Leaving No One Out

Swedish Development Cooperation and LGBT Persons from a Queer Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Firstly, the aim of this study is to find possible reasons for the lack of an LGBT perspective and for the lack of strategies and implementation as far as LGBT persons are concerned in Swedish development policies and practices. Secondly, the aim is to suggest how LGBT can be addressed and implemented in Swedish development cooperation.

The following questions are asked: Is it possible to understand the lack of an LGBT perspective in Swedish development cooperation from a queer approach, through which heteronormativity with its construction of sexual categories is understood as a means of maintaining networks of power that oppress those who do not fit in the heterosexual norm? How can a queer approach help Swedish development policy makers and practitioners address and implement LGBT into Swedish development cooperation?

The method used is the qualitative semi-structured interview with informants at Sida and various NGO’s. The results from the interviews are interpreted and analysed with the help of a theoretical framework consisting of queer theory and gender and development (GAD) in its “queered” version.

Firstly, this study shows that the silence and lack of policies and strategies can be explained by factors, such as lack of knowledge and awareness of LGBT, the invisibility of LGBT persons, a fear and an uncomfortableness of addressing a sensitive and complicated issue, homophobia and prejudices, and a mind-set that LGBT is a special interest that does not concern the majority. A queer analysis of the results gives at hand that Swedish development cooperation is influenced by a heteronormative culture. This culture, whether it is explicit or implicit, makes all those who do not fit in the norm of heterosexuality invisible and marginalised. As a consequence, LGBT persons and LGBT perspectives remain, on the whole, ignored and neglected. In the heteronormative culture, LGBT tends to be regarded as a special interest concerning only a small group with low status. Also, there are other factors not having to do with heteronormative mind-sets that explain the lack of LGBT perspectives.

Secondly, this study shows that an implementation of an LGBT perspective in Swedish development cooperation can be done by means of different methods, such as education, mainstreaming of LGBT and cooperation with local LGBT groups and networks. This study suggests that the adoption of a queer mind-set among practitioners and policy makers can be one way of making mainstreaming of LGBT issues into Swedish development cooperation feasible. This will allow them to see beyond the heteronormative culture and deconstruct those networks of power that make LGBT persons and LGBT issues invisible.
“Democratic development will take the people as they are, not as they ought to be in someone else’s image of the world.”

Claude Ake¹

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS     Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DAC      OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Development Assistance Committee
GAD      Gender and Development
GALZ     Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe
HIV      Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LGBT     Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MFA      Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MSM      Men who have Sex with Men
NGO      Non-governmental Organisation
PGU      The Swedish Policy for Global Development
RFSL     The Swedish Federation for Lesbian and Gay Rights
RFSU     The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education
Sida     Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR     Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UN       United Nations
WID      Women in Development
DEFINITIONS

_Bisexual_
A person who has his or her sexual orientation towards both persons of the same sex and to persons of the opposite sex – used as both a noun and an adjective.²

_Gay_
Homosexual, as adjective or as noun. Sometimes used only for male homosexuals.³

_Gender_
The social and cultural codes used to distinguish between what a society considers “masculine” or “feminine” conduct. Gender expressions are the external characteristics and behaviours which societies define as “masculine” or “feminine” – including such attributes as dress, appearance, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social behaviour and interactions. Gender identity is a person’s internal, deeply felt sense of being male or female, or something else than or between male or female.⁴

_Heteronormativity_
Heteronormativity can simply be described as the assumption that all people are heterosexual. It is founded on the idea that there are two sexes and that heterosexuality is the hegemonic norm. Everything that does not fit in under the norm will be considered as deviant and wrong, and will be punished, marginalised or made invisible.⁵

_Heterosexual_
A person who has his or her sexual orientation towards persons of the opposite sex – used as both a noun and an adjective.⁶

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**Homophobia**
Intense dislike, hatred or fear of homosexuals and homosexuality.\(^7\)

**Homosexual**
A person who has his or her sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex – used as both a noun and an adjective.\(^8\)

**Human Rights**
Rights that people have as individuals.\(^9\)

**Lesbian**
A homosexual woman – used as both a noun and an adjective.\(^10\)

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)**
Among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons there is an ongoing debate of how these people best should be named. No definition is universally recognised and the discussions are dynamic.\(^11\) Also, this terminology has its origin in a Western context, which means that it cannot be automatically applied to people in other cultural and historical contexts. In lack of a better, and uniform, terminology, the term LGBT person, in this study, refers to anyone, regardless of cultural and historical context, who deviates from the more or less expressed cultural norm that everybody is heterosexual. Having an LGBT perspective means that the rights, experiences, perspectives and living conditions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people, by practice and/or by identity, are taken into consideration and influence the policies and practices in development cooperation. The term LGBT issues refers to the rights, experiences, perspectives and living conditions of LGBT persons. The term LGBT is sometimes used in the text, as a general term referring to LGBT persons and LGBT perspectives.

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\(^10\) Ibid.
*Men who sex with men (MSM)*

Men who engage in sexual activities with other men, without necessarily defining themselves as bi- or homosexual.

*Queer*

Queer includes all those who put themselves aside of normative heterosexuality, and question heterosexuality’s recurrent claim to be the meaning and aim of life. Queer is a framework within which people with different sexual identities can gather and find a lowest common denominator and common political goals. To some, queer not only signifies a way of analysing and acting in society, but also the identity that arises from this analysis and action. To others, queer is more of an attitude than an identity. It is something you realise and consider, not something you are. A queer approach implies a critical attitude towards heterosexuality as an excluding principle.12

*Sex*

The biological classification of bodies as male or female, based on factors including external sex organs, internal sexual and reproductive organs, hormones, and chromosomes.13

*Transgender*

Transgender is a term that includes both transsexual persons and transvestites. Transsexual persons are individuals whose sexual and/or gender identity differs from the norm of the biological sex that was ascribed to them by birth. A transsexual person can be male-to-female or female-to-male. Transsexual persons can have a homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual orientation. Transvestites are persons who with different regularity and to different extent dress in clothes traditionally ascribed to persons of the opposite sex. Transgender is an issue of gender identity, not of sexual orientation.14

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 When No One Is Left Out..?

“Development works better when no one is left out”. These words of the Commission for Africa somewhat summarize what seems to be a general and all-embracing theme in the development discourse of today: without the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, no sustainable development will be possible. The voices that advocate every individual’s right and obligation to plan for, partake in and benefit from development are plentiful. The same approach on development seems to characterize official policies and political agendas at all levels of governmental and non-governmental actors in the international development cooperation.

Nevertheless, there is one group of people that constantly tends to be left out in the development discourse, namely those people whose sexual desires and sexual practices are not in accordance with the heterosexual norm. The rights, experiences, perspectives and living conditions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people, by practice and/or by identity, or, simply, LGBT persons, are never, or at least extremely rarely, mentioned in the development discourse.

In Swedish development cooperation policies and practices there is also a striking and consistent lack of an LGBT perspective, in spite of Sweden’s long tradition of being an outspoken defender of human rights on the international scene and in spite of Sweden’s long tradition of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. An LGBT perspective means that the rights, experiences, perspectives and living conditions of LGBT persons, by practice and/or by identity, are taken into consideration and influence the policies and practices in development cooperation. Recently, though, as it seems, the situation has begun to change. One example of this change is that the Minister for International Development Cooperation, Carin Jämtin, in a speech at a seminar on sexual rights and development arranged by Jämtin speaks for

16 These statements are based on the knowledge and understanding of these issues achieved after one year of studying Africa and International Development Cooperation at Göteborg University, 2005-2006.
17 Ibid.
18 This statement is also based on the knowledge and understanding of these issues achieved after one year of studying Africa and International Development Cooperation at Göteborg University, 2005-2006. It is backed up by the studies of Petersson (2000) and Samelius and Wågberg (2005), as well as the participants in the seminar Mänskliga rättigheter för alla? – om situationen för homosexuella, bisexuella och transpersoner i utvecklingsländer, arranged by The Swedish Federation for Lesbian and Gay Rights (RFSL) in cooperation with the Swedish Parliament’s LGBT group in the Swedish Parliament, Stockholm, 19 October 2005.
the Swedish Government, when she declares that they will continue to push forward on “these and related issues”. Also, Sida is planning to present a first (and short) action plan for mainstreaming LGBT in Swedish development cooperation policies and strategies in September, 2006. However, as it seems, these are only two isolated events that do not contradict the fact that an LGBT perspective is extremely rare in Swedish development cooperation policies and strategies.

