

# Measuring the Tangible Fear of Heterosexist Violence

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## Abstract

Fear of crime (FoC) has dominated the political landscape over the last 20 years, with many crime policy developments during this period linked not to actual experiences of violence but to the fear of victimization. Fear of crime studies, in most cases, are conducted with populations that have only a passing, mediated knowledge of crime victimization. The research discussed in this article, in contrast, considers the impact of FoC with a highly victimized community, and establishes psychometric testing to validate an instrument to measure the impact of that fear (*Fear of Heterosexism Scale [FoHS]*). If FoC is related to experiences of crime as the existing research suggests, then victims of heterosexist prejudice, discrimination, and/or violence would be more likely to fear such incidents in the future. It was also predicted that participants who concealed their sexual and/or gender identity and had lower levels of social connectedness would experience higher levels of fear. The findings highlight the importance of contextual factors in FoH, and identify the critical roles that disclosure and social connectedness play in ameliorating the damaging effects of heterosexist victimization.

## Keywords

violence against GLBT, sexuality, hate crimes, sexual assault, GLBT, vicarious trauma

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## Introduction

Devised as an instrument to capture the decreasing legitimacy of the criminal justice system and the increasing uncertainty of urban living, over the last decade, fear-of-crime (FoC) measures have become synonymous with the moral entrepreneurialism of social control measures and the increasing punitiveness of the criminal justice system (Farrall & Lee, 2009; Gelb, 2011; Maratea & Monahan, 2013; Vanderveen, 2011). The discourses of fear and risk, and research instruments designed to measure the “experience” of FoC, have also contributed to the net-widening of pre-crime responses to communities’ perceived FoC, especially with regard to sub-criminal anti-social behavior (Garland, 2001). In these accounts of middle Australia (or America, Britain, Canada, or New Zealand), mediated experiences of crime are used to create “safety maps” about the likelihood of criminal victimization, which are then used as basis to gauge the requisite fear or worry about crime (Altheide, 2003; Enders, Jennett, & Tulloch, 2008). In the absence of prior victimization or personal experiential knowledge of criminal victimization, some critics have questioned exactly what experiences are captured by FoC measures. In contrast, the specific experiential knowledge of heterosexual violence provides an ideal case study for understanding the contextual factors that shape FoC in highly victimized communities.

Research with gender and sexuality diverse communities consistently find high levels of primary and secondary victimization.<sup>1</sup> Yet, past research has shown that less than 50% of hate crimes against gay men and 15% of hate crimes against lesbians are reported to the police (Herek & Berrill, 1992; von Schulthess, 1992). Katz-Wise and Hyde’s (2012) meta-analysis of 386 lesbian, gay, and bisexual victimization studies published between 1992 and 2009 reported that 55% of respondents had experienced verbal harassment, 41% had experienced discrimination, 37% had been threatened with violence, 28% had been physically assaulted, and 27% had been sexually assaulted. In Australia, between 70% and 79% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ)<sup>2</sup> participants reported experiencing at least one incident of targeted verbal abuse over their lifetime (Gays & Lesbians Against Discrimination [GLAD], 1994; Victorian Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby [VGLRL], 2000). The reported increase in verbal abuse over the 5 years of these two studies contrasts with the participants’ experiences of discrimination, which dropped from 87% to 84% during the same period (GLAD, 1994; VGLRL, 2000). In addition, in the previous 12 months, Leonard et al. (2012) found that 25.5% of LGBTIQ respondents had experienced verbal abuse, while 13.4% had been (sexually) assaulted or threatened with assault. The New South Wales [NSW] Attorney General’s Department

(2003) also reported that 85% of respondents had experienced at least one incident of heterosexist abuse, harassment, or violence in their lifetime, and 75% of respondents reported that concerns about abuse led them to modify their behavior.

Disclosure of sexuality or gender identity is a contextual and life-long process, and influential in experiences of heterosexist violence. The decision by individuals to conceal their identity is often influenced by the support they believe they will have, and the reactions they perceive they will encounter from their disclosure (Asquith & Fox, 2013). These assessments of risk in relation to disclosure and concealment can have a significant detrimental impact on well-being and social citizenship (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999; Phelan, 2001). On one hand, not disclosing sexuality or gender identity can result in increased lethality of heterosexist violence, and lower self-esteem and well-being (Corrigan & Matthews, 2003; Frable, Wortman, & Joseph, 1997; Legate, Ryan, & Weinstein, 2012). On the other hand, Faulkner (2009) found that being “completely out” could contribute to increased hate crime victimization, and more serious and traumatic injury. In this respect, everyday heterosexism compels gender and sexuality diverse communities to become risk assessors of all the “microaggressions” (Wing Sue, 2010) and “everyday exterminabilities” (Hage, 2006) that act as signs of possible (re) victimization.

At the center of the arguments presented in this article is the theoretical and conceptual framework of heteronormativity and heterosexism. Heteronormativity was coined by Warner (1993) and expands Rich’s (1983) “compulsory heterosexuality.” Heteronormativity is the linear relationship between sex, gender, and sexuality; it is the privileging of heterosexuality above all other sexual expressions (non-heterosexual) and thereby privileges gender relations with men as dominant to women (Fox, 2009). Heteronormativity reinforces gender performance, gender relations, and sexual performance (Pitt & Fox, 2013), and codifies conduct, which normalizes, privileges, and rewards acceptable performances of heterosexuality and cisgender (Asquith & Fox, 2015). Heteronormative thinking creates and permits heterosexism, which is the act of applying the cultural principles of heteronormativity to everyday life such that the dominant assumption is that heterosexual practice is human practice. Heterosexism, as a policing of heteronormative performance, is an act of violence, whether it presents as prejudice, discrimination, harassment, or other forms of psychological and/or physical violence. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people, by their identity and performance of their identity, do not subscribe to the dictates of heteronormativity, and it is these perceived transgressions that heterosexist violence seeks to contain. The presence of

heterosexist violence leads LGBTIQ people to continually assess their risk of violence, which in turn contributes to a FoH and fear of criminal victimization.

