

# Hearing Minority Voices: Institutional Discrimination Towards LGBTQ in Disaster and Recovery

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Published 5 December 2022

Within the themes of CASCADE NET, this paper focusses on less heard voices and the need to develop new social spaces. Disaster vulnerability identifies diversity in society through a lens of constraints to solutions, on such bases as demography, socio-economic status, cultural, ethnic and gendered minorities within society, and marginalized groups as well as physical proximity to a hazard. The focus of disaster risk reduction is on building resilience through the strengths and capacities in society, but it has a tendency to homogenize characteristics of resilience to the community level, thereby flattening and hiding diversity. LGBTQ people are largely ignored as minority groups with specific information needs. Specific response and recovery processes and actors exacerbate the vulnerability of the LGBTQ minority, especially in evacuation, support, counselling, and rehousing. The role of faith-based organizations (FBO) in providing these services during disaster relief and recovery is examined in this paper. This paper identifies and critiques the attitudes and practices of some FBO towards LGBTQ groups in their provision of disaster relief services.

*Keywords:* LGBTQ; disaster relief and recovery; faith-based organizations; vulnerability and resilience; diversity of needs; discrimination.

## 1. Introduction: Vulnerability and Resilience

This paper responds to the purpose of CASCADE NET that focusses on civil agency and extreme weather. The particular theme of working with diverse groups and developing new social spaces, especially for less heard voices provided a prompt to examine an emerging literature of LGBTQ vulnerability and resilience

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during extreme weather events. The vulnerability of LGBTQ people is exacerbated during disaster events as a consequence of homophobic discrimination and insensitivity towards their needs. Within this identification of enhanced vulnerability, a problematic issue that is identified in the literature concerns a trend towards privatization of disaster relief and recovery support services to faith-based organizations (FBO), especially conservative Christian agencies that are hostile towards LGBTQ people. The danger of increasing discrimination towards LGBTQ people by such FBO during and following a disaster is a primary focus of this paper. The aim is to identify the risk in order to enable policy and practice strategies to reduce that risk and enhance the resilience of this minority group in the face of disaster.

First, this paper briefly examines the broader context of Disaster Risk Reduction before examining a range of themes around LGBTQ vulnerability that are identified in the literature, and especially the increasing roles of FBO in relief and recovery. Since the 1990s, International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) emergency management has shifted its emphasis from vulnerability to resilience, with international strategies aimed at building and enhancing resilience. Diversity is acknowledged in our understanding of vulnerability, but less so in resilience enhancement. Vulnerability is defined in relation to different demographic, social economic, cultural, and special needs groups (Anderson-Berry and King 2005). While vulnerability recognizes the susceptibility to risk in individuals and groups, resilience builds on the strengths of people and communities. Consequently, resilience tends to focus on the whole community and is less sensitive to diversity. Within a strategy of building resilient communities, communication, warnings, education and messages are aimed at an amorphous public (King 2010). There is a tendency to homogenize society. The complication of these two concepts of vulnerability and resilience is that people are both vulnerable and resilient at the same time (Handmer 2003; Gurtner and King 2021). These are not at opposite ends of a single scale but are interacting parallel conditions of being.

One response amongst disaster researchers and emergency managers has been to attempt to diversify messages (Young and Jones 2022). There is a recognition of differences in demographics, class and social economic status, culture and ethnicity, language, geography, and gender. Thus, as an example, the Centre for Disaster Studies, James Cook University, Australia pursued work on awareness and education for children and subsequently for Australian indigenous people as examples of diversity as much as targeting specific needs.

In disaster risk reduction, the emergence of the recognition of LGBTQ people and communities has mostly taken place in the last couple of decades, although it should be noted that it is within this same timescale that emergency management

has attempted to diversify its messages. There is some linkage through gender and feminism, but increasingly, the emphasis is specific to diverse sexualities and the difficulties of LGBTQ people in facing social acceptance. Whereas the need to recognize diversity in relation to emergency management messages, guidelines, and warnings was focused on appropriate language, terminology, and understanding, the social marginalization issues in relation to LGBTQ members of society are less in language (although heteronormative terms, attitudes and assumptions distort messages and awareness) than overt exclusion in some instances from disaster relief, services and facilities, and recovery support. Social homophobia that exists in day-to-day attitudes to LGBTQ people is sharpened and in some situations has emerged as overt discrimination during the phases of disaster relief and recovery.

