.

The analytic sample was composed of respondents who answered the items pertinent to the research questions. From the original sample (N = 4,619), 781 cases (16.9%) were dropped because of missing responses on the dependent variable or the predictor variables. Prior to deleting the cases, the pattern of missing data was examined at both the univariate and multivariate levels. The missing data were found to be missing completely at random, and therefore, cases with missing data were deleted. Specifically, cases were removed if the participant did not identify an age of coming out, did not respond to the questions regarding experiences of workplace or housing discrimination, or did not identify a racial/ethnic category. After removing these cases, the final analytic sample consisted of 3,838 participants.

**Measures**

**Independent variables.** Basic demographics included gender identity (cisgender [reference group] and transgender); race/ethnicity (Black, Asian, Latino/Latina, Native American, Multiracial, and White [reference group]); sexual orientation (queer, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, and gay [reference group]); and age. Gender identity was collected using categories of female, male, transgender, intersex, and self-identify; these categories were recoded to cisgender (individuals who identified as male or female) and transgender (individuals who identified as transgender or self-identify). The four individuals who identified as intersex were removed from the analysis because the subgroup was too small to analyze separately. Moreover, we
removed the intersex subgroup rather than collapse it into the transgender category because even though intersexuality is often conflated with transgender identity, intersexuality is a different construct. Whereas some intersex individuals identify as transgender, others do not. Another small subgroup consisted of individuals who identified their race/ethnicity as Middle Eastern \((n = 6)\); also because the subgroup was too small for separate analysis, these individuals were recoded into the Asian group. These changes yielded a final analytic sample of 3,838 respondents, of whom 153 respondents were transgender or gender variant.

The survey collected age data categorically, using seven age range (in years) groups: 17 and younger, 18 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, and 65 and older. Age was recoded to the high point in each category, with 75 years used for the 65 and older category (Hout, 2004). This approach allowed the analysis to include calculation of a variable for the number of years the person has been out \((years\ being\ out)\). The \(years\ being\ out\) variable was included based on the literature about experiences of discrimination among LGBTQ individuals and the data available for analysis (Meyer & Northridge, 2007). The continuous variable \(years\ being\ out\) was derived by subtracting the participant’s age at which they came out as LGBTQ from their recoded current age.

**Dependent variables.** Respondents’ experiences of housing discrimination were assessed by one survey item that asked whether the participant had ever experienced housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; response options were yes, no, or not sure. Similarly, respondents’ experiences of employment discrimination were assessed by one item that asked whether the participant had ever experienced employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; response options were yes, no, or not sure.

**Data Analysis**
Prior to inferential analysis, descriptive analysis of the sample was completed. Following that step, chi-square tests of independence were undertaken to determine if differences in experiences of housing and employment discrimination varied by gender identity. Finally, multinomial logistic regression analysis was completed to determine predictors of discrimination in a multivariate context.

**Chi-square test of independence.** The variable of participants identifying as cis-gender versus transgender was analyzed alongside the categorical variables (i.e., yes, no, or not sure) for experiences of housing or employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Multinomial logistic regression.** Two multinomial logistic regression models were constructed to examine the two dependent variables: (a) experiencing housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and (b) experiencing employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
The survey response set allowed for yes, no, and not sure. The first model regressed gender identity/sexual orientation-based housing discrimination on years being out and the demographic variables of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and age. The second model regressed gender identity/sexual orientation-based employment discrimination on years being out and the demographic variables of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, and age.

Results

Descriptive Statistics
The vast majority of respondents identified as cisgender, 96.1% (n = 3,690) whereas 3.9% (n = 148) identified as transgender. Regarding sexual orientation, more than half of the sample identified as gay (53.1%, n = 2,039), followed by lesbian (30.1%, n = 1,155), bisexual (8.8%, n = 336), queer (7.7%, n = 295), and heterosexual (0.3%, n = 13). All individuals who identified as heterosexual also identified as transgender. Regarding race, the largest group identified as White (81.7%, n = 3,134), followed by Latino/Latina (7.7%, n = 296), Multiracial (4.1%, n = 158), Black (2.9%, n =112), Asian (1.4%, n = 52), and Native American (0.7%, n = 27). The sample represented a wide range of ages older than 18 years, with the smallest group of respondents being 65 years and older. The mean age in the sample was 44.43 years (SD = 13.31), with a median of 44 years.

