

Titles:

Title for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis:

Studying personal feelings and perspectives on issues with reintegration from military to civilian life among ex-soldiers

Title for Discourse Analysis:

Matt Bernstein discourse on internalised homophobia (YouTube material - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tasPGGPR4Ww>)

Research aims and research questions

1) Research aims:

Research aim for IPA with David And Mark: To explore the problems of reintegration of Mark and David into civilian life with focus on comparisons between military and civilian life, loss of military identity and lack of support during the process.

Research aim for DA with Matt Bernstein: To examine how the speaker discursively constructs internalised homophobia and negotiates queer identity through narratives of shame, self-presentation, and community judgment in an online monologue.

2) Research questions:

Research question 1 for IPA with David and Mark: How do former soldiers make sense of the loss of military identity and belonging after leaving the army?

Research question 2 for IPA with David and Mark: How do former soldiers interpret their experiences of transitioning into civilian life, particularly in relation to the lack of support from army?

Research question 1 for DA with Matt Bernstrein: How does the speaker discursively construct internalised homophobia as a learned, internalised, and emotionally persistent phenomenon?

Research question 2 for DA with Matt Bernstein: How does the speaker position himself and other queer individuals within discourses of masculinity, femininity, and community norms when discussing self-presentation and judgment?

Methodological Summary

The conducted interviews with Mark and David show how they perceive their military life and a somewhat troubled transition into the civilian life after discharge. The reason why IPA was used for research is that both interviews conducted have produced a substantial material consisting of qualitative data. Hence, IPA may be confirmed as one among obvious choices for this type of research (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). Also, semi-structured interviews employed in this research alongside IPA compose an optimal fit (Howitt & Cramer, 2007).

Furthermore, IPA has been proved as an effective approach to studying personal feelings and perspectives of former military personnel members regarding ‘army-to-civvie switch’ (post-deployment reintegration)(McCormack & Ell ,2017; Luethke et al., 2025) or how service has impacted their marriages (Keeling et al., 2015). This may account for viability of IPA in researching how soldiers perceive their former and present life and what they think about wins and losses of reintegration.

Discourse analysis is another novel approach in psychology (Potter, 2011; Goodman, 2017). Discourse analysis originated in other disciplines in (literary theory, philosophy, sociology), where it was used to interpret how text (discourse) can construct social realities. Here, it may be important to note that social realities created during discourse practice may be what they really are, but also what the interlocutor (or writer, speaker, etc.) is trying to put forward to a counterpart or audience (problem of ‘stake or interest’ in discourse) (Ussher & Perz, 2014).

Military service and the further post-service life may create unique social realities for soldiers, and these are likely shaped by military identities, discipline, sense of belonging (‘mateship’) (Heward et al., 2024). Post-deployment reality may create a strong dissonance among ex-soldiers.). Reintegration may involve both: disconnection from strictly hierarchized and orderly military life and going back to civilian life which to some extent is something opposite and lacking ‘higher purpose’ (Wilcox et al., 2015). Hence, IPA may be a productive approach to investigate these problems. On the other hand, LGBT issues relate to such topics as self-pride, stereotyping, homophobia, but also internalised homophobia may be a case, therefore, DA is a useful tool in investigating how LGBT-community members perform discourse practices on these topics (Bailey, 2026).

Discourse pattern may be an ambiguous term if not explained, since discourse practices are very content- and structure-rich. For the needs of this study, the author has assumed that ‘discourse patterns’ are expressed through: action orientations and discursive devices (Goodman, 2017).

In order to make quotations clear for reading: all quotations referring to Mark’s utterances are referred to with ‘M1’ abbreviation, while ‘D2’ relate to David in IPA. In DA, all quotations are marked as ‘MB’.

First step was to read both interviews thoroughly and initial notes have been made afterwards. For DA a YouTube material has been transcribed (See: Appendix 1c), The author has come from the emergent topics that were firstly identified as: identities and how membership in the military branch has changed self-assessment and self-worth among both interviewed former soldiers. Two significant quotes that may be related are: “I was a member of a team, and I was an important member of a team and I was recognized as doing something for my country” (D2) and “The army gave me structure. It taught me discipline, but more than that, it gave me a sense of worth. I felt like I was part of something bigger than myself, and that was powerful” (M1).

The superordinate themes that the author has identified for IPA are:

- Loss of military identity and sense of belonging after leaving the army,
- Hardship during the adaptation to civilian life.

Two superordinate discourses in DA are somewhat consistent with research questions, since Matt Bernstein divides his account into two large sections – either composes a superordinate topic:

- presentation of internalised homophobia phenomenon,
- Matt himself in internalised homophobia.

Evidence of Analysis

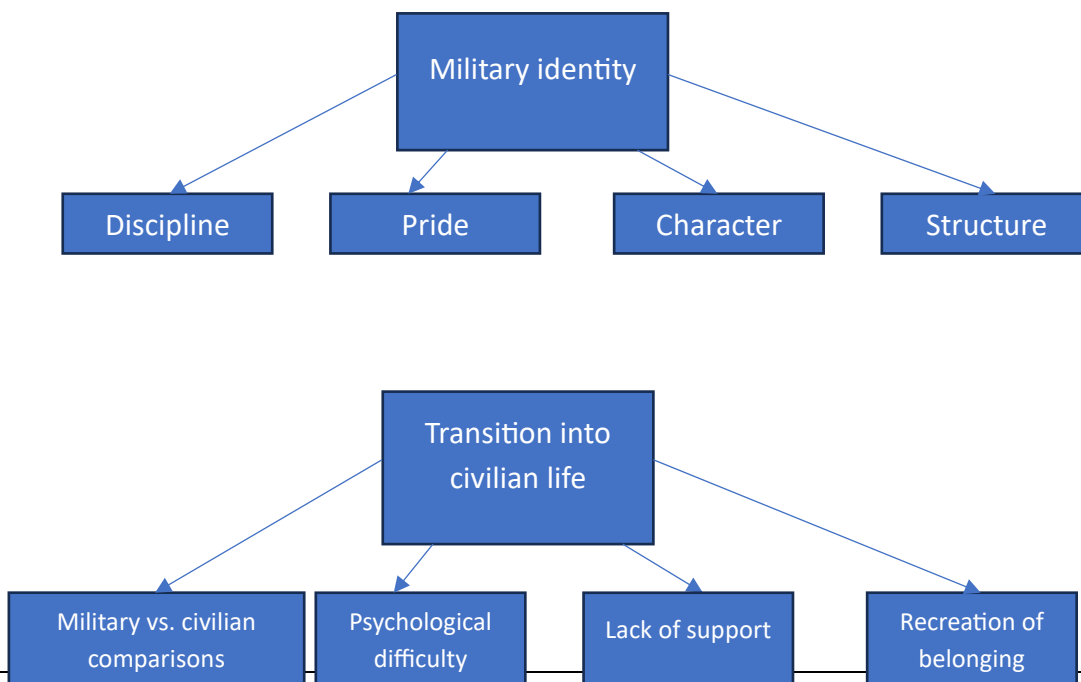
Table 1.