In spite of the general consensus of the importance of participation and influence in development, and in spite of the recurrent statements that every one counts, LGBT persons are practically invisible. This riddling situation constitutes the problem that forms the point of departure for this study.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this investigation is twofold. Firstly, the intention is to find out about possible reasons for the lack of an LGBT perspective and for the lack of strategies and implementation as far as LGBT persons are concerned in Swedish development policies and practices. Secondly, if possible and based on the findings, the intention is to come up with suggestions as to how LGBT can be addressed and implemented in Swedish development cooperation. The reason for having a twofold aim is the assumption that, when formulating LGBT policies and strategies in Swedish development cooperation, one benefits from understanding why such policies and strategies have not yet been formed. A common discussion about both reasons for not having done anything and strategies for actually doing something will be mutually beneficial.

1.3 Research Questions

In this study, the following questions are asked:

Is it possible to understand the lack of an LGBT perspective in Swedish development cooperation from a queer approach through which heteronormativity with its construction of sexual categories is understood as a means of maintaining networks of power that oppress those who do not fit in the heterosexual norm? How can a queer approach help Swedish development policy makers and practitioners address and implement LGBT into Swedish development cooperation?

19 Det talade ordet gäller! Speech held by Carin Jämtin at EGDIs seminar on sexual rights in Stockholm, 6 April 2006
1.4 Delimitation

The study is delimited to Swedish development cooperation and LGBT, as it is expressed and implemented by the Swedish government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. As for LGBT, the study deals mainly with issues and perspectives concerning lesbians, gays and bisexuals, and, consequently, does not bring in the transgender aspect included in LGBT.

1.5 Motivation for the Study

There are several reasons for studying development and development cooperation in general and Swedish development cooperation in particular linked to LGBT persons. These are some:

Firstly, the Swedish Policy for Global Development (PGU) is characterized by a rights perspective as one of its two basic perspectives. With this perspective people should be regarded as holders of rights that are regardless of sex, age, functional disability, ethnicity or sexual orientation. According to DAC, the respect for human rights is a central development goal for foreign aid. According to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights are indivisible, which means that you cannot be denied a human right because it is “less important” than another right. In many of the African countries with which Sweden has development cooperation, homophobic and persecution of homosexuals is prevalent in society at all levels. In these African countries same-sex practices are a crime and/or homosexuality is not socially accepted and associated with taboo, silence and stigmatisation. There are reports of victimisation of openly homosexuals with everything from violence and persecution to freezing out and lack of understanding. In some African states, such as Zimbabwe, Namibia and Uganda, high officials and heads of state are openly homophobic. Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe, has stated that he finds it “extremely repugnant to [his] human conscience that such immoral and repulsive organizations, like those of homosexuals, who offend both against the law of nature and the morals of religious beliefs espoused by our society, should have any advocates in our midst and even elsewhere in the world.”

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22 Gemensamt ansvar: Sveriges politik för global utveckling. Regeringens proposition 2002/03:122 p 21
24 Samelius and Wågberg (2005) p 14
25 www.manskligarättigheter.gov.se
26 Ibid.
28 Quoted in Dunton and Palmberg (1996) p 9
Secondly, PGU is also characterized by the perspectives of poor people. In PGU, it is stated that poverty is relative and contextual, meaning that the perspectives, the needs, the interests and the conditions of the poor should steer Swedish development cooperation.\textsuperscript{29} Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon with many causes, of which discrimination, insecurity, violence and isolation are some.\textsuperscript{30} Cultural, juridical and economic disadvantages for LGBT persons work together causing an escalating negative circle of injustice and poverty.\textsuperscript{31}

Thirdly, during the ongoing HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa, initiatives aimed at men who have sex with men (MSM) have tended to exclude and marginalise other groups such as lesbians and bisexual women.\textsuperscript{32} LGBT persons also suffer from being denied basic health care and treatment for diseases.\textsuperscript{33} This is often the result of the stigma of HIV/AIDS being reinforced by already existing inequalities linked to sexuality.\textsuperscript{34} The tendency to prosecute and marginalise those people who deviate from the heterosexual norm has come to make up one of the most serious traps in the continuous fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa.\textsuperscript{35} Hence, a new and different approach towards LGBT persons in development is beneficial to the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Finally, now that the Swedish MFA and Sida are beginning to address these issues, with the intention to formulate policies, action plans and strategies, a study looking at how this can be done, fulfils a function.

\textsuperscript{29} PGU (2004) p 2; Prop. 2002/03:122 p 21
\textsuperscript{30} Samelius and Wågberg (2005) p 16
\textsuperscript{31} Samelius and Wågberg (2005) p 17
\textsuperscript{32} Samelius and Wågberg (2005) p 9
\textsuperscript{33} Samelius and Wågberg (2005) p 17
\textsuperscript{34} Campbell, Catherine, Maimane, Sbongile, Nair, Yugi and Sibiya, Zweni (2005) Understanding and Challenging HIV/AIDS Stigma p 12
2. METHOD AND MATERIAL

2.1 Choice of Method

The whole approach of this study is qualitative, in the sense that it aims at finding what is essential in what comes up in the interviews, rather than ascribing everything that is being said the same weight and relevance.\(^{36}\) This approach is a consequence of the assumption that what the study aims at catching is something more than the sum of all the individual parts.\(^{37}\) It is an approach that builds on the assumption that what is important for the analysis and the understanding of the material lies hidden in between the lines, as it were.\(^{38}\) Also, this study is qualitative, in the sense that it asks questions about the characteristics or the nature of Swedish development cooperation with regard to LGBT, rather than asking questions such as *How much...? How many...? How often...?*\(^{39}\) Furthermore, this study is qualitative, in the sense that its main method of getting knowledge is through an observation in the form of a more or less unstructured interview with no fixed questions, with an interest in understanding a context rather than single variables.\(^{40}\)

The method used to answer the research questions and to reach the aim of this study, is the qualitative semi-structured interview with informants. The informants have experience of working with international development cooperation and/or LGBT issues and/or human rights in Sweden. A qualitative research interview is a research method that aims at covering, not only what actually is being said in the interview, but also the meaning of this. This means that the interviewer can interpret what is being said during the interview and, as a result of this, try to formulate the “hidden message” and “send it back” to the interviewee in order to test whether the interpretation is correct or not.\(^{41}\) The semi-structured research interview is also a good method when the aim is to get an understanding of how the interviewee experiences and interprets a specific topic.\(^{42}\) It gives an opportunity to register unexpected answers, since the questions asked are of a more open character and since the interview situation as such allows interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee.\(^{43}\) Since the aim of this study is to find answers and explanations to a rather “open” problem – namely, why is it that there is a

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\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Kvale, Steinar (1997) *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun* p 67

\(^{40}\) Holme, Idar Mange and Solvang, Bernt Kron (1997) *Forskningsmetodik. Om kvalitativa och kvantitativa metoder* p 86f