Individuals in the cisgender sample were more likely to be gay (55.1%, p < .001), White (82.9%, p < .01), employed full time (58.6%, p < .01), have a postsecondary degree (38.4%, p < .001), have been out for a mean of 22.8 years (p < .05), and have a mean age of 44.5 (p < .01). Participants who identified as transgender were more likely to be queer (45.9%, p < .001), White (83.6%, p > .01), employed full time (45.9%, p < .01), and have some college (33.8%, p < .001). As compared with their cisgender counterparts, transgender participants had been out for fewer years, with a mean of 19.2 years out (p < .05), and were younger, with a mean age of 41.6 (p < .001). See Table 1 for further details.

Experiences of Discrimination
Overall, 5.8% of LGBTQ individuals reported being victims of housing discrimination (n = 222) and 26.3% reported experiencing employment discrimination (n = 1,011) based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Our comparison of differences in rates of housing discrimination by gender identity showed no statistically significant association between gender identity and housing discrimination. Among cisgender LGBQ participants, 5.7% reported experiencing sexual orientation/gender identity-based housing discrimination, 89% reported no experience of such housing discrimination, and 5.4% indicated being unsure of whether
they had experienced housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In comparison, 9.2% of transgender participants reported an experience of sexual orientation/gender identity-based housing discrimination, 82.9% reported no experience of such housing discrimination, and 7.9% reported being unsure if they had experienced housing discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity ($\chi^2 = 5.47, p = .06$).
In contrast, a statistically significant association was found between gender identity and experiences of workplace discrimination, with cisgender LGBQ participants statistically less likely to report experiencing workplace discrimination than transgender participants. Specifically, 25.1% of cisgender LGBQ participants reported ever having experienced workplace discrimination, whereas 50% of transgender participants reported ever having experienced workplace discrimination based on their gender identity. In addition, a statistically significant between-group difference was found in reports of never having experienced gender identity-based workplace discrimination, with 62.5% of cisgender LGBQ participants reporting no experiences of such workplace discrimination compared with only 35.5% of transgender participants who reported no experience of gender identity-based workplace discrimination. However, transgender participants were statistically less likely to report being unsure if workplace discrimination was based on their gender identity (12.5%) as compared with cisgender LGBQ participants (14.5%) who were unsure if they had experienced gender identity-based workplace discrimination (χ² = 52.56, p < .001). See Tables 2 and 3 for details.

Housing
A multinomial logistic regression model was conducted to analyze which variables were predictive of housing discrimination. Table 4 presents the odds ratios (ORs) and significance levels for the five variables in the model. The model indicates that the variables for years of being out, age, gender identity, and racial identity were predictive of experiencing anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination, albeit in different ways. No significant differences emerged based on sexual orientation identity. As the values for years of being out increased, individuals were more likely to be in the yes category than the no category (p > .01) for experiencing anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination, and more likely to be in the not sure category than the no category (p < .01) for experiencing anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination. For each year of being

| Table 2 |
|———|

| Prevalence of LGBTQ Housing Discrimination by Gender Identity (N = 3,838) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cisgender</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.
Table 3
Prevalence of LGBTQ Employment Discrimination by Gender Identity (N = 3,838)