## 2. Method

A literature review was carried out through a number of internet search engines using the variety of abbreviations around the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, transgender, transsexual and queer, intersex and plus in their various combinations that are defined and discussed below. These were combined with the terms disaster, crisis, climate change, extreme events and sub sets of response, recovery and emergency management. The range and breadth of experiences and issues is indicative rather than exhaustive. The review in turn identified a limited number of related reviews which bring together findings that are summarized here. Rather than repeating a similar summary of each paper identified in these reviews, this paper identifies the issues that are reported in each paper. In particular, this paper seeks to identify specific issues and finds the role of FBOs in disaster relief service provision a problem that requires both further research and ameliorative action.

The literature of LGBTQ experiences that are summarized in this paper identifies loss of privacy, discrimination, rejection, condemnation and in some societies, vulnerability to arrest and imprisonment. This paper therefore reviews the literature of experiences from the perspectives of: (1) Emergency management messages and diversity; (2) LGBTQ experiences in disasters; (3) FBO in the LGBTQ experience; (4) LGBTQ resilience and leadership in disaster.

As LGBTQ people have gained acceptance and recognition in some societies, research and analysis of LGBTQ as minorities has gained traction with focus in areas of feminist and gender geography where gay and lesbian spaces and queer theory have generated an extensive literature that is not the focus of this paper (Hubbard 2016; Gaillard *et al.* 2017). Against this background of scholarship, a consideration of LGBTQ experience in disasters has emerged in recent decades

(Larkin 2019). Larkin (2019) carried out a global review of LGBTQ experiences. She identified 172 papers and reports, narrowing these down to 38 which were ultimately selected for analysis of themes and issues. The issues she identifies are cited in this paper as a summary of her review. Wisner and Gaillard (2009), Larkin (2019) and Dominey-Howes *et al.* (2014) refer to a lack of research “specific to gender and sex minorities in disasters” (Larkin 2019: 61), but Larkin's (2019) literature review captures a range of issues, shortcomings, and policy responses across a number of nations – USA, India, Nepal, Samoa, Indonesia, Haiti, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Philippines (also Knight and Sollom 2012). Larkin's (2019) review lists discrimination and vulnerability, policy gaps, lack of LGBTQ access to relief combined with lack of trust of agencies by members of the LGBTQ community, along with the destruction and loss of safe places and problems associated with relief provision by FBO. She also summarizes the resilience of LGBTQ groups, the contributions of many LGBTQ people to DRR leadership and relief, and the emergence of inclusive policy. A more specialist coverage in the Forced Migration Review journal (Couldrey and Herson 2013) focused on the experiences of LGBTQ refugees in 26 case studies. While 10 of the articles are generically global, the plight of LGBTQ refugees is identified in Eastern Europe, the EU, Myanmar/Burmese migrants in Thailand, Canada, Brazil, UK, Korea, Kosovo, Bolivia, USA, Israel, Kenya, and Nepal.

Dominey-Howes *et al.* (2014) approached the experience through five case study disasters in the USA, Haiti, India, Philippines, and Indonesia to identify issues and service needs, concluding by calling for more extensive baseline research. By 2021, Goldsmith and Raditz reviewed an extensive literature of the impact of disasters on LGBTQ communities, focusing on the USA, that identified issues of limited service provision, recognition of LGBTQ, the problems associated with discriminatory practices of FBOs, and entrenchment of existing inequalities. Their review identifies issues of bias and discrimination in service provision to LGBTQ people, a lack of recognition of LGBTQ individuals and couples, problems with services provided by FBOs, as well as poverty, homelessness, mental health, health needs amongst the LGBTQ community members and outright blame being placed on LGBTQ people by FBOs, especially those of the fundamentalist Christian right. Recommendations from their review focus on anti-discrimination training, community-based response and health care. However, they also point to a lack of empirical studies (Goldsmith and Raditz 2021), a lack earlier identified by Gaillard *et al.* (2017). This lack of empirical studies is noted by Goldsmith and Raditz as contributing to an absence of LGBTQ recognition in DRR policy.

Examples of surveys of LGBTQ respondents are recent and most are quite small (Carman *et al.* 2020; Parkinson *et al.* 2018; Haworth 2021) but COVID-19 has

prompted fresh research such as [Grant et al. \(2021\)](#) which elicited 231 responses from LGBTQ respondents. Privacy and trust are disincentives to participation in surveys, despite ethical assurances, but greater constraints to web-based surveys are researcher identification of networks and permission to share requests to ensure the safety of respondents. Despite these research constraints, surveys and interviews illustrate and reinforce themes and issues of LGBTIQ experiences. Thus, there are already significant research studies and case studies that underscore the difficulties faced by LGBTQ people during and after disaster.