\(^{41}\) Kvale (1997) p 36

\(^{42}\) Kvale (1997) p 34

\(^{43}\) Esaiasson et. al. (2004) p 279
silence and lack of policies concerning LGBT persons in Swedish development cooperation – the answers and explanations may be of all different kinds. Therefore, a semi-structured qualitative interview has been chosen, since it allows all these possible answers and explanations to come up.\footnote{Esaiasson et. al. (2004) p 281}

\section*{2.2 Selection of Informants and Interview Process}

The interviewees have been chosen in their capacity as key-persons among actors in the Swedish development cooperation, both in NGO’s and at Sida. Also, they have been chosen in their capacity as holders of knowledge and experience with regard to development, human rights and LGBT issues. Their role as informants in this study should be understood from the definition of “informant” given by Esaiasson et al.\footnote{Esaiasson et. al. (2004) p 253} It is the experience and the knowledge of the informants as being “witnesses” in Swedish development cooperation that is of interest for this study. In their role as informants, they serve as conveyers of the information required for this study. They are not the objects of this investigation, but their observations of development cooperation are. In other words, this study does not aim at analysing the opinions and the statements of the informants, but it aims at analysing the situation they describe.\footnote{Ibid.}

The informants were selected in a process where 25 persons working with development cooperation, human rights, LGBT issues and gender issues at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, MFA, Sida and various NGO’s were contacted by e-mail and asked if they were willing to take part in this study as informants. In the selection process, the aim was to find people with experience of working with development cooperation, LGBT issues and human rights issues in Sweden, in order to get inside information about their work. The names of these people came from contacts at Sida, from the different NGO’s websites and, mostly, from Samelius’s and Wågberg’s study. Out of these 25, six persons were willing to take part in the study. The others did not answer the mail, had quit working with these issues or recommended other names that they thought could be of greater help. In other words, to some extent the informants chose themselves, in the sense that they agreed to taking part in the study because they thought the topic and questions asked were important and relevant, and because they considered themselves having something to contribute with. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find anyone from MFA who was willing to or had time to take part in the study. This
absence of informants from the Ministry that formulates policies for Sida about development cooperation is, of course, unfortunate. On the other hand, many of the informants have, through their positions, some insight into what happens at MFA and could refer to these observations in the interviews.

The informants are: Lisa Fredriksson, Programme Coordinator for Human Rights and Rule of Law, Division for Democratic Governance, Department for Democracy and Social Development, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Jesper Hansén, Programme and Training Officer, The Swedish NGO Foundation for Human Rights, Stig-Åke Petersson, The Swedish Federation for Lesbian and Gay Rights (RFSL), Mette Sunnergren, Gender Advisor, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Carl Söderbergh, Director, Swedish Section of Amnesty International, and Jonas Tillberg, International Project Manager, The Swedish Association for Sexuality Education (RFSU).

The semi-structured interviews took place in Stockholm in June 2006. The interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes and were taped and, later on, transcribed for the analysis. All the interviews took place at the different interviewees’ offices. Every interview began with three general questions that were supposed to give the interviewees a chance to freely elaborate on the topic. These questions were: What are your thoughts about and experience from having an LGBT perspective in development cooperation? Why is it, do you think, that there is a silence and lack of policies and practices when it comes to LGBT persons and Swedish development cooperation? How can an LGBT perspective be introduced and how can LGBT be implemented in Swedish development cooperation? These questions had been sent to the informants by e-mail one week before the interview. Depending on the answers that came up to these first questions, the interviews took different directions, as it were. The follow-up questions and comments from the interviewer aimed at clarifying and checking answers that came up and that directly related to the research questions of this study.

2.3 Method of Analysis

This study is an explaining and theory-consuming study, in the sense that it uses the ideas and the theoretical approach of queer theory in order to discuss, analyse and explain the findings of the interviews, i.e. how the lack of an LGBT perspective in Swedish development cooperation can be explained? This study is also a normative study, in the sense that it aims at
constructing norms for human actions, i.e. how should an LGBT perspective be implemented in Swedish development cooperation?  

The results from the interviews are interpreted and analysed with the help of a theoretical framework consisting of queer theory and gender and development (GAD) in its “queered” version.

2.4 Validity and Reliability
One basic problem with this study is that it aims at finding the reasons to why something has not happened, to why something is not the case or to why a certain phenomenon is absent or missing in a context. A natural starting point for an investigation, one might argue, would be to try to find causal mechanisms behind and explanations to why something actually is the case. Something has happened, and you want to explain why it happened. Theoretically, there are an infinite number of reasons to why something has not happened. How, then, do you trace a chain of causal events if they have not occurred? However, LGBT persons do exist. Therefore, one could argue that people working in Swedish development cooperation organisations must have come into contact with these people, one way or another. Hence, the fact that they are, more or less, missing in this context must have its explanation in some kind of conscious or unconscious choices not to include them. With this perspective, this investigation fills a function in the sense that it aims at finding the causes or mechanisms that have made these choices possible, whether they are conscious or unconscious.

The fact that LGBT is consciously or unconsciously excluded in policies and practices in Swedish development cooperation, can easily be verified by studying policy documents and reports. This fact, which is the point of departure for this study, also allows the second interview question to pass without being a leading question. However, in the documents, there is no explanation or reasons given as to why LGBT is absent. So how, then, can you find the reasons? The point of departure for this study is that the reasons are to be found in the culture and routines within Swedish development cooperation, and, also, in the mind-sets of those people working in there. Therefore, asking those people about their experience of LGBT and development cooperation must be one way of investigating this culture and these mind-sets. With a theoretical tool for analysis, an interpretation of the situation the informants

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47 Esaiasson et. al. (2004) p 40-42
48 See for instance Samelius and Wågberg (2005)
49 Second interview question: Why is it that, with a few isolated exceptions, there is a silence and a lack of policies and implementation of an LGBT perspective in Swedish development cooperation?
describe becomes possible. One must keep in mind, though, that there can be other possible factors and explanations that lay outside of the institutions, namely MFA and Sida, that this study focuses at that can also explain the absence of an LGBT perspective. If that is the case, these factors have been missed in this study, because the informants all talk from their experience which comes from working within or close to MFA and/or Sida. It might seem a natural thing to do to try and find explanations within the organisation you are trying to understand. This point of departure, however, might be similar to looking for the lost key under the lamplight, not because that is where you lost it, but because that is the only place where you can see something. Nevertheless, this does not mean that an investigation into the culture and mind-set regarding LGBT in Swedish development cooperation institutions is worthless when it comes to explaining why there is no LGBT perspective. It will at least give one possible way of explaining the situation. Then, there might be other factors and mechanisms open for other studies.

Another problem that has to be dealt with when finding out about the culture and mind-set in an organisation is, of course, whom to ask. In the case of this study, it would probably have been of interest to interview all those people who say they do not know anything about the topic, and, therefore, have renounced participation in the study. Their thoughts and ideas about LGBT would probably give a valuable insight into the role of LGBT in the organisation. Then again, how can a discussion about reasons to why LGBT is absent be held with a person who claims he or she has nothing to say about the topic? In this study, thus, the role of the informants has also been to convey their experience of these other people’s thoughts, ideas and awareness of LGBT. The informants were chosen – or chose themselves – just because they have had experience of addressing LGBT in the development discourse, and, consequently, have had reason to reflect on the topic. Nevertheless, the small number of informants in combination with the fact that they more or less chose themselves due to their engagement in the topic studied, gives reason to question the validity of the study. It must be taken into consideration that, due to their small number, the informants’ accounts may not give the full picture of the situation. Furthermore, due to their roles as advocators of human rights and LGBT rights, the picture they give may be somewhat biased. As has been said, this situation arose from the fact that most people renounced taking part in the study. This is partly due to the fact that many people working with development cooperation are stressed for time, especially at Sida, and, therefore, have not had the possibility to find the time for an interview in the time period this study has been carried out. Thus, the limited time available for this study, in the end, set a limit to how many interviews could be arranged and carried out.
With all this being said, the method chosen for this study must be considered to have some validity when it comes to reaching the aim set up. The function of the informants as knowledgeable, conscious and aware witnesses within the development cooperation organisation in Sweden makes their stories and experiences into useful sources that can be used to explain why LGBT is missing.