In adopting an FoC approach to the study of fear of heterosexist violence, the conceptual and methodological criticisms raised in existing FoC research assisted in the development of a scale capable of capturing the intensity, frequency, and effects of fear. This research expands the variables necessary to capture “fear” as an emotion and a practice. It deepens the discussion about the intensity and effect of fear, especially as it relates to the contexts of marginalization and high victimization that result from heteronormativity. The *FoHS* also provides a springboard for investigating the psychosocial consequences stemming from the fear of heterosexist violence, and the critical role that social inclusion and social connectedness has in managing this fear. While significant independent variables are identified in relation to *FoHS* scores, it is in the relationship to actual experiences of violence this research highlights the pervasive and habituated nature of heterosexism and FoH. In the context of these tangible experiences of heterosexist violence, FoH becomes a productive and functional artifact of living on the edge of social justice.

## **Fear, Anxiety, and FoC (Heterosexist)**

In the last four decades, FoC measures have developed little (Gray, Jackson, & Farrall, 2012), with key questions replicated with little heed to the cultural, social, or geographic contexts. In the academe, the concepts of “fear” and “fear of crime,” and the use of these concepts in criminological research have been subject to sustained critique. However, Farrall and Lee (2009) and Gray, Jackson, and Farrall (2011, 2012) argue that despite the problems with the conceptualization and operationalization of FoC, attempts to refine it are laudable and necessary given its continuing significance to governments and policy makers, and salience for surveyed populations. It is not the intention of the authors to restate the significant criticisms and developments of FoC measures.<sup>3</sup> Here, the most critical developments and significant criticisms are discussed as they relate to the development and application of the *FoHS* (Asquith & Fox, 2013).

### *Tangible Fears*

The problems with conceptualizing fear and FoC have occupied researchers since the initial development of attitudinal surveys on crime. Core to these arguments is the methodological concerns of whether researchers and

participants share a common conceptualization of “fear,” and whether FoC measures capture the lived experience of “fear.” In their application of Gladstone and Parker’s (2003) conceptualization, Gray, Jackson, and Farrall (2008) have considered the ways in which FoC can be productive and functional for some, and distressing and dysfunctional for others. These critics argue, and some research confirms (see, for example, Britto, 2011; Gray et al., 2011; Jackson, 2012; Jackson & Gray, 2010), that traditional FoC measures capture a generalized *anxiety* about the ambiguity and insecurity of an increasingly globalized and risky world rather than a tangible FoC victimization (Chadee & Ng Ying, 2013; Clarke, 2003; Gadd & Jefferson, 2009; Lee, 2009). Jackson (2012) suggests that a generalized aversion to uncertainty is the strongest determinant of whether the fear of, or worry about crime becomes dysfunctional anxiety. In this respect, irrespective of actual experiences or threats of criminal victimization, those individuals “. . . intolerant to ambiguity seem to experience a more damaging and persistent form of emotional response” (Jackson, 2012, p. 1). Understanding the different sources of fear and anxiety about crime is essential in contextualizing reports of FoH, and understanding these fears in terms of their function as “safety maps” (or “body maps”; Mason, 2001).

## FoC

Whether you feel safe, whether you feel safe at home, whether you feel safe alone, or whether you feel safe walking in your neighborhood and fear of specific crimes (most commonly, theft, burglary, or assault) have become staple FoC questions (e.g., Gray et al., 2012; Radar, Cossman, & Porter, 2012; Tseloni & Zarafonitou, 2008). These variables have deepened the earlier decontextualized FoC questions, yet fail to measure the intensity or frequency of FoC, or the effect of that fear, worry, or concern on everyday behaviors and decision making. In response to growing concerns about methodological issues and political uses of FoC measures, recent innovations have led to a more nuanced understanding of FoC, and the contextual factors that shape the results. The critical issues in adopting an FoC approach to the study of FoH relate to the operationalization of FoC, conventional target populations of this type of research, and the relationship between prior victimization and FoC.

Much of the criticism of FoC as a meaningful measure of fear stems from the delayed development of FoC measures that account for intensity, frequency, and effect. As Gray et al. (2012) identify, political rhetoric and policy development translated findings from the early FoC studies as an all-consuming, pervasive FoC, which significantly influenced respondents’ everyday behaviors.

The adoption of attitudinal Likert-type scales to account for the intensity of FoC, along with frequency measures, have contextualized the “fear” measured with a resultant drop in reported levels of FoC (Gray et al., 2008, 2012). In addition, researchers have identified a critical problem with measuring emotional responses through future-oriented questions about respondents’ anxieties of criminal victimization. Robinson and Clore (2002 cited in Gray et al., 2008) suggest that the critical problem is that respondents are asked about experiential knowledge in the absence of an actual experience of crime. Alternatively, that the experiences being tested in these FoC measures are too old (more than 2 weeks) and have been converted from experiential to semantic knowledge, which is infused and filtered through participants’ general beliefs about crime rather than the initial embodied experience.

Since Skogan’s (1987) pivotal study, critics of FoC have also reflected on the complex relationship between experiences of crime and fear of that crime. The focus on the relationship between prior victimization and FoC has led to increasingly localized and contextualized accounts of FoC. In line with the results of Skogan’s initial study, a weak positive relationship has been found in research that focuses on the relationship between prior victimization and traditional FoC measures about feelings of safety in the home and neighborhood (Tseloni & Zarafonitou, 2008). Yet, when prior victimization is considered in relation to fear of specific types of crimes, results vary considerably (Alper & Chappell, 2012), with those crimes committed—or commonly thought to be committed—by strangers (such as burglary) related positively to higher FoC (Box, Hale, & Andrews, 1988; Quann & Hung, 2002). A positive correlation between FoC and violent crimes (or crimes against the person), however, is unsupported by existing research, with contradictory findings arising from different sample populations. A consistent problem with identifying the relationship between victimization and FoC—one identified by Newhart Smith and Hill (1991) more than 20 years ago—relates to the reduction of prior victimization to a single dichotomous variable. Therefore, the findings leave questions about whether particular types of victimization—or the frequency of those types of victimization—influence participants’ fear of future victimization. It is also unclear from the limited existing research on “special populations” (Gray et al., 2012), whether the fear reported by victimized participants relates to the specific type of victimization experienced or all crimes.