### **3. Emergency Management Messages**

Following the UN IDNDR, the top down command and control model of emergency Management has steadily transformed ([King 2004a](#)) towards inclusion, cooperation, and recognition of diversity. The relative recency of this change in emphasis partially explains why many minority groups in society have been neglected. Furthermore, the heteronormative language of emergency management information ([Gorman-Murray et al. 2019](#)) extends across society in media, advertising, public information and general assumptions on what is normal ([Hubbard 2016](#)). Minorities and subgroups are recognized and often addressed, but under an umbrella of heteronormative images and assumptions. The information needs of indigenous people in Australia, for example, have for a long time been ignored because of a cultural blindness ([Wensing 2012, 2016](#)). This blindness is pervasive and extends beyond a failure to recognize indigenous people ([Gaillard et al. 2017](#)) LGBTQ people are confronted with information and hazard awareness campaigns that often portray nuclear families or heterosexual couples doing the right thing. [Gaillard \(2022\)](#) suggests that the language of emergency management and DRR is western in origin, thereby assuming a cultural norm that exacerbates blindness or fails to account for cultural complexity, especially the needs of minorities. Gaillard asserts that gender is presented as binary — not diverse.

At the very least such heteronormative portrayals are irritating — many LGBTQ people have long grown accustomed to such images and information — but more pervasively, it goes over the heads of individuals, failing to engage them because it is not about them. This is how multiple minorities are excluded from safety messages ([King 2004b](#)). Education and awareness raising are important issues for hazard preparation and personal and community safety, where greater diversity can and needs to be incorporated into the safety messaging. However, most of the literature reviewed is focused upon LGBTQ experiences during and after disasters during the relief and recovery phases.

## 4. Themes in the Literature Concerning LGBTQ Experiences in Disasters

The review that was carried out in preparing this paper identified five groups of themes and issues. These are diversity of and within the LGBTQ minority, discrimination, issues around service provision and health needs, inequality risk and exclusion, privacy and trust, and the primary focus of this paper, the part played by FBO in LGBTQ Disaster Experiences. It is because some Christian FBO are increasingly part of a trend towards privatization of relief and recovery services that each of these issues and themes needs to be explained. The five issues that are identified below are not separate from the role of FBO, but rather are exacerbated by some of those agencies. This paper summarizes these issues and themes and then focusses on the problem of discriminatory FBOs in provision of disaster relief and recovery services.

### 4.1. Diversity

A crucial starting point to a review of problems and issues is the recognition of a lack of homogeneity of the LGBTQ community (Dominey-Howes *et al.* 2014). The papers and reports that have been reviewed for this paper use a range of terms where LGBT is common to all, but variants include I for intersex, Q for queer or questioning and + as an umbrella for several additional positions of sexuality. Ng (2015) uses LGBT in reference to Chinese activism on the grounds that the Q is not used in China, although she recognizes the increased popularity of LGBTQ. It would be correct to cite the exact abbreviation as it is cited in each paper, but this can be awkward in terms of changing use throughout this paper, and many experiences and issues are cited by multiple scholars who often use slightly different abbreviations. This paper uses LGBTQ for convenience and inclusivity, but stresses that it represents considerable diversity within a population of diverse sexuality. LGBTQ, is used by the Q Christian Fellowship, formerly the Gay Christian Movement, whose organizational name change and choice, with a + as well, is illustrative of its attempt to extend inclusivity among diverse people who are victims of active discrimination but who are exercising their need to come to terms with a discriminatory organization — the church.

Dwyer's (2022) tool for evaluating inclusion uses the term Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) as a substitute for LGBTIQ+. The complexity of the variance of the abbreviations for LGBTQ symbolizes the diversity of the minorities within a minority. There is no single experience, socially, and specifically in disaster (Dominey-Howes *et al.* 2014; Haworth 2021). Each disaster is unique as is the impact on individuals

and communities, but there are common themes of disaster vulnerability that recognize greater impacts on vulnerable groups including all minorities (Anderson-Berry and King 2005; Haskell 2014). Parkinson *et al.* (2018) and Gorman-Murray *et al.* (2019) point to the specific needs of transindividuals, while Carman *et al.* (2020) and Gorman-Murray *et al.* (2019) stress that post-disaster services are generic and not geared to diversity.

## 4.2. Discrimination

Discrimination against LGBTQ is overt and crosses national and cultural boundaries (Goldsmith and Raditz 2021; Larkin 2019; Parkinson *et al.* 2018; United Nations Human Rights 2020). Homophobia stigmatizes LGBTQ people (Parkinson *et al.* 2018). Religious homophobia extends prejudice to include blaming LGBTQ people for disasters (Goldsmith and Raditz 2021; Richards 2010; Haskell 2014; Stukes 2014). The implications of religious homophobia are expanded upon later. Apart from overt discrimination policies, media and services are more commonly blind to LGBTQ (Gorman-Murray *et al.* 2019).