<table>
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<th>Gender identity</th>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cisgender</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>2,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>76***</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>54***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. LGBTQ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 4
Multinomial Logistic Regression for Housing Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Unsure</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odds Ratio, 95% CI</td>
<td>Odds Ratio, 95% CI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outness</td>
<td>1.03 [1.01, 1.05]**</td>
<td>1.04 [1.01, 1.06]*****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.00 [0.98, 1.02]</td>
<td>0.96 [0.93, 0.98]*****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (cisgender)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>2.21 [1.12, 4.36]*</td>
<td>1.28 [0.60, 2.74]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (White)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.30 [0.07, 1.22]</td>
<td>1.06 [0.45, 2.48]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.80 [0.63, 5.11]</td>
<td>1.38 [0.42, 9.06]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Latina</td>
<td>2.41 [1.56, 3.73]*****</td>
<td>2.74 [1.80, 4.15]*****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>3.05 [1.01, 9.20]*</td>
<td>2.09 [0.48, 9.06]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>2.00 [1.09, 3.68]*</td>
<td>2.33 [1.33, 4.09]**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation (Gay)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>0.74 [0.39, 1.39]</td>
<td>1.20 [0.69, 2.06]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>1.23 [0.90, 1.67]</td>
<td>1.29 [0.92, 1.82]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>0.67 [0.36, 1.24]</td>
<td>0.75 [0.41, 1.37]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>0.74 [0.08, 6.46]</td>
<td>6.25 E-9 [6.25 E-9, 6.25 E-9]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Reference group for all regression comparisons is No to housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Odds ratios are adjusted for the other predictors in the model.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

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out, the likelihood of being in the yes category for experiencing anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination increased by 3%, and being in the not sure category increased by 4%. For age, no differences emerged in the likelihood of being in the yes versus the no category for experiencing anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination; however, each additional year of age was associated with a 4% decrease in the likelihood of the person being in the not sure category compared with the no category ($p < .001$). In terms of gender identity, transgender individuals were 2.2 times more likely to be in the yes category versus the no category than cisgender individuals ($p < .05$), but transgender individuals were no more or less likely to be in the not sure category than the no category. Finally, in terms of race/ethnicity, Latino/Latina individuals were 2.4 times more likely to be in the yes category than the no category as compared with White individuals ($p < .001$), and 2.7 times more likely to be in the not sure category than the no category as compared with White individuals ($p < .001$). Native American participants were 3 times more likely to be in the yes category than the no category as compared with White participants ($p < .05$); however, as compared with White participants, Native American participants were no more or less likely to be in the not sure category than the no category for experiencing anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination. In addition, as compared with White participants, Multiracial participants were 2 times more likely to be in the yes category than the no category for experiencing anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination ($p < .05$) and 2.3 times more likely to be in the not sure category than the no category ($p < .01$). No significant differences emerged in comparing likelihood of Black or Asian participants being in the yes category or not sure category versus the no category in comparison with White participants.