In addition, in the operationalization of FoC, critics have raised concerns about the representativeness of randomized victim and attitudinal surveys, and the applicability of these results to marginalized or highly victimized communities (Gray et al., 2012). In drilling down to the more specific experiences of highly victimized communities and their experiences of fear, recent

developments have begun to unearth the rich sources of fear, and the multiple confounding variables associated with FoC. In these localized studies of victimized communities, the relationship between FoC and victimization is contradictory. In Asquith et al.'s (2009) study of nine broad-acre public housing estates, lower rates of FoC were found in those communities with the highest crime rates. Alexander (2008), however, found that young people with learning difficulties experienced higher levels of fear of victimization, which she suggests were well-founded in personal experience and led to pronounced avoidance strategies. In addition, Noble and Poynting (2008) found that migrants in Australia were "neither relaxed or comfortable" about their likelihood of criminal victimization, and Stohr, Vazquez, and Kleppinger (2006) report that minority group members were three times more likely to feel vulnerable to hate crime victimization than their White counterparts.

In their re-analysis of the 2000 to 2010 General Social Surveys, Meyer and Grollman (2014) found that sexual minorities were significantly more likely to report fear of walking in their neighborhoods at night (44% compared with 31% for heterosexuals). In these marginalized communities, the persistent high level of fear and repeat victimization—and the secondary victimization that comes with living in "closed" communities—is thought to lead to a habituation of fear. This therefore translates to these communities living with persistent fear of victimization (Box et al., 1988; Tseloni & Zarafonitou, 2008). The pervasive nature of threat and risk can lead to an acceptance of ". . . an uncertain future threat" and a ". . . sense of closure regarding one's role in trying to prevent or plan for the threat" (Berenbaum, 201, pp. 962, 967 cited in Jackson, 2012, p. 7). However, if left unresolved, or if part of a more generalized anxiety about ambiguity and uncertainty (Gadd & Jefferson, 2009), the habituation of fear could lead to damaging psychosocial and avoidance behaviors.

Gender and sexually diverse communities experience pervasive heterosexism. The *FoHS* was developed to capture the "fear" experienced by these communities. This study aimed to test the psychometrics of the *FoHS* and to explore its validity in measuring heterosexism as a specific socioculturally located violence. In line with Allport's (1954) Scale of Prejudice, the term *violence* is used here to capture the various non-criminal (name-calling and verbal abuse), civil (vilification, discrimination, harassment), and criminal incidents experienced by sexual and gender diverse communities. This also aligns with conventional FoC measures that include sub-criminal (such as anti-social behavior) and criminal acts.

To enhance validity of the scale and to redress the critiques of past FoC studies, the experiences of heterosexist violence were also captured to explore the relationship between the tangible or lived experience of "crime" and fear.



It was hypothesized that participants who had experienced heterosexist violence would score higher on the *FoHS*. Past studies have also failed to identify the impact of FoC on the everyday behaviors and decision making. Through identification of participants' decisions on disclosure and concealment of their sexuality and/or gender identity (SGI), the impact of FoH on these decisions was explored. It was hypothesized that participants who reported higher levels of FoH would also maintain a level of concealment of their SGI. The authors also explored the role of perceived connection to the queer and general communities. Community connection is considered a protective factor against heterosexism (Jude, McLaren, & McLachlan, 2003; McLaren, 2003), and as such, it was hypothesized that participants who reported a connection to queer and/or general communities would report lower levels of fear on the *FoHS*.

## Method

The data analyzed in this article were collected during a year-long community project on discrimination, prejudice, and violence experienced by gender and sexuality diverse communities in Tasmania.<sup>4</sup> In addition to surveying respondents' fears of heterosexist discrimination, prejudice, and violence, the survey also sought data about their experiences of heterosexist violence (in the last 12 months, over their lifetime, and their most significant incident). Respondents' levels of disclosure and concealment of their sexuality or gender identity, and their social connectedness to the general Tasmanian community and LGBTIQ communities further contextualized these experiences and fears. The survey was conducted between November 1, 2011, and October 31, 2012, and contained 44 open-ended, categorical responses and Likert-type scale questions.

The *FoHS* contained 16 items (see appendix). Questions for the scale were based on general FoC measures (see Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010 for key FoC definitions and questions), and FoH measures adopted in the *Coming Forward* (Leonard et al., 2008) and *You Shouldn't Have to Hide to be Safe* reports (NSW Attorney General's Department, 2003). The questions used in these earlier scales were adopted in *FoHS* to ensure comparability of data, and, in the case of the latter two reports, because these surveys were developed with LGBTIQ communities and based on previous community surveys with LGBTIQ communities, and most comprehensively addressed the specific issues of FoH. In line with the deficits identified in the review of FoC scales (see, for example, Gray et al., 2008; Jackson, 2012), the 16 items consisted of a variety of future-oriented, negatively staged "fear" and positively staged "confident" questions, which were interspersed with a variety of "vulnerable,"



“unsafe,” “worry,” and “avoid” questions relating to present feelings about heterosexist violence. Face validity of the scale items were confirmed through nine independent key informants who have personal experience of prejudice, discrimination and violence, and professional experience in advocating for primary and secondary victims.

Participants scored their level of agreement to each statement on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Five questions (FOH2, FOH8, FOH11, FOH13, and FOH15) were reversed scored. A total score was calculated summing participant responses for each question. Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-reported FoH.