The Sendai<sup>1</sup> framework addresses social differences, but presents gender as binary (Gorman-Murray *et al.* 2019). Goldsmith and Raditz (2021), Larkin (2019), and Parkinson *et al.* (2018) all point to bias and lack of recognition of LGBTQ people, with Gaillard *et al.* (2017) adding that while there is a general recognition of minorities in social service provision, this is largely absent in disaster risk reduction.

## 4.3. Service provision and health needs

Discrimination is practiced in the refusal of agencies, such as NGOs that are tasked with disaster relief, including and especially some FBOs, in their provision of health and service needs, as well as access to services (Parkinson *et al.* 2018; Larkin 2019). A specific issue identified by Gaillard *et al.* (2017) and Stukes (2014) is the provision of appropriate bathroom facilities for transpeople in evacuation centers. There are jurisdictions that do not recognize LGBTQ partners (Haskell 2014) and even where legal rights exist, partners are excluded from some health provisions such as recognition of same sex partners as next of kin during disaster response (Haskell 2014). Inadequacy of health needs provision and

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<sup>1</sup>Three world conferences on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) have been hosted by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) to establish DRR strategies and policy frameworks for adoption by countries. Each has built upon and extended its predecessor — the Yokohama Strategy in 1994, the Hyogo Framework for Action at Kobe in 2005 and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction at Sendai in 2015 — all in Japan.

specifically mental health care to LGBTQ are recognized by [United Nations Human Rights \(2020\)](#), [Grant et al. \(2021\)](#), and [Gorman-Murray et al. \(2019\)](#).

#### 4.4. Inequality risk and exclusion

Despite public leadership and articulation by many middle-class gay and lesbian individuals, there is a general pattern of lower social economic status, homelessness, unemployment, and economic disadvantage in the diverse LGBTQ community ([Goldsmith and Raditz 2021](#); [Carman et al. 2020](#); [UN 2020](#); [Haskell 2014](#); [Stukes 2014](#)). Inequalities across the diversity of LGBTQ people and communities are exemplified in racial and gender divisions ([Haskell 2014](#); [Stukes 2014](#)). Transindividuals and partners are especially vulnerable, both in terms of general poverty and intensification of discrimination and exclusion in a disaster ([Carman et al. 2020](#)). Consequently many LGBTQ people are marginalized, living on the edges in terms of housing and income ([Goldsmith and Raditz 2021](#)). Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified pre-existing social and economic inequalities ([Haworth 2021, 2022](#)) adding significantly to mental health impacts ([Grant et al. 2021](#)). During disaster response, evacuation and relief, risk has been enhanced for many LGBTQ people, including incidents of violence in evacuation centers ([Parkinson et al. 2018](#)), as well as increased domestic violence ([United Nations Human Rights 2020](#)) and access to appropriate facilities ([Nicholson 2022](#)).

#### 5. Privacy and Trust

[Haskell \(2014\)](#) and [Stukes \(2014\)](#) wrote against a background case study of LGBTQ people's experiences in Hurricane Katrina. They point out that for many people, this disaster was the first time of being out in public. [Haskell \(2014\)](#) argues that many LGBTQ people are privately out but publicly closeted. The idea of a closet can be somewhat divisive amongst LGBTQ communities as it is associated with being hidden from sight in contrast to Gay Pride and the experience of being 'out' in the mainstream community. Being out is not simple for many LGBTQ people. It may invite discrimination, loss of employment and career, and homophobic violence. In complex roles of service provision, LGBTQ individuals may be faced with subjugating their own needs and rights in front of the albeit misguided conservative attitudes of the clients or the community they serve. This is typified in the dilemma of LGBTQ religious leaders and workers whose mission is to serve people who would otherwise reject and vilify them. Haskell refers to "stories of closeted LGBT unheard" (2014:10). People seek privacy for security and safety ([Carman et al. 2020](#); [Grant et al. 2021](#); [Larkin 2019](#); [Goh 2018](#)). Safe



spaces are lost in a disaster, in some cases physically destroyed (Larkin 2019; Haskell 2014), but in others interrupted or temporarily lost, including online places (Grant *et al.* 2021; Gaillard *et al.* 2017). The reciprocity of trust between institutions and LGBTQ individuals is a repeated theme aimed at enhancing resilience and communication and reducing vulnerability (Haworth 2022; Gaillard 2022; Dwyer 2022; Duckworth 2022).

LGBTQ people seek privacy and safe places. Being out, LGBTQ may invite danger or discrimination or may restrict careers and community roles of service to others. Surveys and reviews report a lack of trust of mainstream service providers (Carman *et al.* 2021; Larkin 2019). Stukes (2014) identifies the loss of specific safe places in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. The loss of a local Metropolitan Community Church (MCC — a diverse affirming church organization) and subsequent involvement of other MCCs played a significant role in terms of initial loss and then the recovery of safety and support. Even without a lack of trust, LGBTQ respondents identified heteronormative information, and specifically language and advice that is unfriendly towards transpeople (Haskell 2014; Larkin 2019).