There is no reason to doubt the reliability of the sources, that is the informants answers and opinions that were given in the interviews. They all account for a situation that they are experiencing at the time for the interview, so there is no reason to doubt that they have forgotten things or are mistaken in their memories. As has been said, one might argue that the fact that they all are committed to LGBT issues, make them prone to give a somewhat biased picture of the situation, in order to make it look better or worse than it is. However, all the informants made it very clear that they did not want to speculate, but rather speak from their experience of what has actually been said or done in connection to LGBT. This attitude strengthens their role as witnesses, whose stories are analysed by the interviewer, rather than analysts themselves. Also, the picture described by all the informants is more or less the same. They all point at similar explanations as to why LGBT is absent and/or difficult to deal with. This concordance strengthens the reliability of their statements. Finally, all the interviews were carried out in Swedish, which is the mother tongue of all the interviewees as well as the interviewer. The informants were given a chance to see the main questions in advance, in order to avoid misunderstandings. The interviews were taped and transcribed within one week after they had taken place. Furthermore, the informants were given the opportunity to check the correctness of their interpreted statements before they were used in this text. The interview process, thus, must be considered to leave little room for mistakes that undermine the reliability of the study.

3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Very little research, if any at all, has been done on the links between development and LGBT persons. Searches on the Internet and in databases give no relevant hits.

Although the LGBT research in Sweden today is of high international standard, there are, at the moment, no large ongoing research projects on LGBT and development cooperation.\(^{50}\) However, there are some postgraduate students who have announced interest and plans for

\(^{50}\) Samelius and Wågberg (2005) p 35
future projects. As for LGBT and Swedish development cooperation, there are two studies that both give an overview of what has been done in getting an LGBT perspective into Swedish policies, strategies and practices.

In his study from 2000 of Swedish development cooperation policies and homosexual rights, Stig-Åke Petersson states that human rights have a great importance for Sweden in the development cooperation with other countries. However, Peterson’s conclusion is that Sweden’s efforts to support the human rights of homosexuals are very modest. For the most of the time this perspective is totally absent. Peterson gives some examples of what Sida has done within the framework of its SRHR strategy (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights). None of the projects linked to SRHR have any focus on, or even mention, LGBT. Peterson also concludes that, as far as addressing the rights of homosexuals in developing countries is concerned, it seems to depend very much on individual efforts and concerns. For instance, a member of GALZ (Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe) contacted the Swedish embassy in Harare concerning the difficult situation for homosexuals in the country. An administrator at the embassy did not consider the issue to be “within the framework for Sida’s support within the area of human rights and democracy.”

The late Minister for Foreign Affairs, Anna Lindh, on the other hand, during an official visit by the Zimbabwean foreign minister in Stockholm in March 2000, made clear the Swedish view on homosexuality and demanded an explanation to Zimbabwe’s discrimination of homosexuals.

In an interview in June 2006, Stig-Åke Petersson claims that not much has changed since the study was made almost six years earlier; the situation is more or less still the same. In the same interview, Petersson stresses that Sweden has never – regardless of the foreign minister’s political “colour” – officially protested against executions of homosexuals in, for instance, Egypt and Iran.

In 2005, Lotta Samelius and Erik Wågberg carried out a study of Swedish policy and administration of the LGBT perspective in international development cooperation. This study has five important results. Firstly, there is a lack of explicit mentioning of LGBT in Swedish policy and strategy documents, and in programmes with Swedish support, LGBT is not dealt with in a consistent manner or at all. In Sida’s policy document for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), there is a lack of mentioning of LGBT issues. In policy documents

53 Ibid.
54 Petersson, Stig-Åke, personal interview, 14 June 2006.
55 The only exceptions being the Swedish Government Communication on Human Rights in Foreign Policy and The Policy for Global Development (PGU), where LGBT is being mentioned.
on gender equality, state Samelius and Wågberg, there is a strong heteronormative bias and no mentioning of LGBT persons as being part of the gender equality agenda. There is no mentioning of LGBT in any of the land strategies for the African countries. Secondly, and consequently, there are no directives neither of how to include LGBT in consultancy assignment with LGBT relevance, nor of how to include LGBT in the country analysis process. Thirdly, the level of knowledge and understanding among Sida and Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) staff on LGBT is uneven and in many cases inadequate. Fourthly, present support to LGBT interventions, LGBT inclusive analysis and dialogue on LGBT is much to the discretion of the individual programme officer or employee at Sida/MFA/NGO with Sida framework agreement. Fifthly, some support is given by Sida to promote LGBT rights, but the initiatives are few and scattered. Furthermore, Samelius and Wågberg conclude that the situation for LGBT persons in three countries with which Sweden has development cooperation (namely South Africa, India and Moldova), is unequal and unfavourable in comparison with the life conditions of heterosexual women and men.56

To summarize, there is very little research – if any at all – on the links between LGBT and development. In the case of Swedish development cooperation, very little focus – if any – has been put on LGBT. The few examples of this are scattered and very much up to individual initiatives. Neither of Petersson’s and Samelius’s and Wågberg’s studies goes into any deeper attempts to explain why this is the case.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter two theories or theoretical approaches that will be used in the analysis of the results from this study are presented, namely GAD and its “queered” variant and queer theory. This study takes it departure in GAD:s questioning of constructed gender categories as a way of leaving out women in development, but, with the help of queer theory, goes one step further to include constructed categories of sexuality as a way of leaving out LGBT persons from development.

In chapter 4.2 the important terms of heteronormativity, networks of power, the “other” and construction and deconstruction of sexuality, that are the main categories of analysis in this study, are explained. In short, heteronormativity refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that everything that does not fit in under the norm will be punished,

56 Samelius and Wågberg (2005) p 7-48
marginalised or made invisible. The networks of power consist of those who benefit from the heterosexual norm and whose power is threatened if it is put into question. The “others” are those who are marginalised, punished or made invisible by the heterosexual norm. Finally, construction of sexual categories refers to the cultural processes of understanding heterosexuality and homosexuality as each others opposites, whereas deconstruction challenges this binary division.

4.1 From Gender and Development to “Queering Development”

This chapter discusses the possibilities of building on gender and development theory (GAD) when discussing sexualities and development.

As of yet, there seems to be no theory that directly links sexual identity/sexual practices or LGBT to development. However, it is possible to discuss these issues within the theoretical framework of gender and development (GAD). In the same way as GAD aims at questioning and deconstructing gender categories that keep women outside of development and its discourse, you could extend the category of gender to also include LGBT persons, in order to deconstruct and question categories of sexuality that exclude LGBT persons from the development discourse.

GAD theory – especially in its postmodern-feminist interpretation – aims at deconstructing the category of woman as the social ‘other’ in a male-dominant world. This position denies women their subjecthood and active participation in development. This is a struggle against the essentialising focus on women, and it aims at a more pluralistic understanding of gendered social relations. GAD focuses on unequal situations – unequal power relations – between men and women as the major problem, rather than women being absent as such. It has been argued that GAD’s approach is more threatening than just simply planning for women in development (WID), since its fundamental goal of emancipation and empowerment, involves a questioning and deconstruction of the category of men. Equality and equity can be reached only by working with both men and women, loosening traditional gender roles.57

In many ways, GAD’s focus on the social construction of gender categories with special subordination of women resembles the focus on sexuality and the construction of sexual categories as a tool of power, that queer theory questions and aims at deconstructing. GAD is threatening to some, because it questions the whole social construction of gender, which includes the category of men. Queer theory, in a similar way, is threatening because it

questions the social construction of sexuality, which includes the category of heterosexuality. This link between GAD and queer theory is of importance for this study.