Evidence of Analysis for IPA

1) Selected extracts of annotated transcript
<p>M1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The army gave me structure... it gave me a sense of worth.” Annotation: Mark illustrates the army as a source of identity, stability, and self-value, also: stable life. - “Now... I’m just another guy in a warehouse.” Annotation: Captures the post-service identity collapse. - “A few workshops and a pamphlet aren’t enough [...] they should have a proper transition program” – perceived lack of institutional support <p>D2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The bond you form with your mates, it’s like nothing else”. Annotation: Highlights camaraderie as identity-forming, home-, family-like structure. - “Once you’re out that gate, that’s it... you’re on your own.” Annotation: abrupt end, being abandoned, one moves from one world to another, - “Once you’re out that gate, that’s it... you’re on your own.” Annotation: nostalgia, sense of being haunted.
2) Emergent theme lists
<p>1) Military service as a source of structure, discipline, and personal transformation: “The army gave me structure” (M1), “It gave me confidence [...] I wasn’t confident at all” (D2).</p> <p>2) Belonging and team identity in military life: “The bond you form with your mates - it’s like nothing else” (M1), “I had an identity and I belonged to somewhere” (D2).</p> <p>3) Pride and sense of life in military role: “Wearing the uniform [...] meant a lot to me” (M1), “We were important [...] I was proud of that” (D2).</p> <p>4) Loss of identity and purpose after leaving the army: “I’m just another guy in a warehouse” (M1), “There’s that void [...] an empty space” (D2).</p>

- 5) Abrupt, disorienting transition with inadequate preparation: “One day you’re in uniform, the next you’re out... I felt lost” (M1), “Once you’re out that gate... you’re on your own” (D2)
- 6) Lack of understanding and support from civilians and family: “My wife tried... but she didn’t understand” (M1), “There was no-one there to give me advice... we lost everything” (D2).
- 7) Clash between military work ethics and expectations in civilian life: “I expect others to do the same [...] I get frustrated” (M1), “Civvies [...] weren’t able to make decisions” (D2).
- 8) Longing for military structure, routine, and adrenaline: “Everything feels a bit aimless [...] civvie life is quieter” (M1), “I miss the danger, the thrill, the adrenaline rush” (D2).
- 9) Attempts to recreate belonging, with mixed success: “Volunteering helps but it’s not the same” (M1), “I tried to join the Association but it’s full of old people” (D2).
- 10) Psychological difficulty in post-deployment: “I bottled a lot of it up” (M1), “If it wasn’t for my wife, I think I’d have done something totally crazy” (D2).
- 11) Need for army’s assistance in reintegration: “They should have a proper transition program, something hands-on” (M1), “Maybe let you shadow a civilian job for a few months before you leave. That would’ve made a big difference” (M1), “Yes, I think the army should allow you to get a feel for civilian life. They should allow you to go and work... work experience for instance” (D2).

3) Diagrams



4) Coding steps

M1:

Descriptive comments:

“Shaped me completely” – total transformation for identity

“Part of something bigger” - identity anchored in collective purpose

“Proud to be a soldier” - self-esteem tied to role

“Just another guy in a warehouse” - loss of status, invisibility

“No ceremony, no closure” - abrupt ending, emotional shock

“Bottled a lot of it up” – forced emotional suppression,

“Everything feels a bit aimless” - loss of direction

“Nothing really fills that gap” - persistent feeling of emptiness, loss

Linguistic comments:

Repetitions of “proud” - identity affirmation

Contrastive language: “then” vs. “now”

Metaphor: “the world moves on without you” - feeling of abandonment, being useless

Conceptual comments:

Military identity as stabilising structure

Civilian life as flattening, depersonalising

Transition as threat to/breach of identity

Lack of support as isolation, helplessness

D2:

Descriptive comments

“It gave me confidence” - identity build-up
 “I belonged to somewhere” - strong group identity (team, rules, hierarchy, etc.)
 “I was proud of that” - value and recognition
 “I know I haven’t got that now” - identity loss
 “Thrown outside and locked the gate” – abandonment
 “See ghosts” - haunting nostalgia
 “There’s that void” - existential emptiness

Linguistic comments:

Strong metaphors: “ghosts,” “void,” “locked gate”
 Repetition of “important,” “proud,” “team” - identity anchors
 Contrastive language: “then” vs. “now”
 Intensifiers (“no-one,” “nothing,” “never”) - they hold emotional load

Conceptual comments:

Army as source of competence, purpose, belonging
 Civilian world as chaotic, selfish, incompetent
 Transition as traumatic rupture
 Persistent longing for military life
 Emotional instability post-discharge

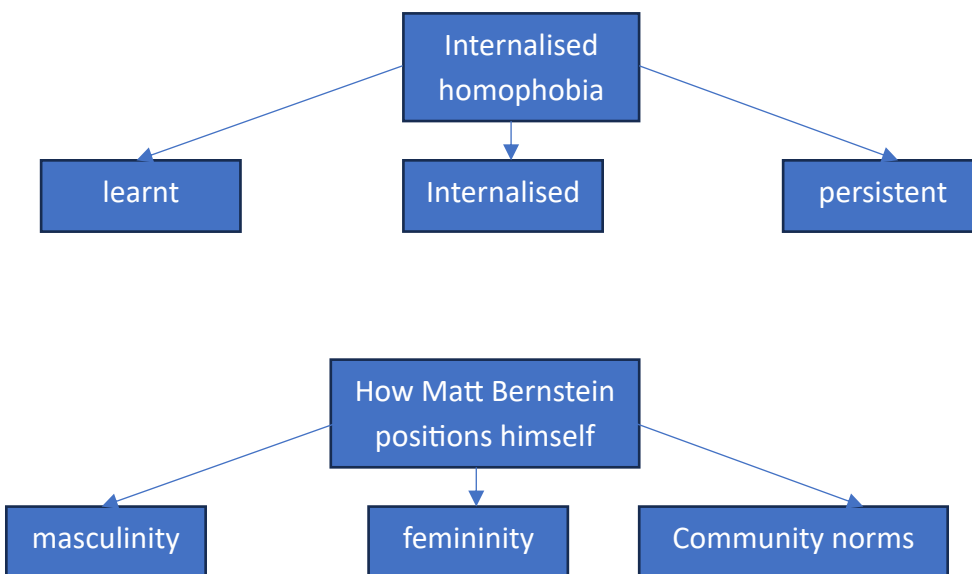
Table.

Evidence of Analysis for DA

1) Selected extracts from annotated scripts
<p>“Internalized homophobia is what happens when LGBTQ+ people [...] subconsciously turn those ideas inwards, believing they are true” - Defines internalised homophobia as a psychological process of absorbing social stigma.</p> <p>“You were probably taught in some way that being gay was wrong or disgusting” – learning process in internalised homophobia starts in early life, since childhood – one could deduce</p> <p>“Just by coming out, you don’t unlearn a lot of the homophobia [...] you internalized all those years in the closet” - internalised homophobia reinforces being in closet - coming out does not prove prevalence over internalised homophobia, since it persists</p>
2) Emergent theme lists

- 1) “You were probably taught in some way that being gay was wrong or disgusting” – internalisation of social stigma,
- 2) “Just by coming out, you don’t unlearn a lot of the homophobia you internalized all those years” – emotional persistence of internalised homophobia
 “If you go on Grindr, it’s literally just people like mask for mask, mask for mask” – community regulates norms that are homophobia-based which support masculinity, while disdain femininity
- 3) “I would literally remove my nail extensions before the date” - lack of surety, safety with self-expressions of being a gay, who is more feminine than other gays
- 4) “Some of us have a lot of femininity [...] and it’s actually really cool to be open-minded about that” - desire for self-acceptance

3) Diagrams



5) Coding steps

Descriptive comments:

1. “You were probably taught [...] being gay was wrong or disgusting.” - homophobia as learnt through early socialisation
2. “Internalized homophobia is what happens when LGBTQ+ people [...] turn those ideas inwards.” - internalisation process goes through absorbing stigma,

3. “Just by coming out, you don’t unlearn a lot of the homophobia you internalized” Describes - internalised homophobia as emotionally persistent, coming out not a milestone in combatting

5. “I would literally remove my nail extensions before the dates” - describes femininity as risky

6. “It’s really easy to take the shame you’ve built up [...] and deflect it onto someone else” – community norms and judgment, internalised homophobia eternalises even within LGBT community

Linguistic comments:

1. “You were probably taught...” - uses generalising “you” to construct a shared queer experience, but Matt and others whom he addresses share the experience

2. “Internalized homophobia is what happens when [...] - uses a didactic, definitional tone to establish authority - for further representing himself as advocate and supporter of other queer/LGBT persons.