All of the issues that are summarized above may be targeted and their negative impacts reduced, by strategies and policies that encourage best practice responsibilities on the part of individual service providers and their organizations. Disaster relief and recovery programs may be evaluated in terms of either their effectiveness or bias. For example Dwyer (2022) presents a risk assessment matrix as a rapid assessment tool of inclusion of LGBTQ (SOGIESC) people in disaster assistance programs. This identifies a continuum of hostile, unaware, inactive, inclusive, through to transformative. This matrix is subdivided by impact, cause and examples. The basic risk evaluation matrix is summarized in Table 1. Each cell in Dwyer's original table (Dwyer 2022, p. 35) identifies detailed examples of situations and strategies. These are not reproduced in Table 1 which is a summary of the matrix categories

Under hostile practices, the impact is identified as 'norms-based marginalization and exclusion of people with diverse SOGIESC is exacerbated' (Dwyer 2022, p. 35). In the next cell of the matrix, the cause is identified as 'The organization is aware of likely negative impact on people with diverse SOGIESC but goes ahead anyway because either it chooses not to address diverse SOGIESC issues or

**Table 1.** Outline of Program Risk Evaluation Matrix

	Hostile	Unaware	Inactive	Inclusive	Transformative
Impact					
Cause					
Examples					

Source: Dwyer 2022, p. 35.

actively discriminates against people with diverse SOGIESC' (Dwyer 2022, p. 35). It is especially significant that for a tool that was developed in the Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu, the hostile example that is cited is 'A faith-based organization is contracted to deliver relief, however its theology commitments or those of its in-country partners cast people with diverse SOGIESC as sinners; OR a secular organization puts aside SOGIESC concerns because they prefer to use the funds elsewhere or do not want to deal with the complexities of this work.' (Dwyer 2022, p. 35).

However the matrix cells of impact, cause and examples become progressively less harmful in each of unaware and inactive, and are positive and thus desirable project goals in the inclusive and transformative columns. The impact of a transformative goal is 'norms-based marginalization and exclusion of people with diverse SOGIESC is ameliorated and challenged', the cause is that 'the organization has developed competency to challenge norms-based discrimination that excludes people with diverse SOGIESC. It has revised its ways of working and has programs and partnerships that positively include people with diverse SOGIESC in mainstream programs while offering targeted alternative programs where safety requires' and an example is 'A cash-based social protection program designed in partnership with diverse SOGIESC CSOs and accounts for the impact of diverse SOGIESC marginalization on family and community relationships. The program provides holistic support that addresses longer-term livelihood challenges and counters community stigma' (Dwyer 2022, p. 35). The value of this tool is in applying it across a range of cultures, locations, and extreme events. In particular, it turns the focus round from the bad and harmful, while clearly identifying what these harmful actions are, to the positive inclusive and transformative approaches that enable resilience, capacity and trust to be built with LGBTQ people (here abbreviated to SOGIESC).

While homosexuality remains a criminal offence in some countries (69 countries mostly in Africa and the Middle East, Reality Check team 2021), there have been many positive trends towards acceptance, tolerance and inclusion. Government agency processes, policies and legislation, especially in western countries, acknowledge diversity, even though in Disaster Risk Reduction there is some way to go. Where direct government services are involved in disaster relief and recovery it is relatively straightforward to evaluate projects and train employees to do the right thing. However, services which are provided by FBO may involve some agencies and individuals who filter their responses and treatment of LGBTQ people in particular, through a lens of scriptural dogma.

## 6. Faith-Based Organizations in LGBTQ Disaster Experiences

It is in the areas of relief and services provided by FBO that researchers have identified the most blatant prejudice and discrimination (Stukes 2014; Richards 2010; Haskell 2014; Goldsmith and Raditz 2021). Governments in many parts of the world have either devolved welfare services inadvertently to FBO, or have left such services to organizations that have long provided relief, evacuation centers and temporary shelter (Wisner 2010). On the face of it, this is a rational sharing of the workload. Throughout the world, faith-based agencies operate at the smaller scales of local involvement, with buildings, personnel, and ideologies that urge the provision of assistance and care to people in need and suffering (Ng 2015; Hackworth and Akers 2010).