There were 151 participants in the sample (women = 94<sup>5</sup>, and men = 53) aged between 16 and 65 years. The mean age was 34 years ( $SD = 12.98$ ), with median age of 33 years. Sixty-five participants identified as lesbian, 49 participants as gay, 19 participants as bisexual, and 11 participants as queer. Seven participants reported their SGI as “other.” These participants offered heterosexual, intersex-identified person, and pansexual as their self-identification. Approximately 52% ( $n = 81$ ) were in a relationship (including unregistered, registered, and overseas marriages<sup>6</sup>), with 41.4% ( $n = 67$ ) reporting their relationships status as single. In contrast to the general Tasmanian population, nearly 70% of participants resided in the southern capital city of Hobart, and 85% resided in one of the three major Tasmanian cities (Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie). As with the wider Tasmanian population, the ethnic and cultural identity of respondents was primarily White, Anglo Australian, with only 6% of respondents indicating other ethnic or cultural identities. Given this homogeneity of cultural identity and geographical location, an analysis of the relationships between these factors and FoH were not possible.

## Results

Reliability, principle component analyses and parallel analyses were used to explore the reliability and validity of the scale. Further validity and utility analyses were explored using correlational analyses and independent sample  $t$  tests. Initial reliability analysis of the total 16-item scale returned a high Cronbach’s alpha score ( $\alpha = .86$ ). A higher alpha ( $\alpha = .88$ ) was possible with the deletion of one item (FoH16: *As an LGBTIQ person, I am alert to prejudice and discrimination*). A second reliability analysis was undertaken with only 15 items. Table 1 presents the item total statistics for the 15 items. A higher Cronbach’s alpha was not possible.

Before performing a principal components analysis (PCA) on the 15 items, all assumptions for factor analysis were met. The sample size

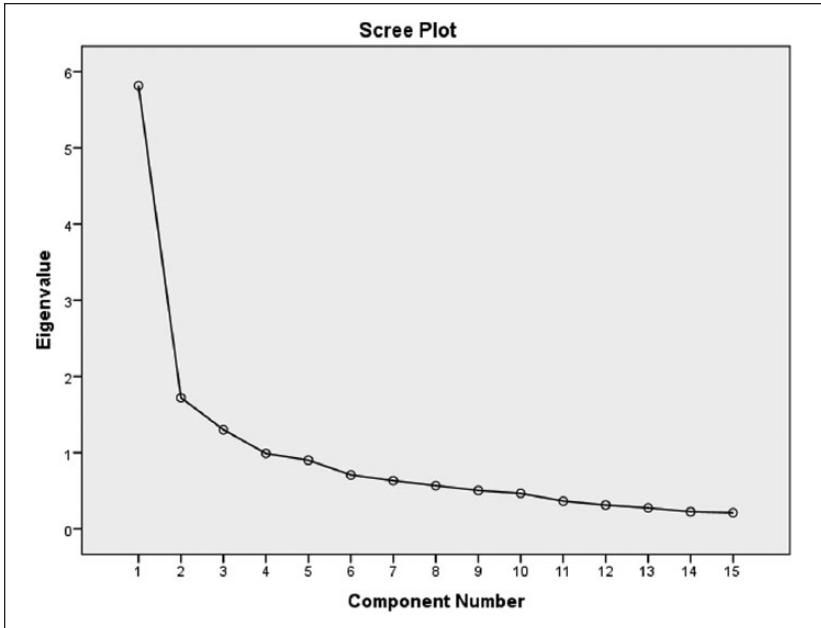
**Table 1.** Item Total Statistics for the Fear of Heterosexism Scale.

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
FOH1	32.3451	50.996	.592	.864
FOH2	32.8584	55.230	.355	.874
FOH3	33.1239	52.770	.474	.870
FOH4	32.5752	53.872	.457	.870
FOH5	32.5398	50.858	.676	.860
FOH6	31.9115	51.956	.633	.862
FOH7	32.9292	51.941	.518	.868
FOH8	32.1416	52.355	.525	.867
FOH9	32.4248	52.586	.538	.866
FOH10	32.5133	51.073	.704	.859
FOH11	32.6726	53.258	.478	.869
FOH12	32.2389	53.219	.543	.866
FOH13	32.8319	54.266	.326	.877
FOH14	32.3186	50.290	.779	.856
FOH15	32.8407	53.546	.377	.875

Note. FOH = Fear of Heterosexism.

( $N = 151$ ) can be considered a *fair-sized sample* based on the work of Comrey and Lee (1992). Pallant (2005) argues that a minimum of five cases per item is needed for PCA. Missing data were examined and determined to be randomly missing based on the SPSS *Missing Value Analysis* with less than 5% of data missing. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001, p. 59) argue that if less than 5% of the data is missing, then this is of minimal concern. Data were checked for normal distribution. Tabachnick and Fidell recommend data are checked for factorability via reference to the correlation matrix. Inter-item correlations were checked for presence of scores greater than .3 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) and found that a number of items had scores greater than .3. Data suitability for factorability was also analyzed by checking that the Kaiser–Meyer–Oklin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy value was greater than .6 (Kaiser, 1970, 1974): A KMO value of .862 was recorded. Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity was significant ( $p < .001$ ). Based on the sample meeting these criteria, it was decided appropriate to continue with the PCA.

Initial run of PCA identified three factors with Eigenvalues greater than one, yet with items appearing on multiple factors. Closer examination found lower factor loading ( $<.55$ ; Comrey & Lee, 1992) on components two and three. An inspection of the scree plot (where factors above the elbow are



**Figure 1.** Scree plot with one factor above the elbow.

recommended; Cattell, 1966) revealed one factor (see Figure 1). For this reason, it was decided to explore the *FoHS* as a one-component scale.