3. “Mask for mask, mask for mask.” - monotony and rigidity of masculinity norms within LGBT/queer community

4. “I would literally remove [...]” - intensifier “literally” conveys emotional weight and vulnerability.

Conceptual comments

1. “Being gay was wrong or disgusting” - homophobia as learnt, not innate.

2. “Turn those ideas inwards” – Frames internalisation as a psychological process of self-directed stigma.

3. “You don’t unlearn it...” - positions internalised homophobia as long-lasting and emotionally persistent

In DA, action orientations have been checked within the discourse on internalised homophobia by Matt Bernstein: (explaining, justifying, excusing, blaming, complaining, defending, positioning, normalising, persuading, moral evaluation, emotional work, instructing, warning, encouraging, persuading). Some of them had to be abandoned (lack of quotes that would back them up). Below, the identified action orientations are presented:

1) Explaining internalised homophobia as learned (MB: “internalized homophobia is what happens when LGBTQ+ people are subjected to negative stereotypes, stigmas, and prejudice... and subconsciously turn those ideas inwards, believing they are true.”, MB: “we listen to all of this stuff that we learn about gay people and we build up these ideas within ourselves about what gay people are like.”, MB: “you were probably taught in some way that being gay was wrong or disgusting.”, MB: “you probably learned somewhere along the way that femininity in men was... [undesirable].” MB: “all the while [...] repressing our own sexuality [...] we form judgments about feminine men and masculine women.”)

2) Normalising internalised homophobia as universal/omnipresent (MB: “Unless you had like super woke parents [...] you’ve probably been exposed to some level of homophobia in your house.”, MB: “I’m sure you were exposed to homophobia in school and homophobic microaggressions in the media.”, MB: “I think that all gay people at some point have felt like freaks”, MB: “our internalized homophobia that we all have”)

3) Emotion work: shame, fear, self-hatred: MB: “that was like a hotbed of internalized homophobia to me”, MB: “I told myself [...] ‘this is a passing phase [...] this is not gonna be good for my future”, MB: “that’s a really traumatic thing to feel”, MB: “remember the shame that you felt when other people were judging you”.

4) Blaming/critiquing social structures: MB: “you were probably taught [...] being gay was wrong”, MB: “a whole slew of other queerphobic, homophobic, binary bullshit that taught you to hate yourself”, MB: “homophobia and queerphobia [...] live within all of us.”

There is another perspective in which action orientations are formulated during discourse and these apply to Matt Bernstein himself and - according to the below evidence - he employs them in a different way than in description of the phenomenon:

1) Positioning himself within masculinity/femininity norms: MB: “I’m gay. But I’m not gay gay. I’m an acceptable gay. I’m a good gay. I’m a normal gay”, MB: “I really wanted straight people to accept me as one of them”, MB: “I get really nervous [...] because I want a guy like me.” MB: “I feel most myself when I’m dressed like this”,

2) Self-presentation and identity work: MB: “I would literally remove my nail extensions before the date”, MB: “I love my nails, I love how they make me feel. I feel most myself when I’m dressed like this”, MB: “if the person [...] only likes me when I’m a scaled-down version of myself [...] then it’s never gonna work out.”

3) Positioning others: MB: “masculinity is prized in gay world as much as it is among straight men”, MB: “on Grindr... mask for mask, mask for mask”, MB: “no amount of straight acting, not like the other gays, mask for mask bullshit is going to change that.”

4) Critiquing community norms: MB: “mask for mask bullshit”, MB: “it’s a really shitty thing to do... it doesn’t let us grow as people.”, MB: “our internalized homophobia... has made us think that judging someone else... lifts us up.”

5) Moral evaluation of judgment within the community: MB: “when you judge another queer person, you’re also judging yourself”, MB: “we are all a community of sexual and gender minorities.”

6) Encouraging/persuading toward acceptance: MB: “it’s actually really cool to be open-minded about that”, MB: “when you stop projecting your homophobia onto others... you can also stop projecting it onto yourself”.

Discourse in MB transcript also employs various interpretative repertoires:

- **Shame and internalisation repertoire**, which is a leading way to explain queer experience as shaped by absorbed stigma, self-hatred, and turning ideas inward: quote from MB: “We build up these ideas within ourselves [...] taught you to hate yourself;”
- **Trauma of the closet repertoire**, which explains how LGBT members go through hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity: MB: “Those were five years [...] a hotbed of internalized homophobia”,
- **Queer community hierarchy repertoire**, which may be understood as way in which some queer people judge or compare themselves to other queer people to feel superior: “All freaks have a deep psychological need to feel superior to a different type of freak”,
- **Performance vs. authenticity repertoire**, which embodies struggle between true and performed self: “I’m a good gay... a normal gay”

DA in the transcript of MB talking-head session also spans on few ideological dilemmas:

- Pride vs. shame,
- Authenticity vs. social acceptance,
- Group solidarity vs. judgmental stances within the group,
- Being masculine, as being safe vs. expressing femininity as self-expressive.

Below, these dilemmas are illustrated by the most notable quotes:

- Pride: “Some of us have a lot of femininity. And, actually, really cool to be open-minded about that.” - shame: “I told myself [...] 'This is a passing phase, this is not what I want, this is not gonna be good for my future, and I'm gonna marry a woman”,
- Solidarity: “Treat all people with the respect [...] you wished straight people had treated you with.” - judgment: “Mask for mask... looking for mask”,
- Masculinity vs. femininity (or relative safety vs. self-expression): Safety: “Masculinity is prized in gay world” - expression: “I feel most myself when I’m dressed like this”

5. Summary Table of Findings

Students will produce a single, clear table (one for IPA and another for DA) summarising one superordinate theme and its subthemes.

Table 2.

Summary of findings for IPA

Superordinate theme	Subthemes	Illustrative quote
Military identity	Belonging/team identity	“I belonged to somewhere” (D2)
	Discipline	“It taught me discipline” (M1)
	Pride	“I was proud to be a soldier. I was proud of the work we did” (D2)
	Character/structure	“The army gave me structure” (M1)
Transition into civilian life	Military vs. civilian comparisons	“Civvies [...] weren’t able to make decisions” (D2).
	Psychological difficulty	“I bottled a lot of it up” (M1)
	Lack of support	“My wife tried her best, but she didn’t understand what I was going through. None of my friends were

		ex-military, so I didn't have anyone to talk to who really got it" (M1)
	Recreation of belonging	"I tried to join the Association but it's full of old people" (D2)

Table 3.