**Employment**

The multinomial logistic regression model further indicated that the variables years of being out, gender identity, racial identity, and sexual orientation identity mattered in predicting the likelihood of experiencing anti-LGBTQ employment discrimination; however, the age variable was not associated with significant differences in likelihood of experiencing this form of employment discrimination. Table 5 presents the ORs and significance levels for the five variables in the model. As the value for years of being out increased, individuals were more likely to be in the yes category than the no category for experiencing anti-LGBTQ employment discrimination ($p > .001$), but were no more or less likely to be in the not sure category than the no category. For each year of being out, the likelihood of being in the yes category increased by 2%. In terms of gender identity, transgender individuals were almost 5 times as likely to be in the yes category versus the no category than cisgender individuals ($p < .001$), and transgender individuals were 2.3 times more likely than cisgender individuals to be in the not sure category compared with the no category ($p < .01$).
In terms of race/ethnicity, Latino/Latina individuals were no more or less likely to be in the yes category than the no category as compared with White individuals; however, Latino/Latina participants were 1.5 times more likely than White participants to be in the not sure category than the no category for experiencing anti-LGBTQ employment discrimination ($p < .05$). Also in comparison with White participants, Multiracial individuals were 1.7 times more likely to be in the yes category than the no category regarding workplace discrimination ($p < .01$); however, Multiracial participants were no more or less likely than White participants to be in the not sure category versus the no category. No significant differences emerged comparing likelihood of being in the yes category or not sure category rather than the no category for Black, Asian, or Native American individuals compared with White individuals in experiencing employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outness</td>
<td>1.02 [1.01, 1.03]**</td>
<td>1.01 [0.99, 1.02]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.99 [0.98, 1.00]</td>
<td>1.00 [0.98, 1.01]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (cisgender)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>4.96 [3.27, 7.54]**</td>
<td>2.38 [1.32, 4.29]**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race (White)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.62 [0.37, 1.03]</td>
<td>1.23 [0.71, 2.12]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.68 [0.32, 1.44]</td>
<td>1.46 [0.69, 3.08]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Latina</td>
<td>1.13 [0.85, 1.51]</td>
<td>1.50 [1.06, 2.12]*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.37 [0.60, 3.14]</td>
<td>0.69 [0.16, 3.03]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>1.79 [1.25, 2.58]**</td>
<td>1.45 [0.88, 2.40]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual orientation (Gay)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>0.64 [0.46, 0.89]**</td>
<td>0.75 [0.49, 1.15]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>0.89 [0.75, 1.06]</td>
<td>0.84 [0.67, 1.07]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>0.54 [0.39, 0.73]**</td>
<td>0.77 [0.53, 1.11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>0.35 [0.10, 1.19]**</td>
<td>0.31 [0.3, 2.75]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Reference group for all regression comparisons is No to employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Odds ratios are adjusted for the other predictors in the model.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Finally, in terms of sexual orientation identity and experiences of employment discrimination, queer individuals were 0.6 times less likely to be in the yes category than the no category as compared with gay individuals \((p < .01)\), and queer individuals were no more or less likely than gay individuals to be in the not sure category than the no category for experiences of employment discrimination. Bisexual and heterosexual individuals were 0.5 times and 0.3 times, respectively, less likely than gay individuals to be in the yes category than the no category for employment discrimination \((p < .001)\) and no more or less likely than gay individuals to be in the not sure category for experiencing employment discrimination. No significant differences were found in comparing the likelihood of being in the yes category or not sure category versus the no category for lesbian individuals compared with gay individuals in experiencing employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Discussion and Implications**

The findings from this study suggest that transgender individuals are more likely to experience anti-LGBTQ housing discrimination than their cisgender LGBQ counterparts, and that transgender individuals are more likely than their cisgender counterparts to report they have experienced or are unsure whether they have experienced employment discrimination. Taken together, the findings indicate that there is a different level of risk accrual for discrimination within the LGBTQ community based on gender identity. Given that discrimination against transgender individuals is associated with numerous negative psychosocial outcomes, including clinical depression, anxiety, somatization, substance abuse, unmet mental health needs, and overall psychological distress (Bockting et al., 2013; Burgess, Lee, Trans, & van Rynd, 2008), this issue is important to address via culturally competent education and policy change to ensure transgender individuals have legal protections from employment and housing discrimination. Ideally, this policy change would occur at the federal level to include transgender individuals living throughout the country; such change could be accomplished by Congress passing an inclusive employment non-discrimination act in addition to a similar policy regarding access to and prevention of bias-based discrimination in housing. In lieu of this action, more states need to adopt non-discrimination language for housing and employment that is inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Findings further suggest that risk for housing and employment discrimination accrues differentially within the LGBTQ community based on racial/ethnic identity. Multiracial individuals were more likely than any other racial/ethnic groups to report they had experienced sexual orientation/gender identity-based employment discrimination, whereas Latino/Latinas were more likely than other racial/ethnic
groups to report being unsure whether the discrimination they experienced was based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Regarding housing discrimination, Latino/Latina, Native American, and Multiracial individuals were more likely than White individuals to report they had experienced discrimination, with Latino/Latina and Native American participants being more likely to report being unsure whether they had experienced sexual orientation/gender identity-based housing discrimination. These results are consistent with previous research that has shown different experiences of gender identity-based discrimination based on race/ethnicity (Kattari, Walls, Whitfield, & Langenderfer-Magruder, 2015). Finally, individuals who identified as queer, bisexual, or heterosexual were less likely than their gay counterparts to report experiencing employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

