

Bisexual Communities: Identity, Erasure, and the Fight for Visibility

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Abstract

Bisexual and bi+ individuals constitute the largest subgroup within the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) population in the United States, a pattern reflected in several other countries, yet remain chronically underserved, underrepresented, and systematically erased within both heterosexual and LGBTQ+ spaces. This presentation examines the structural and interpersonal challenges bi+ individuals face in forming community, and investigates how bisexual communities have persisted and flourished despite ongoing erasure, with implications extending across international contexts. Drawing on minority stress theory and community resilience frameworks, we analyze how bisexual erasure operates at both interpersonal levels (e.g., binegativity within intimate relationships and double discrimination from both heterosexual and gay/lesbian communities) and systemic levels (e.g., harmful and absent media representations and inadequate research attention). We further examine how gender shapes these experiences, as bisexual women, men, and gender-diverse individuals face distinct and compounding forms of erasure and discrimination. We then explore how bi+ individuals and communities have responded through grassroots organizing, digital community-building, and identity affirmation strategies.

Particular attention is given to virtual platforms, including Reddit and social media campaigns such as #StillBisexual, in creating accessible, affirming spaces that buffer the mental health consequences of minority stress. We also highlight local, national, and international organizations that have sustained bisexual community across diverse contexts. Throughout, we address gaps in current literature, including the underrepresentation of bisexual people of color and gender-diverse bi+ individuals, and call for more internationally comparative research on bisexual community and resilience.

Keywords: bisexuality/bi+; bisexual erasure; community resilience; minority stress; bisexual visibility