Summary of findings for DA

Superordinate theme	Subthemes	Illustrative quote
Notion of internalised homophobia	Learnt	"You were probably taught in some way that being gay was wrong or disgusting and you probably learned somewhere along the way that femininity in men was shout out to internalized misogyny".
	Internalised	"Internalised homophobia is [...] when LGBTQ+ people are subjected to negative stereotypes, stigmas, and prejudice about queerness and subconsciously turn those ideas inwards, believing they are true"
	Emotionally persistent	"Even if you've accepted yourself on the surface... all those prejudices and judgments... they're still there"
Matt Bernstein in internalised homophobia	Masculinity	"I think some people outside of, like, the gay male community don't understand that masculinity is prized in gay world as much as it is among straight men."
	Femininity	"As a guy who often chooses to express myself in obviously feminine ways, I get really nervous about this because I want a guy like me."

	Community norms	“We are all a community of sexual and gender minorities and no amount of straight acting, not like the other gays, mask for mask bullshit, is going to change that”
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6. Short Discussion

In the above analysis (IPA and DA), two major topics have been undertaken: reintegration of ex-soldiers and struggling against internalised homophobia. The reintegration topic divides into two superordinate themes (military identity, and transition into civilian life) while the other also holds two leading themes (internalised homophobia as a phenomenon, and Matt Bernstein within it – positioning himself). Below, the author shall discuss briefly subthemes for each superordinate topic.

Military identity, according to literature, consists of strength, discipline, but also invincibility and lethality (Heward et al., 2024). Related to social structure, components of military identity are: individual and group identities (me-identity, we-identity), that are embedded in hierarchical positions and belonging (to group, to structure – “something bigger”) (Kuemmel, 2018).

Discipline, in military means is a broad concept, that covers how members of armed forces behave and execute tasks, but also it explains external influence (orders, commands) that shape it. Further, it applies to breaches of regulation in military (Amarasinghe, 2024). Discipline creates a climate and framework of rules that establish safety and security, especially when it is developed using positive means (leadership, advice, etc.) (Volkov, 2005).

Pride is an important component of military identity, as it programmes loyalty, resilience, belonging and purpose. Therefore, it is a factor interconnected with other factors that shape soldier's self (Lancaster & Hart, 2015).

Character/structure in military identity is a concept that is not well discussed in literature, however, it may be understood as combination of various personal traits that have been augmented by military life (Ruben & LaPiere, 2023).

Transition between military and post-military, however, may be a troubled process (2024). According to literature, transition to civilian life may carry negative consequences, such as alcoholism or drug use, homelessness, domestic violence, or crime (Cooper et al., 2017). But even without these issues, most of ex-military encounter multi-faceted problems.

Psychological difficulty, in most serious forms involves post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or schizophrenia, which not necessarily stem from battlefield experience (shock, physical impairment due to wounds). Such problems as depression, anxiety and prolonged stress are frequent among ex-soldiers (Stevlink et al., 2015).

Lack of support is explained as social (family, friends, community) and institutional (ambivalence or retrained means of support from military and civilian institutions). Compared to problems of Mark and David, who seem to be militaries serving during 1980s and 1990s, when consciousness of problem was low, according to YouGov study (2022), support situation for UK veterans is still difficult. Recreation of belonging is perceived as embodiment and retirement of relational legacy, but the problem is access to veteran community and limited interest of ex-soldiers (Albertson, 2019).

Notion of internalised homophobia is explained in many studies, and it is understood as a phenomenon among homosexual men who are conflicted between their homo and heterosexual identity, and its consequences may be projected against other homosexual men (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Berg et al. (2013), explain that internalised homophobia develops through complex structural and environmental factors which are interwoven into early life stages of would-be homosexuals (family, upbringing, peer pressures, etc.). This defines it as an internalised process, however, not without external influences that generate effects of dystonia and homonegativity (Berg et al., 2013). External norms, beliefs (familial, religious, cultural) that shape mind of a young homosexual develop into a learning process which is not well understood according to available literature, which stays opposite to learning "general homophobia" among heterosexuals. Emotional persistence of internalised homophobia in

literature is rather backed up indirectly, through studies that link it with various mental health problems among homosexual persons (McKenna, 2024).

In Matt Bernstein's discourse on internalised homophobia there have been three key subthemes: masculinity, femininity, and community norms. Regarding relationship (conflict) between masculinity and femininity, evidence in literature is not clear. Thepsourinthone et al. (2020) argue that homosexual men may not value masculinity, as expected, however, authors admit that this may be a result of self-report and social desirability bias. Inquiry into literature evidence on internalised homophobia and gay men who seem to be "homophobic" towards other gay men shows that this topic requires wider scientific attention, as it may not have been adequately recognised. Matt's discourse on this matter may be pointing an overlooked topic.

7. Reflexivity

After having read all interviews for IPA and DA, I have had certain strong emotions towards both topics (reintegration of ex-soldiers, internalised homophobia). Also, I felt that my position has been evolving and not without basis, I think that these factors may have influenced my interpretation of results in IPA and DA.

Your positionality to the participant/text

Also, in both analyses (IPA and DA) I have been in the position of outsider, therefore, I was not exactly aware of the depth of problems that the involved persons (ex-soldiers in IPA and Matt Bernstein in DA) expressed.

In IPA, my positionality towards both ex-soldiers was shaped through the overall picture of persons whose life changes drastically often against their will, however, in the first place I did not know that ex-soldiers may be missing the lost identity, power and right to use violence and that they would be in more or less subtle ways disdainful towards civilians.

On the other hand, my positionality as researcher in DA evolved from basic compassion (which was likely accompanied with personal bias) to a version expanded with deeper understanding. The reason why this has changed is the fact that MB transcript contained various terms which I did not understand previously as a non-member of the community: "mask for mask", "trauma of closet", or "Grindr". Actually, also "internalised homophobia" has a new

term to me, yet, I knew that holding a non-binary orientation may involve some dystonic feelings and experiences.

Emotions that arose and subjectivity

In my subjective point of view, both ex-soldiers originate from troubled social backgrounds where their self-esteem could not have developed, therefore army was the only institution that could bring them up. The side effect is that they developed superiority over other persons based on military identity and what it involves (power, use of violence). Emotions that I have felt for them are empathy, also a bit of anger, but such ones as disgust and disapproval have been much stronger. Emotion that I felt was empathy, but also some feelings as familiarity or curiosity, since MB transcript has enclosed internalised homophobia as an umbrella term which hides interesting structure of LGBT community.

How your stance shaped interpretations

Likely my stance and emotions have been shaped through IPA and DA. This may be the case, since phenomenological position and discourse positions are different. While the former may be more focusing on personal insights and feelings, DA interprets discourse from the positions of exerting power and interests.

My stance also changed on the fact whether Matt Bernstein has good roster of strategies to deal with internalised homophobia. In my opinion, discourse in MB transcript shows that internalised homophobia is a serious and multi-layered problem. Yet, Matt Bernstein despite being an advocate for other LGBT/queer persons, may still lack well-developed strategies to deal with it (i.e. his willingness to remove longer nails before date). It may be certain that LGBT community stigma and internalised homophobia may originate from the binary “mainstream”. But my interpretation has taken a direction that there is a ‘secondary’ problem of homophobia that is practiced within LGBT community.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1. Transcript with coding

Appendix 1a. Interview Transcript – ma

Interview Transcript – Mark

Interviewer: In what ways, if any, do you think your sense of yourself has been influenced by being in the army?