These nuanced differences in findings based on gender identity, racial/ethnic identity, and sexual orientation identity indicate a need for further research examining intersectionality of identities when examining risk and resilience within the LGBTQ community. Together, these findings also indicate a need for culturally responsive education for social workers that includes information not only on how to be supportive of transgender clients, but also on supporting LGBTQ clients of color who are experiencing multiple dimensions of oppression.

The length of time a person has been out regarding their sexual orientation or gender identity also affects their experiences of anti-LGBTQ housing and employment discrimination; the longer a person has been out, the more discrimination the person is likely to have experienced. It is possible that this difference occurs simply because the longer a person has been out, the more opportunities that person might have had to be discriminated against. This finding must be considered with caution because it does not suggest that LGBTQ individuals should be encouraged to hide their identity to reduce experiences of discrimination. Rather, this finding suggests an area in which social workers can practice advocacy for LGBTQ individuals at the organizational and local policy level, working to implement and support policies that are inclusive of LGBTQ individuals in accessing housing and employment that are free of discrimination.

Given the social work profession’s commitment to social justice, it is important that social workers, educators, and other human services professionals work to challenge housing and employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Given the centrality of housing and employment to quality of life in contemporary U.S. society, barriers such as bias-based housing and employment discrimination are critical impediments that urgently need to be addressed. As social workers engage members of the LGBTQ community in services, awareness of the prevalence of discrimination and its effects can assist in assessing for experiences and in identifying opportunities for advocacy. Our findings provide an
important lens to better illuminate the presence of discrimination in housing and employment against members of the LGBTQ community, and the even greater likelihood of discrimination experienced by transgender individuals.

**Limitations**

The data used for this study were collected for a statewide needs assessment project by One Colorado. As with many secondary data analyses, limitations such as reliance on single-item measures are present. In addition, because the data were collected primarily through the Internet, the original survey study potentially omitted members of the LGBTQ community who do not have regular access to the Internet or social media. The online data collection might also have decreased participation by older adults, low-income individuals, and people living in rural settings; these possible exclusions are important because these groups are frequently underrepresented in many types of research.

In addition, language used in the survey instrument such as “transphobia” and “transgender” might not be understood by all people who responded to the survey, leading some respondents to skip questions or to provide responses that differed in meaning from their intended response. A further language challenge is posed by the survey’s use of male and female because these terms most frequently refer to biological sex or sex assigned at birth, whereas terms such as woman, man, and genderqueer are more commonly used to refer to gender identity. Someone might have been assigned as male at birth but currently identify as a woman, making it difficult to know whether this respondent would have chosen male (sex) or woman (gender). A more thoughtful selection of wording of gender identities could have made the data gathered on gender more robust.

Another limitation is that for people with multiple marginalized identities (e.g., LGBTQ people of color, LGBTQ people with disabilities), it can be difficult to pinpoint which identity was the focus of discrimination in their experiences of discrimination. As such, the responses of those marginalized by multiple cultural identities are potentially qualitatively different from the responses of those who are marginalized only by their sexual orientation or gender identity. Further research is needed to better understand these nuances in the study of anti-LGBTQ discrimination, including a deeper look at potential confounding of sexual orientation and gender identity, not only in research questions but also within the LGBTQ community itself.

**Conclusion**

This study highlights the need for further research on discrimination and other lived experiences of transgender individuals, including transgender people of color. Although gender identity is frequently subsumed under the larger LGBTQ umbrella
in research, failure to differentiate has the potential to obscure the increased risks that transgender individuals might experience above and beyond the already heightened risks of LGBQ individuals.

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