Susie Jolly argues that development policy and practice has a lot to gain from embracing the challenges to conventional definitions of sex and gender that queer theory poses. Gender norms and rules about sexuality shape both women’s and men’s lives. They are all-pervasive, and not only determine the sexual aspects of our lives, but also shape our access to economic resources and our ability to participate in social and political activities, Jolly argues. According to Jolly, GAD’s analysis of the connections between the control of sexuality and economic and political power can be extended to examine the unjust treatment of not only women as a sex, but to all who deviate from prescribed gender roles. Also, the traditional stereotyping of both feminists and gays and lesbians as underminers of traditional social orders, gives reasons to study these two sets of issues together. Both approaches could benefit from asking what definitions of maleness and femaleness underlie the fear of feminism and the opposition to equal civil rights for gays and lesbians. Furthermore, Jolly contends, the defence of lesbian rights is integral to the defence of women’s rights to determine their own sexuality.58

Nevertheless, GAD has been reluctant to address issues of sexuality, which is something Jolly criticizes. Jolly understands this reluctance as being a result of development practitioners’ fear or unwillingness to intervene in local culture. This question, says Jolly, should then be asked of all projects, economic or otherwise. Another reason is the notion that homosexuality comes from the West and therefore has nothing to do with developing countries. Yet another reason, according to Jolly, is that development policy makers and practitioners feel that they do not want to encourage the clumsy ‘development machine’ into even more intimate areas of people’s lives. This is linked to the view that is prevalent among many people, that development is just another means to continue colonial control in the South.59

Saskia Wierenga contends that the exclusion of sexuality from development agendas suggests that there is an assumption that, while people in the North need sex and love, in the South they just need to eat.60

Much GAD work, according to Jolly, is still based on the dichotomy between biological sex and social gender. This is were GAD could develop and adopt a second strategy of

58 Jolly, Susie (2000) “Queering Development” Exploring the links between same-sex sexualities, gender, and development p 79ff
59 Ibid.
challenging the binary distinctions between sex and gender and exploring new, queer ways of understanding these categories. Development could, in Jolly’s terminology, be “queered” by both targeting queer people – or, in other words, LGBT persons – specifically, and by mainstreaming queer into social policies and GAD. A strategy for this should be to target queer groups in development countries for support, to adapt the perceptions of what is household, family and community, to integrate queer into health, education and youth work, and, finally, to institutionalise queer among development practitioners. Institutionalising queer simply means acknowledging same-sex partnerships among their own staff and integrating queer awareness into staff training.  

4.2 Queer Theory

This chapter explains the ideas and thoughts of queer theory, as well as gives an outline of its philosophical origins. It also describes the meaning of important terms such as construction of sexualities and sexual identities, heterosexual matrix, heteronormativity with its networks of power and oppression of the “other.” There is also an explanation to how a queer perspective can be applied in a study such as this one.

4.2.1 Origins of Queer and the Construction of Sexualities and Sexual Identities

According to queer theory, heterosexuality has functioned and functions as a norm, according to which sexual desire is expected to be orientated towards a person of the opposite sex. This norm is important in order to maintain a certain balance of power, and therefore everyone who threatens this balance of power – for instance, by being homosexual – must be made invisible. In consequence, even though homosexuality is recognised as being part of human nature, it is not always easily discernible in human culture.

It has been said that queer is “a concept that does not let itself be explained.”  

Michael Warner has said that the appeal of queer theory is that it “has outstripped anyone’s sense of what it exactly means.” To Judith Butler it is even necessary that the meaning of the queer concept does not become fixed and stable, because at that point it will cease to exist. So what is queer then, if it does not let itself be that easily understood?

According to Don Kulick queer theory does not consist of a single theory, not even a set of many individual theories. Queer theory is more of a number of different perspectives on how

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61 Jolly, Susie (2000) p 84ff
63 Quoted in Jagose, Annamarie (1996) Queer theory. An Introduction, p 1
64 Rosenberg, Tiina (2000) Byxbegär, p 17
to interpret society, culture and identity. These different perspectives have in common that they call in question and challenge normative heterosexuality. They refuse to accept heterosexuality’s claim to be natural and self-explanatory. Queer theory questions and problemizes the division of sexuality, sex and gender into so-called natural and well-defined categories.65

Queer theory is part of a tradition in philosophy called post-structuralism or deconstruction. Important post-structuralist thinkers are Ferdinand de Saussure and Jacques Derrida. Saussure claimed that “language is arbitrary and cultural” and that the meaning of words and language “depends on relationships within language.”66 The meaning in language resides not in the words themselves, but in the differences between different words. According to Derrida there are no longer any fixed differences between different words. The meaning in language has therefore become floating and unstable. From these post-structuralist thoughts follows that we can no longer use language to describe an objective reality – if one can ever be said to exist. We can no longer draw lines between so-called binary oppositions, such as good and evil, real and unreal, male and female or heterosexual and homosexual. All such binary oppositions must therefore be regarded as cultural constructions. Identity in general, and sexual identity in particular, has, in this sense, changed from being essential, objective and fixed to being cultural, relative and unstable.

Derrida claims that meaning can only be found somewhere else, not where you look for it. Meaning originates not only from difference, as Saussure thought, but also from deferment, which implies that the meaning of a word is always deferred, away from the word itself. The word ‘slut,’ for instance, can only be understood through the meaning of the word ‘virgin.’67 Consequently, heterosexual identity can only be understood if there is something called homosexuality, which is then what heterosexuality is not. Hence, according to queer theory, there is nothing essential or natural in sexual identities. They are simply cultural constructions, of which heterosexual identity, or heterosexuality, functions as the norm. Homosexual identity, or homosexuality, then, functions as the opposition which is necessary for the construction of heterosexuality.

Deconstruction of sexuality, thus, is a process in which sexuality is regarded as something multi-faceted, complex and ambiguous. This is an aspect of queer theory that is of importance for this study.

67 Kulick (1996) p 18
4.2.2 The Heterosexual Matrix, Heteronormativity and Oppression of the “Other”

The most influential queer theorist is Judith Butler. In her most important work *Gender Trouble*, Butler claims that not only sexuality, but also gender, and even sex, should be regarded as social constructions. “The cultural matrix through which gender has become intelligible,” writes Butler, “requires that certain kinds of ‘identities’ cannot ‘exist’ – that is those in which the practises of desire do not ‘follow’ from either sex or gender.”

Butler contends that gender is constructed by a “repeated stylisation of the body” and by “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.” Thus, gender is performative. In the same way, Butler contends, heterosexuality can be said to be naturalised by the performative repetition of normative gender ideas. Butler has introduced the concept of heterosexual matrix which refers to the constructed link between sex, gender, desire and practice. The heterosexual matrix gives the framework for what is allowed and comprehensible. It requires that certain identities cannot exist, that is those where gender is not a consequence of sex and those where sexual desire and practice are not consequences of gender. Those who do not fit into this unbroken chain from sex, to gender, to sexual desire, to sexual practice, will be oppressed in our culture. From this follows that, in Margareta Lindholm’s words, “a woman coveting another woman becomes incomprehensible through the heterosexual matrix. She can only be interpreted as something unnatural, as a freak.” In line with the heterosexual matrix, there are two natural categories of sex, man and woman, and gender should be seen as a consequence of these. Butler questions the legitimacy of the heterosexual matrix and contends that even sex should be regarded as a social construction, which is necessary in order to maintain the idea of gender as being natural and innate. A queer perspective can be said to dissolve the heterosexual matrix by manifesting other interpretations and experiences of what is sex, gender and sexuality. This approach is of importance to this study.