Mark: I think it shaped me completely. Before I joined, I was a bit all over the place—no direction, no real goals. The army gave me structure. It taught me discipline, but more than that, it gave me a sense of worth. I felt like I was part of something bigger than myself, and that was powerful.

Interviewer: What aspects, if any, of being a soldier were important to you?

Mark: Camaraderie, definitely. The bond you form with your mates—it's like nothing else. You rely on each other, and that trust, that loyalty, it becomes part of who you are. And the pride, too. Wearing the uniform, knowing you're representing your country—it meant a lot to me.

Interviewer: You mentioned pride—can you talk more about that?

Mark: Yeah, I was proud to be a soldier. I was proud of the work we did, even the tough stuff. I felt respected, and I respected myself. That's something I've struggled to hold onto since leaving.

Interviewer: Do you feel you still have that sense of identity now?

Mark: Not really. I work in logistics now, and while it's a decent job, it's not the same. No one really knows what I did or what it meant. I'm just another guy in a warehouse. It's hard to explain to people who haven't been there.

Interviewer: How did the transition to civilian life feel for you?

Mark: Honestly? It was rough. I thought I was ready, but I wasn't. One day you're in uniform, the next you're out, and it's like the world just moves on without you. I felt lost. There was no ceremony, no closure. Just a handshake and goodbye.

Interviewer: Did you feel supported during that time?

Mark: Not really. My wife tried her best, but she didn't understand what I was going through. None of my friends were ex-military, so I didn't have anyone to talk to who really got it. I bottled a lot of it up.

Interviewer: Did your military training help or hinder you in civilian life?

Mark: A bit of both. It helped in terms of work ethic—I show up on time, I get the job done. But I also expect others to do the same, and that's not always the case. I get frustrated easily when people don't take things seriously. I've had to learn to let go a bit.

Interviewer: Are there things you miss about military life?

Mark: Loads. The structure, the sense of purpose, the mateship. Even the routine—I knew what each day would bring. Now, everything feels a bit aimless. I miss the adrenaline, too. Civvie life is just... quieter.

Interviewer: Have you found anything to replace that sense of purpose?

Mark: I've tried. I volunteer with a veterans' group now, and that helps. Talking to others who've been through it—it's grounding. But it's not the same. I don't think anything really fills that gap.

Interviewer: Looking back, do you think the army could have done more to prepare you for civilian life?

Mark: Absolutely. A few workshops and a pamphlet aren't enough. They should have a proper transition program—something hands-on. Maybe let you shadow a civilian job for a few months before you leave. That would've made a big difference.

Appendix 1b: Interview Transcript - David

Initially found phrases words that might be useful for either IPA and DA – red marked

Interviewer: In what ways, if any, do you think your sense of yourself has been influenced by being in the army?

David: It gave me more confidence. As a nipper when I first joined the army, I wasn't confident at all. I think I joined the army to see how I could do it for one thing. Number two – I joined to

get away because I didn't have a trade. I had no or very little education. The education I did have behind me wasn't up to much, so I needed a job where I could go in and have some money in my pocket. And, as you know, in them days, they were 'Yeah, if you want a job my son, come this way' and that was it. But it gave me confidence – confidence to go out. As we said, once I left the army, I could find a job anywhere ... within reason.

Interviewer: What aspects, if any, of being a soldier were important to you?

David: I was a member of a team, and I was an important member of a team and I was recognized as doing something for my country. You know, I was prepared to go. If they say, 'Right, David, Kuwait has been attacked, you know, I was ready to go'. Yeah. It wasn't a case of 'Woah, it's their country, it's nothing to do with us'. If the boss wanted to send me, then away I go. That was important to me. It's like, as I say, I had an identity and I belonged to somewhere.

Interviewer: You had an identity – could you talk a little bit more about having an identity?

David: Yeah, I was, I was part of a team. I was a driver and, without us drivers, no-one would get their goods, so we were important, and I was proud of that. Uh, so that side of the identity was important to me, you know – we were important in doing a job.

Interviewer: Do you have that now?

David: [Sigh] People like to tell me I've got that now, but I know I haven't got that now. You know, I'm in the school [working as a caretaker] and they say, 'Oh, without the caretaker this wouldn't happen, and this wouldn't happen. You know where everything is – we don't'. True. Yeah, you know. If I was to have a week off, it would start falling because people don't know where everything is. But in the same vein, if I happened to walk out of there and if I was to get run over by a bus, you know, it would be case of, 'Well, that's it. David, you did a good job, we miss him, fine, get someone else in'.

Interviewer: It seems to be a little different for you from being a team member within the school and being a team member in the army.

David: You're not a team member within the school because you're not a teacher. The teachers all sort of get round their ... I sometimes wonder why the kids of today act like they are, and I can understand by the standards of some of the teachers. They can't do simple things. Like, at the end of the day before the class is dismissed, the teacher could say 'Right, we are going to pick bits of litter up'. They don't do that. They just leave it off, you know, as if to say, 'Ah, it's only the caretaker and his staff – they'll do it'. It annoys me because being part of a team as we

should be, as we were in the army, you know, we would have all helped right from the top all the way down. Civilians have different ideas of being in teams. They go as far as what's good for themselves and then, 'Right, that's it', and that to me is not being part of a team. That's the difficult part, I find.

Interviewer: I'd like you to think and talk about whether your values and personal beliefs have anything to do with your training as a soldier or experiences in the army.

David: I would say a great percentage of them, yes. As in, as in being honest to your mates – yeah – which, you know ... if you're not honest to your mates, then God, you were in the doghouse, right up to your neck in the dark and murky stuff. Um, discipline. Yeah, I think I learned a great majority of them being in the army. Ah, I wouldn't say I could have learned them at home because my mother died when I was young, when I was little, you know, um, so being brought up by my grandmother, right, I don't think she had a great deal of time so, so yeah, I think I got a lot of them from being in the army.

Interviewer: People tend to experience events like this sort of transition into civilian life in their own unique way. I'd like to hear how you experienced it and what your feelings were.