The choice of one component was confirmed through the results of parallel analysis (Pallant, 2005, p. 191). The parallel analysis confirmed one component of the PCA with an Eigenvalue (5.82) greater than the corresponding criterion value (1.67) for a randomly generated data matrix of the same size (15 variables  $\times$  151). The mean score on the (15-item) *FoHS* was 34.88 ( $SD = 7.73$ ) with a median score of 35. The score ranged from 14 to 54, with high scores indicating higher levels of fear. The *FoHS* scores are normally distributed. To confirm the utility of the *FoHS*, correlation analyses and independent-samples *t* tests were used. No significant differences were recorded between *FoHS* scores and sexuality or gender identity, which in effect means that the LGBTIQ community experiences FoH are similar and can be generalized across the sampled LGBTIQ community.

### *FoHS and FoH Violence*

Spearman’s rank order correlations were used to explore the relationships between fear of specific acts in the last 12 months and fear over participants’

**Table 2.** Correlations Between Fear of Heterosexism and Reported Fear in the Last 12 Months and Over the Lifetime.

Type of Incident Feared	Fearful Last 12 Months	Fearful Lifetime
Verbal-textual hostility	.432** .000	.248** .008
Vilification	.544** .000	.287** .002
Discrimination	.508** .000	.234* .013
Harassment and/or bullying	.602** .000	.215* .022
Physical assault	.520** .000	.266** .004
Sexual assault	.323** .000	.293** .002
Property damage/vandalism	.389** .000	.263** .005
Theft/burglary	.356** .000	.291** .002

\*Significant at .01. \*\*Significant at .05.

lifetime. All these relationships were significant with a positive relationship between fear of specific acts of heterosexist violence associated with an increased FoH. Table 2 illustrates these results.

### *Experiences of Heterosexist Violence*

Seventy-one participants (43.8%) reported at least one experience of heterosexist violence in the last 12 months, and 96 participants (59.3%) reported they had experienced at least one incident over their lifetime. The prevalence of each type of violence experienced over the last 12 months and over participants' lifetime are reported in Table 3.

### *Fear of Heterosexism and Experiences of Heterosexist Violence*

A significant Pearson  $r$  correlation was recorded in the relationship between FoH and experiences of at least one incident of heterosexist violence in the participants' lifetime ( $r = .266, p = .004$ ), which suggests that just a single

**Table 3.** Type of Incident of Heterosexist Prejudice, Discrimination, and/or Violence Reported Over the Last 12 Months and Lifetime.

Type of Incident Experienced	12 Months Experiences	Lifetime Experiences
Verbal-textual hostility	26 (39.4%)	50 (57.5%)
Vilification (civil offence)	19 (28.8%)	49 (56.3%)
Discrimination	37 (56.1%)	63 (72.4%)
Harassment and/or bullying	37 (56.1%)	60 (69%)
Physical assault without a weapon	8 (12.1%)	35 (40.2%)
Physical assault with a weapon	1 (1.5%)	22 (25.3%)
Sexual assault	3 (4.5%)	30 (34.5%)
Threat of physical or sexual assault	15 (22.7%)	44 (50.6%)
Property damage/vandalism	6 (9.1%)	28 (32.2%)
Theft/burglary	3 (4.5%)	24 (27.6%)

Note. Percentages refer to the number of respondents, not the number of responses to each type of incident.

incident can influence levels of fear. A non-significant relationship was found between FoH and an experience of an incident of heterosexist prejudice, discrimination, or violence in the last 12 months ( $r = .168, p = .136$ ).

The relationship between FoH and experiences of specific forms of heterosexist violence were explored with Pearson  $r$  correlations (see Table 4 ). Significant relationships were found among FoH and experiences of discrimination ( $r = .210, p = .026$ ), assault without a weapon ( $r = .248, p = .008$ ), threat of physical/sexual assault ( $r = .244, p = .009$ ), and property damage/vandalism ( $r = .226, p = .016$ ) in the last 12 months. Significant positive associations were also recorded between FoH and *lifetime* experiences of property damage/vandalism ( $r = .271, p = .004$ ), as well as theft/burglary ( $r = .250, p = .008$ ).

Crime experience data were recoded to a dichotomous variable (no experience in last 12 months/experience in last 12 months and no experience in a lifetime/experience in a lifetime). An independent-samples  $t$  test was undertaken to compare scores on the *FoHS* and experience of prejudice, discrimination, and/or violence in the last 12 months. No significant difference was found for participants with no experience in the last 12 months ( $M = 34.09, SD = 7.20$ ) and participants who had experienced prejudice, discrimination, and/or violence in the last 12 months ( $M = 36.93, SD = 7.79$ ),  $t(78) = -1.508, p = .136$ .

In line with the hypothesis that experience of heterosexist violence would increase FoH, a significant difference in *FoH* scores was recorded between participants who had experienced heterosexist violence over their lifetime

**Table 4.** Correlations Between Fear of Heterosexism and Experiences of Prejudice, Discrimination, and/or Violence.

Type of Incident Experienced and/or Feared	Experienced Last 12 Months	Experienced Lifetime
Verbal-textual hostility	.132	.159
	.163	.093
Vilification	.128	.166
	.176	.078
Discrimination	.210*	.084
	.025	.377
Harassment and/or bullying	.114	.146
	.229	.122
Physical assault no weapon	.233*	.088
	.013	.354
Physical assault with a weapon	.112	.135
	.238	.153
Sexual assault	.150	.045
	.112	.637
Threat of physical/sexual assault	.233*	.085
	.013	.371
Property damage/vandalism	.221*	.271**
	.019	.004
Theft/burglary	.089	.250**
	.347	.008

\*Correlation significant at .05. \*\*Correlation significant at .01.