According to Michel Foucault, these cultural constructions are the results of networks of male heterosexual power that both create them and use them as tools for oppression. Foucault claims that the term homosexual was invented in 19th Century Europe. Before then, there had been people labelled sodomites, but sodomites were those who carried out certain types of forbidden sexual activities, mainly anal intercourse. Sodomy, thus, referred to a certain type

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69 Butler (1990) p 33ff.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
73 Lindholm (1996) p 44.
of actions, not a personality type. Sodomites were sodomites only when they carried out these actions. Homosexuality, on the other hand, refers to an identity. This new type of sexual identity, according to Foucault, has served its purpose to justify and manifest the other – and normative – sexual identity created at the same time, namely heterosexuality.  

Heteronormativity can simply be described as the assumption that all people are heterosexual. It is founded on the idea that there are two sexes and that heterosexuality is the hegemonic norm. Everything – people, actions, cultural and social expressions etc. – that does not fit in under the norm will be considered as deviant and wrong. The punishment for being wrong can be everything from violence and jail to more subtle expressions as marginalisation, invisibility, cultural dominance, stereotyping and homophobia. In a heteronormative culture, claims Iris Marion Young, oppression and exclusion are built in as structures, rather than being the results of people’s purposes and politics. Norms, habits, symbols, conceptions, traditions, rules and routines that are imbedded and institutionalised in a culture make up this structural oppression. Above all, according to Young, heteronormative oppression and exclusion come from the simple fact that all these rules and routines are all-embracing and obeyed. The concept of heteronormativity is of importance for the analysis in this study.

The maintenance of the heterosexual matrix, with normative heterosexuality and fixed connections between sex and gender, becomes crucial for the power structure that benefits from it: the male heterosexual power structure. All individuals and all actions that deviate from the norm, therefore, have to be made incomprehensible, unnatural or even invisible. These individuals become the excluded and oppressed “other.” Both the power aspect of queer theory and the notion of the “other” are of importance for the analysis in this study.

4.2.3 Having a Queer Approach

Queer theory can serve as an analytical tool bringing in new ways of looking at social and cultural phenomena. Having a queer approach, thus, means that you understand sexualities as being socially, historically and geographically constructed. Having a queer approach also means placing oneself in a position from which a discerning analysis and criticism of society can be carried out. In this sense, queer signifies a critical approach to what is considered to be the norm, namely heterosexuality as an excluding principle. A queer approach will have

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75 Jackson (1999) p 176.
76 Young (2000) p 53
77 Rosenberg (2002) p 63
influence on the choice of focus for the study; that is to say focus is put on those groups of people that are being made invisible by the heterosexual matrix. A queer approach will also influence the way you study, analyse and discuss your findings. Thus, it affects both material and method. Combined, these aspects will make it possible to analyse power relations and reveal mechanisms of oppression and exclusion. A queer perspective makes it possible to see through and go beyond the delimiting constraints of heteronormativity.

“Queer theory does not aim at abolishing heterosexuality or heterosexuals,” Don Kulick claims, and continues, “likewise, feminism and post-colonial theory are not about doing away with men or people with a white skin. These theoretical approaches, however, strive at identifying – and, further on, changing – those conceptions, relations and societal institutions that attribute to certain people status, rights, privileges and power just because they happen to be men, have a white skin – or are heterosexual.”

5. RESULTS
The results from the interviews are structured in accordance with the interview questions in this study. The answers from the informants are classified and arranged under headlines without any hierarchy between them.

5.1 Why Is It That There Is a Silence and Lack of Policies and Practices When It Comes To LGBT Persons and Swedish Development Cooperation?

5.1.1 Lack of Knowledge
The lack of knowledge of LGBT or the fact that very few people at MFA and Sida have the knowledge was mentioned as one explanation to why almost nothing has happened.

5.1.2 LGBT is a New Issue/It Has a Short History
The lack of an LGBT perspective is due to the fact that LGBT is described as a “new” concept with a short history of being part of the public consciousness in Sweden.

5.1.3 LGBT Persons Are Invisible
The informants talk about LGBT persons, both in Sweden and in partnership countries in, say, Africa, as being invisible, unknown, never heard of or considered to be non-existing.  

5.1.4 Fear of Bringing Up a Sensitive and Delicate Issue
Another factor that the informants mention is the fact that issues dealing with LGBT are delicate and difficult to address. There is a fear of getting it wrong, of not knowing what to say and how, and, also, a fear of offending or embarrassing the partner in the development cooperation.

5.1.5 Different Views on What is Human Rights
When it comes to the issue of LGBT persons and their human rights, all the informants eagerly express that their own opinion, and point of departure for having an LGBT perspective in development, is that this is a question of giving equal human rights to people regardless of sexual preferences or sexual identity. Nevertheless, this view is obviously not shared by all people, especially in many of Sweden’s partnership countries. The link between LGBT and human rights is obvious, but, at the same time a bit complicated, since there is no UN Declaration that officially deals with sexual orientation and human rights.

5.1.6 Homophobia and Prejudices
None of the informants claim that they have met homophobia among Swedish development cooperation workers, not even after a direct question can anyone recall having come into contact with such a thing. Prejudices against LGBT are mentioned, but not as something that is common or widespread. Nevertheless, homophobia and prejudices in the partnership countries seem to have influence on Swedish development cooperation.

5.1.7 “It Does Not Concern Me”/To Busy With Other Problems and Issues
Some of the answers given by the informants can be categorised as examples of the mind-set “LGBT-persons-and-LGBT-issues-do-not-concern-me”. LGBT is for somebody else to deal with. LGBT is an issue that interferes with and takes time from other important issues that

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people have to deal with. There is also the aspect that “the-issue-is-not-for-me-since-I-am-not-an-LGBT-person-myself.”

5.1.8 Difficult Because There Is No Terminology or Common Practice
There is one category of answers that all have to do with difficulties of addressing LGBT in, say, a dialogue with a partner, due to the problem with terminology and the meanings of different concepts in different cultures.

5.1.9 Working Methods at Sida
Finally, the lack of LGBT perspectives can be explained by the fact that the working methods at Sida and the framework for development cooperation does not easily allow the adoption of new perspectives and new issues into the processes.

5.2 How Can an LGBT Perspective Be Introduced and How Can LGBT Be Implemented in Swedish Development Cooperation?

5.2.1 Education of Staff
Education and raising the awareness of LGBT among development workers in Sweden is mentioned as one important step in the process of introducing and implementing an LGBT perspective. Among the informants, there are different ideas about what this education should consist of and how it should be done.

5.2.2 Mainstreaming LGBT
Mainstreaming of LGBT is mentioned by some of the informants. As it happens, they seem to have different opinions about this method and what it actually means. There are doubts about mainstreaming, since it cannot be done in a context where there is no understanding of the meaning of LGBT. There are also comments indicating that mainstreaming of LGBT is something that has to be different in different contexts.

5.2.3 Work With Local Organisations in a Local Context
The informants stress the fact that implementation of LGBT policies have to be done in cooperation with already existing groups working for these issues in each country or culture. There has to be an adaptation of terminology and methods, respecting and utilising the specific context. Sweden can only support processes and initiatives that exist already.\(^\text{90}\)

5.2.4 Political Strategies and Influence on Governments
The informants also mention political and official statements and dialogues advocating the protection of human rights in the contact with governments and officials, as an important method or tool as part of the implementation of an LGBT strategy.\(^\text{91}\)

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
In order to answer the research questions in this study, the results from the interviews are analysed and discussed with a point of departure in queer theory’s concepts of heteronormativity, power structures, the construction of the “other” and construction and deconstruction of sexuality as categories of analysis and explanation.