David: 22. It was a ... I don't know what I expected but I didn't expect too just ... You sort of stood in front of this officer who reeled off a load of crap because, you know, the officer I was stood in front of didn't like me anyway. We never saw eye to eye from the day I got there because he knew I was only there for months because of 'Options for Change' [plans for reducing the size of the army in the light of the end of the 'Cold War']. The unit I was at was closing down, so they had to send me somewhere. Um and, you know, so he came out of his office and reeled off 'Oh, we've really enjoyed having you' and all this ... and I thought, 'You lying git'. But then you just walked out of his office and the next thing you know, someone's saying 'ID card – thank you, Mr Jones'. And that hit you, you know. Someone's calling you 'Mister'. No-one's calling me 'Sergeant' anymore. That was funny. That was a shock. That's when you knew. And then that's it – you walk out, and no-one's prepared you for that. I just ... Once you're out that gate, that's it. I know I can't even get back into the camp where, not ten minutes ago, I was a serving sergeant. I can't get back in. You know, you ... it's like they're throwing you outside and locked the gate, you know, and that's it – you're on your own. That was painful. And then having to sort of fend your way through the world like ... If something falls off your house, you can't pick up the phone and get hold of the old housing people anymore – you've got to deal with it. In fact, there's no great problem in that but it's a funny feeling. You

know, 'Bloody hell, I've got to deal with that now'. Yeah. Um, and going around and, you know, like we were saying, you walk round, and you walk down the street and you see ghosts. You know, you walk down streets where you walked down as a serving soldier and you can see all these ghosts, people you've met, you know. Or, come out of this shop and you expect all the lads to come staggering down the road drunk as skunks or something like that and they don't and I still see them today, you know. I can sit down in [named garrison town where he lives] and yeah, the mind goes back to the times and you think, 'Yeah but there's no-one there anymore' and, you know ... you think, 'Jesus, you never expected it to be like that'. You thought that maybe there's someone you could talk to but there isn't. Even, you know, when they say you can go to SSAFA [Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association – a charitable organization that offers help to ex-service people] and all that, even they sort of put you on the back burner once you're a civilian because they think 'Yeah, that's it, you've used up, you know you've done your bit – off you go'. And you know they don't realize that you've given the best time of your life to them and you give, which I did, I gave per cent to the stage where I got damaged knees and other things and I'm knackered. And so when I came out, I should be out now enjoying myself because my kids have all grown up and I should be now but I can't and you think to yourself, 'Oh Jesus, what have I done?'. Would I have done that if I had my time all over again? Yes, even for all I've just said. You know, you walk out and there's nothing – there's that void. It's just like an open space, an empty space.

Interviewer: It sounds lonely.

David: If it wasn't for my wife, I think I'd have done something totally crazy. I don't think I'd be around today to be honest if it wasn't for the missus. She was, she was very supportive and I, um, I tended to be a little wild for about a couple of months after I got out, which one does. Uh, it nearly broke the marriage up at one stage. But she stuck with us and here we are. But yeah, it's ... it is lonely. I still miss it, I still do. I wish I could get civilianized very quickly.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about what it felt like to be thinking about leaving the army and becoming a civilian?

David: I started leaving the army when I was posted back from [a named German town]. Hence that's why I chose, because I had a choice of my unit, and I thought to myself, well a truck driver, that seems like the obvious route to take, being RCT [Royal Corps of Transport]. So, I thought if I go for [name of specific army unit], at least they've got the attics [articulated vehicles] there, so I can get out. Although I had a Class licence, I can get experience on them

and get the tacco [taccograph] experience, the rules of the road and the driver's hours. Um, I started building up from then. What I aimed to do was get a job first then find somewhere to live. And so I thought, and you know when you have these briefings [army resettlement briefings] and they tell you how hard it is to get a job, which was right in one respect, um, as I think you need a job to get a job in civvie street and so I was gearing up for that all the way through. I was putting favours out and working for firms moonlighting, so I was getting my fingers in quite a few pies. **Um, it was the army that wouldn't let me leave. I started gearing up for civvie street.**

Interviewer: It sounds like you were doing a lot of preparation, practical preparation – was there any mental preparation? Did you think about what it would feel like when you were a civvie?

David: I might have given it one or two thoughts ... [indecipherable] ... **But one thing I could never sort of visualize was civvie street. You know, to me civilians were people that walked around and weren't able to make decisions.** That's the feeling you get, you know.

Interviewer: Looking back, do you think that you were prepared for civilian life and how being a civilian was going to feel?

David: No.

Interviewer: Looking back, do you think there is anything extra that the army might have done to help you adjust to civilian life or did they do enough?

David: Yes, **I think the army should allow you to get a feel for civilian life. They should allow you to go and work, um, work experience for instance.** In the last six months, they should post you off somewhere and say, 'Right, off you go and we'll see in you in ...' – **not letting you run wild, having at least to report in once a week or something, um, and let you go and work for somebody. So I think that would have helped a lot.** I don't think you can go away on one of these three week [resettlement] courses and, you know, you come back and they think, 'Well, he's ready'. You know, I think some of the officers at the top don't realize just how hard it is for someone to get out because I know when they finish, they don't really finish. They go to the officers' clubs and all of those things and they carry on drinking G and Ts for breakfast. They don't think you ... [indecipherable] ... has to go out and find his work. **He doesn't get the money that they're offered in their package, so he's got to go out and find the work, if you can understand what I mean. And it's ... you know, it just didn't prepare me at all.** Like I said earlier on, you know, **one minute I was there and the next minute I was out the gate – I was a civilian, you know. There was no preparation at all.**

Interviewer: Some researchers believe that when people leave a distinctive environment like the army, there may be an impact on how they see themselves, feel about themselves or on how they behave. I'd like to explore how your sense of being a soldier might or might not have affected how you felt about yourself in civilian life.

David: Yes, I think I understand. You're trained to be disciplined and you're trained to look after yourself. **When I say 'look after yourself', not like just combat. I mean by 'looking after yourself', I can make my breakfast, I can make my dinner, I can sew, I can iron, I can wash. Um, I know that there's a lot of civvies out there can't. I was astounded at how many blokes can't iron or sew or can't cook.** I just can't believe it, you know. Um, so yeah, that's the thing ... that was me.

Interviewer: Did you feel differently or the same about yourself in civilian life compared to how you felt about yourself while you were still in the army?

David: Don't feel as ... sometimes, not all the times, **sometimes I don't feel as though there's a purpose to it. You know, like, going to school [as a school caretaker] and walking along and thinking, 'What the hell am I doing here? Bugger this'. The kids are a bunch of shits, you know.** But I've got to do this yet again, today and tomorrow. And you think to yourself, 'This is me for the rest of my life'. I go in there and I just feel, 'Why isn't it like it was in the army?' and hope something will change, yet I get on with it. **Um, so I mean the answer to that question is sometimes I feel upset but other times, you know, there's just that void where I just wonder.**

Interviewer: Can you say something about how, if at all, being an ex-soldier helped you or caused problems for you, or if you feel it made no difference?

David: **In civvie street, being an ex soldier gives you the confidence. Um, I went for an interview for a job. As I said, I've never been out of work.** I've had more jobs than I thought I ever would and I think that the simple fact is that when I go on the interviews, I say, 'Right, this is me. This is what you're getting. Take me and I'll be a great team player', and I tell them that. Where it hinders me is the fact that I like things in lines. I like things in neat packages and so when I go – like when I was driving the truck, when I used to come back at night, I used to park all the wagons up so all the bumpers were level. Funny as it may seem, they had them parked all over the car park. It made it harder to get out. They couldn't see the fact that by lining them all up it was easy to get them out. Um, it was other little things like your paperwork. Keep your paperwork in order – it makes it easy. I think that side of life used to hinder me because all I would do was spend an extra ten minutes. All they wanted to do was in, out and go. Um, so

yeah, there is a hindrance somewhere way along the line, in some aspects. I think in most aspects it certainly stood me in good stead.

Interviewer: Sometimes spouses, relatives or friends can influence how we feel about ourselves, particularly during important changes, such as changing career or lifestyle. I'd like to focus on whether or not the decisions that you made and how you felt might have been influenced by your spouse, relatives, friends and work-mates. Can you say something about whether or not you felt supported by your spouse?

David: Supported by ... no, not really. Because the people we knew when we went to live in civvie street were up in [named town], north Wales, so we didn't really know anybody there, so as for support, no, no we didn't get any support from anybody. You just had to go out and try and find your own feet and make lots of mistakes – expensive ones at that.