( $M = 36.18$ ,  $SD = 7.72$ ) and participants who had never experienced heterosexist violence over their lifetime ( $M = 31.85$ ,  $SD = 6.96$ ),  $t(111) = -2.809$ ,  $p = .006$ . The magnitude of difference in means ( $M_{diff.} = -7.37$ , 95% CI  $[-7.37, -1.27]$ ) was moderate ( $\eta^2 = .06$ ).

### *FoH and Concealment of SGI*

The relationship between FoH and the concealment of sexuality or gender identity for fear of prejudice, discrimination, and/or violence was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There were no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoskedasticity. There was a strong correlation between these variables ( $r = .343$ ,  $p = .000$ ) indicating that if SGI is concealed, a greater level of fear was reported.

An independent-samples  $t$  test was undertaken to test the hypothesis that people who concealed their SGI would report higher levels of fear as

measured by the *FoHS*. Analysis showed a significant difference in scores between people who had concealed their SGI ( $M = 36.25, SD = 7.10$ ) and people who had not concealed their SGI ( $M = 29.79, SD = 7.97$ ),  $t(111) = 3.85, p = .000$ . The magnitude of the difference in the means ( $M_{diff.} = 6.45, 95\% CI [3.1, 9.78]$ ) was large ( $\eta^2 = .12$ ).

This relationship was further tested with Spearman’s rank order correlations exploring relationship between spheres (or environments/situations) of concealment and FoH. Moderate to strong, positive, and significant correlations were recorded for each domain of concealment, with stronger correlations found in relation to public domains or spheres such as “in public,” community or religious events, work, and accessing social welfare services. These results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Correlations Between Fear of Heterosexism and Concealment of Sexual and/or Gender Identity.

Spheres of Concealment	R p Value
At work	.519 .006
At home	.295 .002
With family	.305 .001
At an educational institution	.622 .000
In dealings with the police	.524 .000
In accessing health services	.154 .000
In accessing Centrelink <sup>a</sup> services	.522 .000
In accessing community and/or welfare services	.522 .000
In public	.448 .000
At religious events	.624 .000
At community events	.510 .000

<sup>a</sup>Centrelink is the government social security agency in Australia.

\*All correlations are significant at .01.



## FoH and Social Connectedness

Further strong, negative correlations were reported between connectedness to the LGBTIQ community and FoH ( $r = -.294, p = .006$ ), indicating a perceived connection with the community is associated with lower levels of fear. A similar relationship was recorded with connection to the general community ( $r = -.230, p = .034$ ). These relationships were tested to identify whether there were any differences in mean scores on the *FoHS*. As hypothesized, a significant difference in the mean scores on the *FoHS* was found between participants who reported a connection to the LGBTIQ community ( $M = 33.25, SD = 7.26$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 38.12, SD = 7.13$ ),  $t(83) = 2.802, p = .006$ . The magnitude of difference in scores ( $M_{\text{diff.}} = 4.88, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.41, 8.34]$ ) was large ( $\eta^2 = .87$ ).

Significant differences in mean scores were also recorded between participants who reported a connection to the general community ( $M = 33.73, SD = 7.01$ ) and participants who reported no connection to the general community ( $M = 37.94, SD = 8.55$ ),  $t(83) = 2.157, p = .034$ , as hypothesized. The magnitude of difference in scores ( $M_{\text{diff.}} = 4.21, 95\% \text{ CI } [.32, 8.10]$ ) was moderate ( $\eta^2 = .05$ ).

## Discussion

FoC measures are not without their problems. Yet, as illustrated by Jackson (2009) and Gray et al. (2008), these problems can be resolved by adopting a range of strategies that more effectively capture the various emotional manifestations of apprehension about crime, along with the frequency, intensity, and consequences of that fear, worry, or apprehension. The focus in this research has been on creating a more nuanced quantitative instrument that addresses some of the methodological concerns raised in previous research, while retaining the capacity to measure the relationship between prior victimization and fear of the specific "crime" of heterosexual violence.

The items of the *FoHS* integrate the most significant contextual factors influencing the fear of heterosexual violence (such as place and nature of these interpersonal interactions), and constructs FoH as present- and future-oriented events. Reliability analysis suggests high internal consistency on the scale, and face validity was confirmed through a panel review of experts. Through confirmatory factor analysis, a one-factor scale was identified. Further analysis of the scale (scree plot and parallel analysis) supports the one-scale model proposed. The psychometrics for *the FoHS* indicate a reliable and valid instrument in the measurement of FoH. Correlation analysis and independent-samples  $t$  tests were used to further confirm the validity and utility of the scale to measure FoH.

When used in conjunction with measures of prior victimization in the last 12 months and over participants' lifetime, level of concealment of sexuality or gender identity, and perceived social connectedness, it has been demonstrated that the *FoHS* is capable of addressing most of the major conceptual and methodological problems identified in earlier FoC research. The results illustrate that FoH is a significant artifact of highly victimized LGBTIQ communities, and that the capacity to safely disclose SGI and feel connected to either the LGBTIQ or general communities potentially mediates this fear.

### *FoH and Experiences of Heterosexist Violence*

A moderate and significant difference in means was found between participants who had experienced heterosexist prejudice, discrimination, and/or violence *over their lifetime* and those who had not. Yet, no significant difference was found between FoH and experiences of heterosexist acts in the *last 12 months*. As with previous FoC research (Box et al., 1988; Tseloni & Zarafonitou, 2008), these findings suggest that the FoH is likely to be accumulative and increases with age as well as experience of heterosexism. In addition, in line FoC research that sought to identify the specific types of crime feared, strong and significant relationships were found between the *FoHS* scores and fear of specific heterosexist acts in the last 12 months and over the participants' lifetime. These significant relationships suggest that the *FoHS* captures the presence of tangible, experiential fear. Past FoC research has not been able to confirm the relationship between FoC and experiences of violence.