6.1 Heteronormativity
When the informants give answers to the question why there is no LGBT perspective in development cooperation, they give answers that fall under categories such as “lack of knowledge,” “LGBT is a ‘new’ issue” and “LGBT persons are invisible.” From a queer approach, this is altogether a consequence of a heteronormative culture that has excluded and marginalised and keeps excluding and marginalising a group that does not fit in the self-evident and yet silent norm, namely that all people are heterosexual. MFA and Sida are obviously no exceptions. An answer like, “The knowledge is there, but only among very few people, it is not widely spread, not even, then, among human rights experts in this building,”\(^\text{92}\) indicates that the norm of everybody being heterosexual is so strong, that not even those people whose main concern are marginalised groups can see through it. Another answer of the same kind goes to justify this interpretation: “One has not even, here in Sweden, managed to

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\(^{92}\) Sunnergren (2006)
pick up [what is LGBT]; and, still, it can be somebody [at Sida] who has volunteered to work with equality issues."\(^{93}\)

One consequence of a heteronormative culture in an organisation such as Sida is, of course, that to its staff the idea that somebody there, or in a place where they have ongoing development cooperation, should be an LGBT person becomes a non-existing thought. Says one informant, “As a development cooperation actor, and in the environments these people work, if you are not especially interested or if you are not an LGBT person yourself or have friends and people around you who are […] you don’t come into contact [with LGBT people and their perspectives].”\(^{94}\) This statement suggests that, unless you happen to have private reasons for questioning heterosexuality as a norm, it is something that does not happen at Sida, at least not in an organised way. Maybe, one explanation as to why heteronormativity seems to be ruling in Swedish development cooperation milieus is that, as one informant puts it, “many of those who work at MFA and Sida are, if you are allowed to express it a bit simplified, middle-aged men, who have grown up with another view of homosexuality and carry this view with them.”\(^{95}\)

A heteronormative mind-set among development workers, making LGBT people invisible, will affect the understanding that LGBT people exist in the partnership countries, even though they might not always be easy to come into contact with. As one informant puts it, “If you have a rights perspective and take action in a country, there are many groups that are clearly visible and who will be affected, such as women, children, ethnic minorities, religious minorities […] and who are well organised; LGBT groups become invisible, because they are not as evident [as these other groups].”\(^{96}\) Heteronormativity also affects the possibilities to come into contact with and support LGBT groups in partnership countries. One informant says that it, “if [they, as an NGO.] send a message to the [Swedish] embassies to reach out to and include LGBT organisations in their networks, the answer [they] get from many places in the world is: ‘There are no LGBT organisations’. ”\(^{97}\) He continues, “To a certain extent, this is the case, or they are so small that they are not visible or dare not be visible.”\(^{98}\) He also adds that “in other cases, of course, this may have to do with a lack of knowledge or awareness among the staff at the particular embassy.”\(^{99}\)

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\(^{93}\) Sunnergren (2006).
\(^{94}\) Ibid.
\(^{95}\) Petersson (2006)
\(^{96}\) Sunnergren (2006)
\(^{97}\) Sunnergren (2006)
\(^{98}\) Söderbergh (2006)
\(^{99}\) Ibid.
With a heteronormative culture in Swedish development agencies and ministries, the whole organisation becomes more or less like “a sheltered workshop,” where the discrimination of LGBT persons in partnership countries “does not exist,” and, “hence, is not a problem.” There is nothing, though, in the results that points towards Swedish development workers excluding and marginalising LGBT persons on purpose. On the contrary, the informants speak of a lack of knowledge and people being unaware; “there is a lack of an LGBT competency,” as one informant puts it. This is in line with Young’s definition of heteronormativity as an excluding and discriminating principle, not because of people’s purposes and politics, but because of heteronormativity being embedded and institutionalised in a culture.

One of the first steps when introducing an LGBT perspective at MFA and Sida, thus, must be to make heteronormativity visible, and to make the people who work in these organisations aware of how a heteronormative mind-set excludes and marginalises, not only colleagues, but also, and maybe more important, those people in the developing countries that the rights perspective in Swedish development cooperation is supposed to focus on. One informant expresses it like this: “We must make a non-issue into an issue; people haven’t even uttered the word LGBT.” Raising development workers’ awareness could be one way of mainstreaming LGBT in the organisation. Mainstreaming, in this sense, just means “that you always take into consideration that there are LGBT persons in the populations you work with […] and that you always take into consideration the fact that not all people are heterosexual.” This is an example of what Susie Jolly refers to as a process of institutionalising queer into an organisation.

6.2 Networks of Power

Foucault’s ideas of the construction of homosexuality as a deviance from the norm, which serves to maintain heterosexual networks of power, can serve as one explanation as to why LGBT perspectives are lacking in Swedish development cooperation. This does not necessarily mean that MFA and Sida are ruled by white, heterosexual men with power, even though many of them are “middle-aged men, who have grown up with another view of

100 Sunnergren (2006)
101 Ibid.
102 Petersson (2006)
103 Young (2000) p 53
105 Tillberg (2006)
106 Jolly (2000) p 61
107 Foucault (1981) p 53ff
homosexuality and carry this view with them.”108 Male heterosexual power networks are more subtle than that. Young’s definition of heteronormativity as being institutionalised into cultures, implies that these institutionalised networks of power can be supported and maintained even by those who do not directly benefit from them.109 Consciously or unconsciously, these invisible networks of power will not become challenged, let alone from those who directly benefit from them. One of the informants points at the importance of “having a clear and explicit leadership, so [that the LGBT perspective] becomes visible, [and that there] has to be commitment behind.”110 This indicates that addressing these issues has a connection to the power networks at Sida and MFA. This aspect of heteronormativity as a supporting instrument for certain networks of power, raises questions about the importance and the role of the leadership in Swedish development cooperation. Furthermore, fear of bringing up the issue because “[some people might feel that] ‘if I bring this up, everybody will think that I am an LGBT person, and I don’t want to take that risk’,”111 gives reason to interpret the environment in which such an idea has been nourished as being heteronormative. In such an environment, you risk losing your position in the power hierarchy if people suspect you are homosexual.

The fear of challenging the established heterosexual networks of power can also explain what makes LGBT into a delicate and sensitive issue. The uneasiness and uncomfortableness about addressing LGBT issues among some development workers is something the informants give as an explanation to why there is a silence. For example, “Somebody got the reaction [from a person working near the Swedish government] ‘Now, is Sweden gonna start bringing up this too, don’t you understand how difficult and embarrassing it will be for us who will have to deal with this embarrassing and awkward issue’; those forces do exist too,” as one informant says.112 There is simply too much at stake for those who question and challenge the normative system that supports these power structures, which the following answers exemplify, “Some NGO’s are scared of bringing in an LGBT perspective in their programmes [in Africa], because they fear they might be thrown out of the country,”113 and “In Saudi-Arabia, they still execute homosexuals, and [for Sweden] to come and say: ‘We would like to have trade exchanges with your country, but then you must stop executing

109 Young (2000) p 53  
110 Fredriksson (2006)  
111 Sunnergren (2006)  
112 Fredriksson (2006)  
113 Petersson (2006)
homosexual’ – you don’t take that discussion, I don’t even think you have considered it.”\footnote{Petersson (2006)}

These statements also point at other explanations. The relationship with the partnership country, whether it is political, commercial or of another kind, will be at stake if you bring up these issues. Therefore, silence is preferred in as a means of not ruining a relationship that is working. Obtaining a queer approach and awareness, is a strategy that would make Swedish development workers more likely to question and challenge the institutionalised networks of power. A queer approach is also likely to make LGBT into something everybody should be aware of, rather than being something that is dependent on “[only just a few] individual people and their commitment.”\footnote{Ibid.}

A more obvious example of a male heterosexual power network benefiting from the exclusion and oppression of homosexuals, are those patriarchal and homophobic leaders in some of Sweden’s partnership countries in Southern Africa. Advocating the rights of LGBT persons from a Swedish rights perspective is obviously difficult, according to some informants. Say two of them, “It’s one thing to write a policy document if you don’t have to take responsibility in practice; if you are in country where the president has made homophobic statements, it is of course, a much more difficult situation,”\footnote{Ibid.} and “[The fact that] Mugabe and others […] talk about homosexuality as if it is something that is not genuine in African culture, that it is something we [in the West] are trying to export makes this into a charged issue.”\footnote{Fredriksson (2006)} The well-known fact that the rights of LGBT people are not being respected in many of the countries with which Sweden has an ongoing development cooperation, is an important factor to take into account when explaining the lack of LGBT policies and practices. The lack of LGBT perspective shows that it cannot only be due a certain mind-set among Swedish development workers. Even if all Swedish development practitioners were totally aware of and willing to implement LGBT, there would still be problems and shortcomings due to the situation and opinions of other people in the context the development cooperation takes place. In this context a queer perspective on oppression of homosexuals as a means of power, is most likely to give those who must “take responsibility in practice” a better ground for action. A queer definition of homosexuality as a construction that serves these leaders’ political purposes, rather than being something “un-African” imported from the West, could also be a sustainable approach for those development workers.