Religious faith provides motivation and purpose for citizens to want to help people who are in need or are suffering (Ng 2015; Hackworth and Akers 2010; Ager *et al.* 2015). Not only from the perspective of the giver, the recipients of services from FBO may experience a greater spiritual support and meaning that goes beyond the purely physical support and assistance (Ager *et al.* 2015). At times of disaster, many people who are not normally religious, turn to faith institutions for comfort and meaning. This transcends the world religions. Islamic, Buddhist, and Judaistic as well as Christian FBO respond to community needs in disaster (Ferris 2005; Baidhaw 2015; Wirtz and Ecke 2014; Ng 2015; Kawai 2014; Wisner 2010). The term FBO includes everything from local churches, mosques, temples or synagogues, etc. through to the hierarchy of the religion and service provision organizations that they have established to meet specific needs. Involvement of FBO is global and cross cultural, and scales from the local to international. In many instances, probably for most people, the response and relief experience is positive and supportive. However, minorities are vulnerable to pre-existing prejudices and social vilification attitudes, which in the context of this paper focusses on the activities of some conservative Christian agencies. LGBTQ individuals may have avoided conflict or confrontation through privacy and a low profile, but in a disaster people are forced into the sphere of influence of both government and non-government organizations including FBO.

At the local level, immediate response and recovery is driven by local individuals and community groups. LGBTQ people may be limited in their access to a range of services in small communities, but in such places, the providers may already be known. Post-disaster services and relief are provided by government departments, from central to local and NGOs as well as FBOs. In a small community where people may be members of multiple clubs and organizations, relief services are provided by known community members rather than a faceless

organization, where levels of trust and acceptance already exist (Wisner 2010). Unfortunately, a simple local trusted relationship in small communities is not the experience of most people, primarily because we live in large urban centers. During a disaster, local service providers are overwhelmed anyway. Community self-help breaks down in more severe disasters where local capacity may be destroyed and relief is brought in from outside by strangers. In a government-based hierarchy, this ramps up to calls for assistance from larger jurisdictions.

At the same time, throughout the world, governments have downsized and privatized services; even authoritarian regimes such as China (Ng 2015). In the developing world, governments are frequently weak and under resourced. Alongside such limitations, two processes have driven the shift from government provided services to increasing reliance on non-government organizations (local, international, and faith-based). In the developing world, because governments are under resourced and often weak in terms of governance, there is a reliance on non-government organizations (King 2004b). In the developed world, the trend has been towards downsizing of government services generally, but also as part of the neoliberal agenda. This has resulted in devolution of services to the private sector, which includes FBOs (Hackworth and Akers 2010; Ng 2015; Riera and Poirier 2014). In some cases, the devolution to FBOs was probably unintended but in societies such as USA, many Christian organizations are strongly committed to neoliberalism and supportive of conservative governments (Hackworth and Akers 2010). Concurrently, these FBOs are frequently anti-big government, answerable to their faith base and independent of government processes in terms of training, practice and inclusion. FBOs enter communities and countries with a set organizational agenda that is often not modified to meet local needs (King 2004b). They provide services in which they are skilled and committed with minimal reference to local needs, while many at the same time proselytize.

Riera and Poirier (2014) describe UNHCR reliance on faith-based agencies in the running of refugee camps, and identify discrimination practices against minorities and people of other faiths as well as LGBTQ. Couldrey and Herson's (2013) edited collection lists 26 case studies of discrimination and poor practice in relation to forced migrants with specific focus on LGBTQ. Hackworth and Akers (2010) cite the example of NORM, the New Orleans Rescue Mission. NORM was positively supported by a United States government that was not only set on a purposeful neoliberal devolution of services, but which had also run down Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the point where it was not able to provide proper response to the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina. NORM required relief recipients to attend church, were they were proselytized by a fundamentalist interpretation of faith and judgment. Many other FBO involved in relief in New

Orleans after Katrina were also very evangelical. These state supported FBO had little or no association with pre-existing churches, especially African-American. Thus when they emerged as major providers of relief services after Hurricane Katrina they had no local relationship on which to build in many of the poorer parts of New Orleans. Stukes (2014) additionally cites the initial incapacity of the LGBTQ Metropolitan churches (MCC) to service its own community because of alienation of LGBTQ people by the broader evangelical churches that had generated a distrust of all FBO.

Within Christianity (as well as Islam and other world religions which are not the focus of this paper), a major rift has long existed between the evangelical, fundamentalist Christian right, and the liberal traditions which are most often identified in the more established denominations. It is against this trend of service devolution to FBO that increasing relief and care falls into the hands of some intolerant organizations, as well as the more tolerant liberal FBO. FBO are extremely diverse. This critique of negative and intolerant practices is specific to some FBOs.