When these differences in means are disaggregated to each type of heterosexist violence, two patterns emerge that support existing FoC research in addition to identifying some of the unique characteristics of *heterosexist* fear. In the first, participants clearly indicated that their fear of theft/robbery and property crimes (such as vandalism) was higher than interpersonal crimes at 12 months and over their lifetime. Whether theft/robbery can be motivated by heterosexism (or any form of prejudice) is highly contested, with many disputing whether sexuality or gender identity can be a motivational factor in these types of opportunistic crimes. In spite of this contestation, theft/robbery along with vandalism and property crimes are signal crimes because of their frequency and wide distribution across the population. Given the relatively low victimization rates of theft/robbery and property crimes/vandalism reported by participants (Table 3), the difference in relation to fears of these specific types of heterosexist violence may represent a generalized anxiety

(Jackson, 2012) about social decay rather than a specific fear of heterosexual violence.

The second pattern of FoH, however, complements the characteristics of the heterosexual violence experienced by participants (and reported in Table 3 above). Higher *FoHS* scores for discrimination, threats of physical/sexual assault, and physical assault reflect the higher reported experiences of these types of victimization. When considered as a continuum of violence, these types of incidents are also more significant in terms of their immediate effects (physical injury, loss of job) and long-term consequences for concealment of SGI and connectedness to community. An additional feature of this pattern to emerge from the difference in means in FoH and lifetime fear of specific heterosexual incidents was the division between criminal and civil domains of violence. An initial PCA identified that FoH may be a stronger factor in non-criminal incidents. This finding points to the relationship between prior experience of specific acts of heterosexism and fear of those specific acts. As noted in Table 3, participants reported higher levels of civil victimization—involving discrimination, harassment, verbal-textual hostility, and vilification (in order of prevalence)—than criminal victimization (such physical and sexual assault), which coincides with their reported higher levels of FoH in the civil domain. This also strengthens the claim that some of the fears reported by participants are experiential, embodied, and tangible. These results suggest the nuanced nature of the *FoHS* captures the deficit of earlier research of fear as an experiential and embodied experience (Gray et al., 2008).

### *FoH and Concealment of Sexuality or Gender Identity*

It was hypothesized that participants who had not disclosed their sexuality would report higher levels of FoH. A significant relationship was found between concealment and FoH. The mean difference between participants who had disclosed and participants who had not disclosed and levels of fear was large and significant. Participants who had not come out reported higher levels of fear than participants who had come out. The relationships between FoH and disclosure in different spheres were also significant in every domain tested. The relationship between concealment and FoH is complex; FoH may influence whether a person chooses to disclose his or her SGI (Herek et al., 1999). Equally, as Faulkner (2009) found, disclosure of SGI may lead to experiences of heterosexual violence, which in turn influences victim's fear of future heterosexual violence. It is plausible that

this is cyclic, and that breaking the mutually reinforcing processes of disclosure/concealment and FoH is difficult if victims experience additional violence after disclosure, or if their openness about their SGI is not supported or recognized by the communities in which they live. In this sense, FoH is not only mediated by the capacity to safely disclose SGI but also by the strength of social connections beyond the LGBTIQ communities.

### *FoH and Social Connectedness*

Connectedness to community was found to be an important protective factor for gay men and lesbians (Frable et al., 1997; Jude et al., 2003; Legate et al., 2012; McLaren, 2003). It was hypothesized that participants who reported a connection to the general community and/or LGBTIQ community would report lower levels of fear. Significant and moderate differences in mean scores on the *FoHS* were reported between connectedness to both communities and levels of FoH. These results suggest that people who are socially connected are likely to experience less FoH. A sense of connection to the general (broader heteronormative) community is likely to provide participants with a sense of safety in their interactions with non-LGBTIQ people and also a greater sense of acceptance by non-LGBTIQ people. A connection with the LGBTIQ community is a known protective factor (Jude et al., 2003; McLaren, 2003), and provides gender and sexuality diverse communities with a supportive environment, which recognizes the effects and consequences of prejudice. Yet the relationship between connectedness to LGBTIQ communities and FoH is complex. Greater connectedness exposes members to increased knowledge of, and vicarious trauma from, others' experiences of heterosexist violence (i.e., the much-lauded, though under-studied, "ripple effect" of secondary victimization), which, given the results above, should lead to increased FoH. This pattern would complement general FoC studies which have found membership of Neighborhood Watch programs—and thus, increased knowledge of crime, and possible vicarious trauma from crime—leads to increased FoC (e.g., Bennett, 1989). This is not the case with the increased knowledge that comes with connectedness to LGBTIQ communities.

### **Conclusion**

In line with Gray et al. (2011), it is argued that the fear experienced by gender and sexuality diverse communities is productive and functional given the

high victimization rates experienced by these communities. If experiences of heterosexual victimization are consistent, then it is functional to worry regularly (if only momentarily) about those experiences and the likelihood that they will reoccur. Unlike the anxieties that arise out of the intangible dangers of non-victims, the fears that emerge from participants' experiences of heterosexual violence are embodied, habituated, and pervasive. They are fears borne of primary victimization, which is deepened and extended by the secondary vicarious harms generated from a shared use of space and the networked social, political, and business links of marginalized communities (Perry & Alvi, 2012).

The contextual factors that influence FoH (and FoC) are central to this study, which means that these results are not generalizable beyond the Tasmanian LGBTIQ community surveyed. The results of this study are exploratory and focused on the initial development of the scale, and as such, there are limitations to this study as well as future opportunities for the development of the scale. Although the sample is an appropriate size for the analysis, it is small and localized. To enhance the reliability and validity of the *FoHS*, a larger sample, drawn from a broader population is currently being tested, which is also hoped to elicit additional data about how race/ethnicity may intersect in these experiences and fears of heterosexual violence. Future research needs to consider the fear and experiences of urban, regional, and rural LGBTIQ communities, as well as the experiences of smaller sub-communities such as those identifying as transgender, bisexual, and intersex. In addition to testing the *FoHS* with different LGBTIQ communities, adaptations to the scale are planned to test the conditions under which experiences of targeted violence and fear of prejudice affect other marginalized communities.