Interviewer: Can you say something about whether or not that lack of support affected how you felt about yourself?

David: There was no-one there to give me advice and guide me on things like buying a house. Um, it's all right sitting in a briefing room and someone pointing at a chart and saying, 'Do this and do that'. That's all well and good but, as we know, what you see on paper and what happens on the ground are two different things. Um, we bought a house and it collapsed and we lost everything. I lost all of my money, the lot, in this house in one fell swoop. If I had've been guided, if someone had been there to say, 'Look, this is what you have to look for', if there had been someone up in that area that we could have called on and say, 'Look, I'm buying a house, I've just come out of the army – any chance of coming along and showing me a few pointers?', I think that would've helped. So at least you'd have got the first one over with. I won't be buying another house. I don't want to buy another house ever again. That would have been handy. Um, no, there was no support for me.

Interviewer: I wonder if people's feelings or behaviour towards you changed or stayed the same after you became a civilian?

David: Yes I think they did because the people we knew when we were living in [named Welsh town], the people we knew around the area knew me as the soldier from England so they used to come around and we used to have a chat at weekends and all this. But once I got out [left the army], a few of them sort of kept coming round for a while and then all of a sudden they were

just gone. They must have thought, 'Well that's it, he's got nothing else to offer, the novelty's worn off'. I think people's feelings did change in some respects.

Interviewer: Did that have an effect on you or not?

David: No, not really, because I was working permanent nights, so I never used to see them often anyway. Once I got out and I started working properly, no I don't think it did.

Interviewer: Working and living in the military environment is different in many ways to civilian life. I was wondering if there are parts of military life which you miss?

David: **What, compared to civvie street? I miss the social life, I miss the social life ... I miss the programme of events that we used to get in the army.**

Interviewer: The social programme or..?

David: **Both, the social and regimental programmes ... in view of my character.** Like, we've got days when we're on exercise for a few weeks. Get there and you could plan your life. You knew you were going on exercise and you thought um, you knew that weekends out of the ... you knew you were going to kill a few beers and you knew you were going to have a good time. I think you've got over that now. You know you can't plan anything from day to day. I miss the danger, the thrill, the adrenalin rush. You don't get that any more. **Um, I miss walking out the door and making sure I'm all right. I'm proud to be a soldier.** Now I walk out the door in my overalls and I think, 'Well, yeah, that's it'. **You try to give an appearance of someone who's been trained and disciplined but it's not the same, it's not the same. You don't have the same effect as anywhere else.**

Interviewer: Did you feel you needed to replace things about the army that you missed with something else?

David: **Well I tried to join the Association but it's full of old people.** The RCT [Royal Corps of Transport] Association, I mean. We joined that but I'm the youngest there by years. You know, um, we went to the Christmas function and it was someone with an organ playing 'Roll out the barrel' and others music, which is no good to me and our lass. Um, we haven't reached that stage yet. We go back up to [named Welsh town] and we have some friends up there and we go back up there and we have a whale of a time up there – totally go wild. So yeah, that replaces it.

Interviewer: You talked about moving around in the house in [named Welsh town] and now you're living in [named garrison town]. What made you come back to [named garrison town]?

David: The house we had up there, um, collapsed and we had to sue a solicitor and get another solicitor to sue the other solicitor and it was quite a hard task, you know. They refused to do it or reluctant, I should say, to do it but we did find one but it cost us a lot of money – money which we didn't have so we had to beg, steal and borrow it. In the end, we lost the house altogether. Um, we had to sell it to pay off some of the debts and this job came up which meant I got a house with the job. Hence, I'm back here. And that's it.

Interviewer: You had links then with the [named garrison town] area to know about the job here?

David: Oh yes. The father-in-law was a governor of the school and he told me that there was a job coming up. He didn't actually have any say or input into me getting the job because it was totally down to me, you know. Him being a governor, me coming because we were related – he had to take a step to one side and let me get on with it.

Interviewer: When I was preparing for this research I came across material which discussed how people from distinctive jobs might try to lessen the impact of leaving. We've talked about the army resettlement package but I'd like to know a little more from a personal perspective. Did you think about what it might be like when you would've left the army lifestyle and how – how you might feel about that?

David: Well one of the reasons why I think I was moonlighting was to get to know my civilian counterparts and try and get into how they thought and how they worked and how they operated, um, but it was very difficult in some respects. That, uh, as soon as they found out that you were a squaddie – a serving squaddie – working in their firm, some of the drivers – not all of them but some of the drivers – just wouldn't speak to you because you were trying to take over their jobs, which I think, you know ... it's how can I put it, a bit like a Black trying to join the Klu [sic] Klux Klan, you know. You know, we were sort of coming in and we were 'No go', you know. 'You shouldn't be coming in here, you know. You've got a job – what are you doing sort of taking other jobs?', you know. 'There's people out there who are unemployed who want this job', you know. And I'd turn round and say, 'Well, why aren't they here taking the job?' That was hard. It was also giving an insight into how they felt.

Appendix 1c.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tasPGGPR4Ww>

Let's go make some coffee and talk about why we hate ourselves.

Good to see you.

Cheers! So today we're going to be talking about internalized homophobia. What is internalized homophobia? Here's the definition, according to me: **internalized homophobia is what happens when LGBTQ+ people are subjected to negative stereotypes, stigmas, and prejudice about queerness and subconsciously turn those ideas inwards, believing they are true.** Researcher James Locke defined it as the self-hatred that occurs as a **result of being a socially stigmatized person.** What does that actually mean? I would explain internalized- No comments about the nails, please. I'm no no f..... comments about the nails Basically, I explain internalized homophobia like this when you are in the closet and you learn what being gay is or you see media about gay people or you hear people in school or in your family or wherever talk about gay people did you form the idea in your head that being gay was like a celebratory awesome thing and that like gay people were super cool and amazing and deserving of equal treatment No.

Unless you had like super woke parents who were really progressive throughout your childhood, you've probably been exposed to some level of homophobia in your house. Even if you weren't, I'm sure you were exposed to homophobia in school and homophobic microaggressions in the media. As gay people, we're in the closet for a long time for some people, decades, and during that time, we listen to all of this stuff that we learn about gay people and we build up these ideas within ourselves about what gay people are like and how they should be treated and how we should judge them. All the while, oftentimes repressing our own sexuality and you know, who we are actually are and who we want to be. We form judgments about feminine men and masculine women and why they are less than.

You were probably taught in some way that being gay was wrong or disgusting and you probably learned somewhere along the way that femininity in men was shout out to internalized misogyny. And you probably were taught that masculinity in women was garish or brutish or weird. And a whole slew of other queerphobic, homophobic, binary bullshit that taught you to hate yourself and hate a lot of people for me. I figured out I was gay when I was 10 and I didn't start coming out to people until I was 15. I know that that's still really young, but those were

five years, and in those five years, that was like a hotbed of internalized homophobia to me. I told myself over and over again, 'This is a passing phase, this is not what I want, this is not gonna be good for my future, and I'm gonna marry a woman.'