LGBTQ experiences in disaster identify homophobia, stigmatization, blame and prejudice (Parkinson *et al.* 2018; Goldsmith and Raditz 2021; Richards 2010; Haskell 2014; Stukes 2014). The same researchers, as well as those who focus on FBO (Ng 2015; Hackworth and Akers 2010; Ager *et al.* 2015; Stukes 2014; Ng 2015), cite examples of evangelists placing blame for disaster on LGBTQ people as God's punishment for sins. Consequently some FBO providing relief services have practiced exclusion, refusing to assist LGBTQ people and especially those who are trans (Stukes 2014; Riera and Poirier 2014; Richards 2010; Couldrey and Herson 2013; Ng 2015).

Ng's (2015) case study of Uganda explains how U.S. based evangelists whipped up homophobia in a predominantly Christian population in the period leading up to 2014 when the death penalty was introduced (and later annulled) for some homosexual acts. However, she also shows how FBO specifically Christian International Non-Government Organizations worked with the Chinese government to provide welfare services which included LGBTQ recipients. Similar inferences may be drawn from the Hurricane Katrina experience (Stukes 2014; Hackworth and Akers 2010) that suggest that government leadership and control of FBO is critical either in tacitly condoning, or actively supporting discrimination by FBO, or alternatively in framing inclusionary non-discriminatory provision of aid. Dominey-Howes *et al.* (2016) specify sound recommendations to direct FBO in providing relief, and the staffing of evacuation and recovery centers in such a way to include LGBTQ people within the broader legislative framework that outlaws discrimination. There are contradictory positions where a government (such as

Australia's legislative proposal on religious discrimination) would permit discrimination by FBO on the grounds of theological interpretation and freedom of religion, while simultaneously outlawing discrimination in terms of human rights, specifically as practiced against LGBTQ individuals.

Dominey-Howes *et al.* (2016) make a specific recommendation calling for LGBTQ people of faith to examine how they manage relations between faith and secular society and especially in the disaster situation. This is very much easier said than done. In this review paper, it is this statement that generates a research question that is significant to the experience of LGBTQ people receiving disaster relief from FBOs. Stukes (2014: 73–74) in her thesis explains her personal involvement as an African American Lesbian emergency manager. The experiences identified in many of the articles cited in this paper are already evident from qualitative research of the stories and accounts of rejection and discrimination in the Christian church in its day to day, pre-disaster dealings with its LGBTQ members. The experience of LGBTQ Christians in terms of their general self-conflict and direct conflict with their churches and communities is a focus of background research that is compiling faith discussions and written explanation (QCF 2021). The diverse LGBTQ Christian community struggles in bringing change, or at least acceptance and safety, within their churches. These tensions and conservative attitudes then extend into the disaster event when FBOs provide relief and recovery services, intentionally or inadvertently bringing discriminatory attitudes to strangers in the wider community. FBOs are ill suited or unable to accept their own LGBTQ members, they are by extension liable to disengage and marginalize LGBTQ people in the broader community.

Many LGBTQ people are distrustful of religious organizations, and like a significant proportion of the population in the Western world, do not attend a religious institution. They distrust FBO because of their stated condemnatory attitudes, their vilification and blame (Goh 2018). These attitudes can be avoided most of the time for most LGBTQ people by staying away from religion and having nothing to do with it. However, for many LGBTQ people, the most direct confrontation with the attitudes of FBO will come when there is no alternative relief provider in a disaster. At such a time, the vulnerable individual and the intolerant organization come into contact and confrontation.

LGBTQ people of faith on the inside of the religious organization can experience far worse. The Q Christian Fellowship (formerly Gay Christian Movement) published a series of personal accounts by members of their struggle to come to terms with sexuality, faith, rejection, and acceptance (QCF 2021). Experiences of LGBTQ people inside the church and especially those in evangelical fundamentalist denominations extend through rejection by family and community, self-

doubt, self-harm and suicide attempts, depression and substance abuse, the abusiveness of gay conversion, dismissal, expulsion, verbal abuse, condemnation and threats. LGBTQ people who remain in FBO do so despite the hatred and vilification of them either as individuals or as members of a minority. In most FBO, the task of negotiating with or changing the organization is extremely difficult. Some Christians move to tolerant or affirming, or even specifically LGBTQ churches, such as Metropolitan Community Church, (MCC) but these are small in number and location. Most LGBTQ people of faith find support networks and maintain work and service in organizations that reject and vilify them. To effect a change from within is a mammoth task – it is hard enough to survive and maintain faith.

In some denominations, progress has been made in achieving inclusiveness through affirmation. Churches have declared themselves affirming towards LGBTQ members and are put forward as appropriate FBO to offer non-discriminatory fellowship and service to the broader community. The Uniting Church in Australia is such a broadly affirming church that theoretically welcomes LGBTQ people. However, this extends neither to all individuals nor to whole states, such as Queensland, which rejects gay leadership and same-sex marriage. Especially in the north of Queensland, churches tend to reject and vilify LGBTQ people, despite secular laws which prohibit this, and despite an overall affirmatory declaration from the whole church.