In this study *fear*, as measured by the *FoHS*, was used as an antecedent in analysis. It is possible for the variable to be a post-cedent. As noted earlier in the discussion, the relationships with fear and concealment of identity may well be cyclic. The level of fear may also influence people's engagement in community. To this end, further research is required to capture the roles of fear in concealment of identity, and connection with community. In essence, the hypothesized relationship requires further testing and exploration.

Furthermore, one of the most trenchant critiques of FoC is the inability of traditional measures to make the distinction between fear, concern, anxiety, and worry. Although some of these emotional states are captured in the *FoHS*, further investigation is necessary to enhance the distinction between these emotions and the impact they have on victims' behaviors. The final area of

study requiring additional research is the contradictory results in relation to gender differences in FoC. An important and major finding of this research, in contrast to most FoC research, is that there were no significant differences in FoH based on sex, sexuality, and/or gender.

Fear of heterosexist violence is a significant artifact of heteronormativity. The *FoHS* provides evidence of the socio-spatial contexts of fear of heteronormative violence, and the reported results redress the gap in past FoC research where the contextual factors that shape results are either not known or not present. Understanding the impact of fear of heterosexist violence allows for the development of more appropriate policy responses, which address the mechanisms required to support highly victimized communities. While much is now known about the negative consequences of heterosexist violence on health and well-being, the impact of fear of that violence has been largely unknown. As fear of heterosexist violence can inform an individual's connectedness to community and capacity to safely disclose their sexuality and/or gender identity (which are also related to well-being), understanding the contexts and intensity of this fear is as important as understanding the impact of actual experiences of criminal victimization. In addition to the experience of a generalized FoC, LGBTIQ people experience the specific fear of heterosexist violence. This doubles the negative consequences of FoC and deepens the impact of avoidance behaviors on the participation of this population in the wider polity. As such, the ability to measure fear of heterosexist violence affords policy makers and advocacy groups with the evidence required to develop better responses to protect the mental health and well-being of this population group.

Aberrant and everyday heterosexism can truncate the opportunities available for gender and sexuality diverse communities to be more than "passport citizens" (Phelan, 2001). The experiences of LGBTIQ communities, such as those in Tasmania, are mediated by a tangible FoH. Moreover, while a generalized worry about uncertainty and ambiguity may influence how their experiential knowledge of heterosexist violence is reported in the *FoHS*, it is a fear generated out of a cumulative, pervasive heterosexism that permeates contemporary Australian society. In traditional FoC research, the fears produced from repeat heterosexist victimization are lost in the decontextualized accounts of FoC. When FoC research is localized and speaks directly to the contextual factors of participants' experiences, instruments such as the *FoHS* are better able to capture the impact of what Ghassan Hage (2006) has called the "everyday exterminability" of the hated other.

## Appendix

**Table A1.** Fear of Heterosexism Scale.

Item #	Item Wording	Temporal Orientation
FOH1	I feel vulnerable to prejudice/discrimination from people I know	Present
FOH2	I feel safe in my neighborhood	Present
FOH3	I fear that I will lose my job because of prejudice/discrimination against LGBTIQ people	Future
FOH4	LGBTIQ people are safer if they hide their sexual or gender identity or behavior	Present
FOH5	I fear that I will be physically unsafe because of my sexual or gender identity	Future
FOH6	I feel vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination from strangers	Present
FOH7	I fear that I will lose friends because of my sexual or gender identity	Future
FOH8	Prejudice and/or discrimination are not a worry for me	Present
FOH9	I avoid doing some things because of possible prejudice and/or discrimination	Present
FOH10	I fear I will not be accepted by my communities because of my sexual or gender identity	Future
FOH11	I feel safe to be open about my sexuality	Present
FOH12	I feel vulnerable to violence and/or harassment from strangers	Present
FOH13	I would be confident about reporting violence or harassment to the Police	Future
FOH14	I fear that I will be ridiculed or vilified because of my sexual or gender identity	Future
FOH15	I would be confident about reporting prejudice and/or discrimination to the ADC	Future
FOH16 <sup>a</sup>	As a LGBTIQ person, I am alert to prejudice and discrimination	Present

Note. FOH = Fear of Heterosexism; ADC = Anti-Discrimination Commission.

<sup>a</sup>This item was deleted after initial reliability analysis.

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## Notes

1. Importantly, although these victimization rates are exceptional in themselves, they only relate to those criminal and civil incidents stemming from *heterosexist* violence. As with any other member of a community, they may additionally be victims of non-targeted violence. This study, as with most community studies into heterosexist prejudice and violence, did not ask respondents to document the compounding experience of non-targeted violence.
2. LGBTIQ is the acronym used in this article to represent those gender and sexuality diverse communities identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (or questioning, and inclusive of non-gender conforming and cis-identified people).
3. For a comprehensive review of the historical, political, and methodological development of FoC measures, see Gray, Jackson, and Farrall (2008, 2011, 2012).
4. Tasmania is the smallest of Australia's six states, and unlike their mainland peers, most Tasmanians live outside of the capital (Hobart) and regional (Launceston and Burnie) cities. In policy terms, the whole of Tasmania is classed as a remote, rural, and/or regional zone. Tasmania was the last of Australia's state governments to revoke criminal provisions against homosexuality (in 1997). This law reform only occurred after the Tasmanian and Australian governments were brought before the High Court of Australia and the United Nations Human Rights Committee, respectively.
5. Nine participants responded to the question about gender identity as M2F transgender. These transgender women were recoded as women for the purposes of this analysis.
6. At the time of writing this article, same-sex relationships were recognized (and registered) by some Australian state governments (but not the Federal government, which has the power to amend the constitution in relation to marriage), and recent attempts by state and territory governments to enact same-sex *marriages* have been over-turned by the High Court of Australia as unconstitutional.

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