

# Claim Them as Ours: A Qualitative Exploration of Power and Privilege within Black, Queer Communities

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## Background

Indoctrinated across various societal sectors, heteronormativity is adopted by cis-hetero and queer communities alike (van der Toorn et al., 2020). In response to socialization within white, cis-het dominant culture, queer people of color (QPOC) may be pressured to compartmentalize their identities, embracing only a select portion of themselves. (Adames & Chavez-Dueñas, 2021).

## Aim

The purpose of this research is to examine how ideas of privilege and power influence the way Black, Queer individuals interact with each other.

## Method

### Participants

N = 5 Black, queer identifying individuals, >18

### Procedure

1. Qualitative, semi-structured interview - .75 - 1.5H
2. First cycle coding: In-vivo
3. Second cycle coding: Pattern
4. Inductive thematic analysis
5. Member checking (forthcoming)

“And a lot of this is about survival. Let's be honest, right? Like a lot of our elders...you know...didn't survive unfortunately because of stigma, because of hatred, because of lack of access and equity and healthcare and housing—all of these things.”

“They are...they are treated as close to nothing because they are...they are fetishized. And then once that fetish is fulfilled, they are treated like shit.”

“No one is staring or like holding pitch forks, but that is the feeling that's created. And I think that's how white supremacy and heteronormativity have infected my relationship and just how I'm gonna' decide to navigate that.

“And it's like, *damn...* I thought we was all somebody in here. I thought we was all part of the same community. *All somebody in here.*”

“Men can't deal with men not being men.”

“Unfortunately, we emulate white standards even when we don't mean to.”

“If I push you further out and oppress you, that puts me closer to the middle now because the line is bigger. Whereas if I help you out and we become equal, now I'm actually...I'm closer to the bottom than I was before.”

“And they were just saying like there's a lot of racial tension happening as well. And they were just saying like, I just feel like I'm already on the edge right now—just being a black person. Me holding your hand is like the edge for me. Like, I don't have more...I can't kiss you right now. Like that would be pushing it too far.”

## Emergent Themes & Subthemes

- Healthy Black, queer relationships establish community, affirmation, and generativity
- Power and privilege by way of queer concealability in both sexual and gendered presentation
  - ❑ Cisgendered presentation
  - ❑ Alignment with traditional femininity and masculinity
- Unexpected manifestations of power and privilege
  - ❑ Power of the *change agent*
  - ❑ Power of the *fetishized*
  - ❑ Power of educational and commercial representation
- Attitudes of racial, sexual, and gendered desirability are institutionally reinforced
  - ❑ Religious sectors
  - ❑ Academic and professional sectors
  - ❑ Black identity and conflicting liberation struggles
- Attitudes toward 'greatest' privilege within Black, queer community vary (vacillating between cis, gay men and cis, lesbian women)
- Unanimous attitudes toward 'least' privileged identify Black, Trans women as subject of greatest disadvantage
- Collective liberation efforts should include openness to personal sacrifice, self-interrogation and deconstruction, prosocial motivation, and genuine empathy