### **6.1. Leadership and resilience**

The CASCADE NET will focus on community agency in adaptation to extreme weather events seeks to identify capacity for resilience in the community, in this case, a minority vulnerable community. Disasters are mostly short duration events that must be structured by emergency managers to lose minority and cultural blindness in order to encompass and serve all members of the community according to their needs. This requirement for emergency management as a state organization is relatively straightforward and is backed up by legislation, but it will still take some time to achieve effective inclusivity. All of the scholarly articles that have been reviewed in this paper contain sound recommendations concerning training, minority and specifically LGBTQ awareness, inclusive language and imagery, cooperation and resilience building. Many countries and jurisdictions are acknowledged as possessing appropriate policies, but these are often not practiced fully or even at all by some operational agencies (Duckworth 2022). To tackle this gap between intention and practice, Duckworth outlines a mechanism for a radical transparency to build trust between minority communities and relief agencies.

Apart from being victims of discrimination, LGBTQ people, coming from a very diverse minority are also leaders, careers, and innovators. [Gorman-Murray et al. \(2019: 4\)](#) state the “remarkable resilience, social capital, and adaptive capacity within LGBTQ communities”. Pre-existing networks and support structures exist within LGBTQ communities. These must be sought and activated during times of crisis and disaster. [Stukes \(2014\)](#), [Dominey-Howes et al. \(2014\)](#), and [Grant et al. \(2021\)](#) draw attention to the strength of leadership and resilience that exists among LGBTQ people and their communities. This also exists within strong affirming and supportive, predominantly straight, extended families in their love and protection of their own LGBTQ members. Equally important are the leadership roles played by many LGBTQ people in mainstream society, who will be part of the response and recovery of the wider communities in which they serve. There are, for example, lesbian and gay emergency managers who primarily serve the whole community, and whose attitudes influence the agenda of tolerance. [Dominey-Howes et al. \(2014\)](#) and [Gaillard et al. \(2017\)](#) refer to specific minority groups within LGBTQ in Asian countries, who play key roles of leadership in disaster recovery. The leadership and resilience exist with the LGBTQ minority to advance change in DRR policy and practice from within the agencies, even in tackling the conservatism of FBOs.

The much greater problem is the entrusting of leadership of disaster relief, the operation of evacuation centers and provision of welfare support services to FBO that are blatantly anti-LGBTQ, and who consider it acceptable to deny the services with which they have been entrusted by the government. Clearly, there are many FBO who do good work, as cited by [Ng \(2015\)](#) in China, but there are fundamentalist organizations which condemn LGBTQ people and refuse services and support. If these services and goods are provided by government through these organizations, such actions are illegal, but in many instances goods and services are provided by the charity of organizations that are only loosely answerable to the government. Some of these organizations may be controlled and structured by good governance, but in times of disaster, services are often provided by volunteers whose training and awareness may be very limited, and some of whose anti-LGBTQ opinions are entrenched. LGBTQ people on the inside of these organizations have direct experience of the prejudice and intolerance that is directed towards them. Many are active in refusing to walk away from that prejudice and discrimination ([QCF 2021](#)), and understand fully the depth of the problems involved in dealing with these FBO. Reversing the intolerance of evangelical FBO towards LGBTQ people may not be achievable even in the long term, given its centuries’ old history. Training in tolerance and inclusivity is not a solution to entrenched prejudice. An immediate focus must be the unsuitability of such organizations to be permitted to provide aid and relief after a disaster.



## 7. Conclusion

New and emerging areas of research from a variety of disciplines such as Anthropology, Sociology, Gender and Feminist Studies, and Disaster Studies argue for the importance of LGBTQ peoples' needs and engagement in disaster response and recovery. Researchers should identify discrimination and call out those organizations, or sections within them, which practice discrimination and speak publicly against LGBTQ individuals and communities both outside the period of a disaster event but especially during a disaster impact and recovery (Stukes 2014). More research is needed to fully understand how those inside these FBO can work within disaster relief operations and recovery in a way that does not impinge on the rights of LGBTQ members of the community during times of disaster and recovery. Participatory action research informed by queer theory is a research strategy for working inside organizations and communities (Castan Broto 2021; Parkinson *et al.* 2018). The question to be addressed will be whether FBO which advocate or practice discrimination should be identified and removed from disaster relief operations even if they have a long history of successful and effective relief and recovery strategies. LGBTQ researchers within such organizations have a critical role and responsibility in enacting transformation that may harness the goodwill and capacity of FBO to care for all members of the impacted community.

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