But I did come out. Eventually and if you're watching this, you probably did, too. Or you're planning on it at some point, but when you came out, those ideas that you had, that you internalized and built up within yourself about gay people and queer people and what we're like— we deserve those ideas didn't just vanish overnight. That's not how it works. That's not how the brain works. When you learn something, you have to consciously unlearn it. Just by coming out, you don't unlearn a lot of the homophobia and transphobia and queerphobia that you internalized all those years in the closet. Even if you've accepted yourself on the surface to the point where you feel comfortable coming out to other people, all those prejudices and judgments and all of that—those that you still have within yourself.

They're still there. Changing those ideas and really becoming a more accepting person, both of yourself and of others in the community, that's something that is a lot more emotionally challenging. It doesn't happen in a day. It can take years. It can take a lifetime. And the people who never attempt to unlearn any of those judgments and ideas start to treat themselves and other people like shit. Let's watch an example.

[Alright, you guys, we're gay, but this dude at the drive-in window at Starbucks is gay. No, because I'm about to put this on him when he gets to. He's gonna be like, 'Alright, have a good day.' That's what he's gonna be like. Yeah, baby. Alright, have a good day. Thank you. Thank you. That's how I called it. No. That's how I called it. He really said, 'Have a good day. Have a good day'].

Yikes, so obviously what this guy did was rude and unnecessary and immature. But the motivation for him to actually like—basically—bully this gay drive-thru worker I think is more interesting because this wasn't an instance of a straight person making fun of a gay person. It was a gay guy making fun of another gay guy. Why? Internalized homophobia, as per usual. I think ContraPoint says it best, so I would like to propose a sociological theory. Tiffany's Law. **All freaks have a deep psychological need to feel superior to a different type of freak.** Basically, the guy who filmed this TikTok, his name is Cameron. He lets us know that he is gay, but he's not.

But he's gay and we can assume that this means at some point he's felt like a freak. I think that all gay people at some point have felt like freaks to themselves or to other people, or

usually both, and that's a really traumatic thing to feel. But it's how a lot of us feel, especially when we're in the closet— like we don't fit in, like we can't fit in. So what do we do with that traumatic feeling? It's really easy to take the shame that you've built up inside of yourself as a queer person and deflect it onto someone else might be a little bit weirder than you or a little bit less acceptable than you are.

It is what Cameron did to the drive-thru guy, but I would argue that it's a really shitty thing to do and it doesn't let us grow as people because at some point Cameron is going to meet some flamboyant guy that he likes or he's gonna go to a drag show and realize he is enjoying himself or he's gonna be listening to pop music and his inner femme is gonna come out and he's gonna be like, 'Yes, queen' and then he's gonna be like, 'Oh no, I didn't do that. I'm not that kind of gay' and in those moments he's going to judge himself exactly like he judged this drive-thru guy. And the truth is, Cameron, we all have a little femininity in us. Some of us have a lot of femininity.

And, actually, really cool to be open-minded about that. Not just because I want you to be nice to people like me and like the drive-thru guy, but also because I think it's good for you. Because when you stop projecting your homophobia onto others, people you can also stop projecting it onto yourself. It's actually a really great way to grow without judging yourself all the time, the way that you're probably always afraid straight people are judging you. But I, I'm not just saying this stuff out of my ass. I have had a long journey with internalized homophobia, and I'm still on it. When I first came out as gay, I really consciously distanced myself from flamboyance and femininity. I felt like, okay, I'm gay. But I'm not. Gay, gay. You like.

I'm an acceptable gay. I'm a good gay. I'm a normal gay. And a lot of those feelings were just lingering from when I was in the closet and I really really wanted straight people to accept me as one of them, even after I came out. I really wanted straight people to accept me as one of them. Obviously, over the years, I've let go of some of that. But I still struggle a lot, you know. This is a shitty time to film this because it's literally the one video I'll ever make where I'm not wearing nails. I've actually struggled a lot recently with my nails and feeling like men will still find me desirable and attractive while I'm staying true to my femininity. Like, I'm 21. I'm single.

I date sometimes, but until recently, if I was going on a date with a guy that I really wanted to be into, I would literally remove my nail extensions before the date. I'd still have my short nails painted because, like, Let's not get ridiculous. But I was literally so nervous that other gay men would be turned off by my visible expressions of femininity, that I would f

cut my nails so that they would want to go on another date with me or so that they would want to sleep with me or whatever the goal was. Even though I f..... love my nails, I miss them the most right now. But I am taking a break because my real nails are falling apart—it's a whole thing. I don't want to talk about it. **I think some people outside of, like, the gay male community don't understand that masculinity is prized in gay world as much as it is among straight men.** Like, oh my god, if you go on Grindr, it's literally just people, like, Bye. Thank you. I don't even know how to explain this. **If you go on Grindr, literally people's profiles are just like mask for mask, mask for mask, looking for mask. And mask is an abbreviation for masculine.**

Thank you. Honestly, Grindr is a whole other video. Let me know if you want me to make a video on Grindr. But this is all to say, as a guy who often chooses to express myself in obviously feminine ways, I get really nervous about this because I want a guy like me. I eventually want to get married and have kids. **I would get nervous often that, if I presented in a feminine way, that a man wouldn't want to see me internalized as homophobic.** Honestly, it's only been in the past few months that I stopped removing my nails before meeting a guy because it occurred to me that, regardless of how I presented myself on a first date, at some point the nails and the lashes and everything would come back on because I love them.

I love how they make me feel. I feel most myself when I'm dressed like this. And if the person that I'm going on a date with only likes me when **I'm some scaled-down version of myself, when I'm a less gay version of myself, then ultimately it's never gonna work out.** And it's not worth either of our time. So what are we going to do with all of this internalized homophobia? We're gonna f..... address it in ourselves. Listen, in those moments where you find yourself judging another queer person, remember the shame that you felt when other people were judging you when you were judging yourself, the exact same way. **Because homophobia and queerphobia and bigotry live within all of us, and it is always the same.**

It's always discussed with another person, and it's always using that disgust to try to lift ourselves up while putting other people down. **Our internalized homophobia that we all have has made us think that judging someone else and putting them down is going to lift us up, when actually the opposite is true.** Because when you turn the judgment of a queer person that's different than you into acceptance and empathy and respect, you're also accepting and respecting yourself. **And when you judge another queer person, you're also judging yourself.** We are all a community of sexual and gender minorities and no amount of straight acting, not like the other gays, mask for mask bullshit, is going to change that. **To conclude, internalized homophobia is the shame we carry with us after we've left the closet.**

When we use this shame to justify judgment, we're not only hurting other people in the community, but we're also hurting ourselves. I know this was kind of brief, but I hope it gave you some insight. I think Talking about this and addressing it within ourselves is truly the first step to overcoming it. Okay, I need to end this video. I am late for therapy. I love you. Treat all people with the respect, openness, and dignity you wished straight people had treated you with when you were in the closet. Think about that.

Appendix 2: Additional analytic materials

Diary: As I can see, both ex-soldiers come very likely from social lows, orphanage or broken families. Mark gives substantial and concise answers, which are full of potentially useful quotes, phrases, but David talks a lot and it is hard to get the same effects from his utterances. David moves with his family back to the garrison town – interesting – looking for some reconnection. David mentions collapsed house at few occasions, as if symbolically.

In DA I started with two sections: internalized homophobia and Matt Bernstein himself in this phenomenon. This division was rather clear, during the transcription process and after the first reading of the whole transcript. Matt refers to femininity as a set of traits which may be linked to being gay, however, he may be alluding to a more complex identity/orientation he has (“I’m not gay gay”).