\footnote{Petersson (2006)}\footnote{Ibid.}\footnote{Ibid.}\footnote{Fredriksson (2006)}
who, in Jolly’s words, have a “fear or unwillingness to intervene in local culture.”\textsuperscript{118} The importance of the political dialogue as a way of putting pressure on those governments that do not respect the human rights of LGBT people is stressed by the informants as a way of implementing LGBT in development cooperation.

6.3 The “Other”

A consequence of the construction of the heterosexual matrix, Judith Butler contends, is that some people do not fit into this matrix; they become excluded, invisible and oppressed in our culture.\textsuperscript{119} These individuals are the “freaks,” the “deviants” or the “others” – the non-heterosexuals. In this study, they are called LGBT persons.

From the answers given by the informants as to why LGBT issues are absent, it seems that this view, that LGBT persons are the “Others,” the “not-me’s,” as it were, is prevalent among Swedish development cooperation practitioners and policy makers. Answers categorised as “Different views on what is human rights” and “It does not concern me” support this interpretation. There are comments like: “Some say that we have so many other prioritized groups that are more important; it’s difficult as it is to try to get in a women’s perspective, a children’s perspective, and now we are supposed to add another one,”\textsuperscript{120} and “If you work with important issues, with two capital I:s, such as drilling wells or vaccinating people, it can happen that questions concerning sexuality become reduced to the private sphere and why should we care about how people live their lives, we are here to create structures and health, which leads to a marginalising approach towards sexuality.”\textsuperscript{121} These comments can be interpreted as examples of a certain mind-set. It is a mind-set that sees LGBT as yet another issue which has to be added on top of everything else, as something that deals with the private lives of certain people; as something less important because it is a special interest of a group of invisible and unknown “others.” This way of seeing LGBT persons is also exemplified by one of the informant’s experience from a seminar: “I once asked about the LGBT perspective [in a report on honour related violence at a seminar in the Government Offices], and those who were in charge said ‘Yes, it is here in a footnote on page x.’ I thought, ‘They would never have dared to say so if it had been an ethnic minority […] ‘Yes, the Jews, they are mentioned in a footnote on page 53’.”\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{118} Jolly (2000) p 59
\textsuperscript{119} Butler (1990) p 17
\textsuperscript{120} Fredriksson (2006)
\textsuperscript{121} Tillberg (2006)
\textsuperscript{122} Söderbergh (2006)
The link to human rights is interesting, since the rights perspective is important for Swedish development cooperation. One informant says, “It is still relatively new to have a rights perspective, but, of course, one has worked with children’s rights as something considered to be easier [to address].”\textsuperscript{123} Children do not belong to the category of the “other.” Hence, it is not very challenging, or threatening, to work for their rights since it doesn’t threaten heteronormative power structures. Another answer supports the interpretation that the rights of LGBT persons are not always regarded as equal to the rights of other people: “There have been reports from Amnesty and Human Rights Watch and so on [about the oppression of homosexuals in certain countries], and [the Swedish] embassies know, so it must be a political adjustment that we don’t care about it.”\textsuperscript{124} According to one of the informants, there is still some way to go when it comes to regarding people as individuals with certain rights, whether they are LGBT persons or not: “There is too little of a human rights approach in Swedish foreign policy and development cooperation, we are still at the level of ‘pitying those poor people’ […] of having a charity perspective […] if you don’t have a rights perspective as a platform it will be difficult to bring in other perspectives such as LGBT […] the idea of working with people in developing countries as individuals with a rights catalogue of their own is still somewhat unfamiliar.”\textsuperscript{125} Then again, no matter how much a queer approach can help us understand how certain issues and perspectives tend to be neglected and overseen, it cannot possibly be the whole explanation. Even among the informants working at Sida, and who can be considered to have an awareness of LGBT, there are complaints about not having the time or means to address these issues. The working methods and routines at Sida are such that you tend to focus at one, or a few, perspectives at a time. Also, the new approach towards development cooperation with budget support and cooperation on a larger and wider scale, rather than in small projects, makes it difficult to introduce an LGBT perspective.\textsuperscript{126} Hence, the lack of an LGBT perspective also has to do with practical problems of introducing it into the actual development programmes, and not only with unawareness or unwillingness to do so. In such a situation it becomes difficult to introduce new perspectives and new issues for concern, no matter how motivated you are as an individual.

What type of strategy, then, could change the mind-set of LGBT being a special interest for a special group to which nobody seems to belong, that is a least prevalent to some extent? At Sida, they are planning to “take in experts from outside” because the Sida staff “can never

\textsuperscript{123} Fredriksson (2006)
\textsuperscript{124} Petersson (2006)
\textsuperscript{125} Söderbergh (2006)
\textsuperscript{126} Fredriksson (2006)
become experts in these issues.”\textsuperscript{127} Even though the intention might be good, there is always the risk, with this type of education that LGBT for most people at Sida will remain an odd issue for those with a special interest. A queer way of educating Sida staff about LGBT would be to, as in GAD:s way of questioning gender categories in order to involve women in development, let the Sida staff start questioning the categories of sexuality, including heterosexuality. In the same way as GAD aims at including women by questioning both gender categories as constructions, LGBT persons must be included, not as a special group with special needs because they are different and “other,” but as equals. Having a queer approach on this phenomenon means that one sees it not as a question of how heterosexuals look at the “others,” the homosexuals, but how heterosexuality works as an excluding principle. Mainstreaming LGBT into development practices, thus, must be a process of questioning the constructions of heterosexuality and homosexuality, rather than regarding LGBT persons as “the others” that are being left out, but whom we should be so kind to include. Or, as in the words of one of the informants, “[What is needed is] to deconstruct and look at what sexuality is, regardless of whether we speak about homosexuality or heterosexuality […] an insight that sexuality is not a private issue […] not what homosexuality is in a specific country, but how we regard homosexuality as such.”\textsuperscript{128}

6.4 Construction and Deconstruction of Sexuality

An understanding of how sexualities and sexual identities are unstable, changeable and shaped differently in different contexts can be of help in forming an LGBT strategy for working with these issues in other cultures.

The informants bring up the problem of finding the right terminology for addressing issues of same-sex sexualities in different cultural contexts. Says one informant, “[It is difficult because] in many countries you cannot speak of homosexuality in the same way we are used to; you must use another terminology.”\textsuperscript{129} Another informant puts it like this, “[In many countries] you cannot identify the group ‘homosexuals’ in the same way as we do here [in Sweden].”\textsuperscript{130} This makes addressing LGBT from a Swedish perspective in other countries difficult and can cause confusion and misunderstandings. “You sometimes hear that it is illegal to be gay in certain countries […] but this is confusing, because identity gets mixed up with behaviour and you don’t know whether you are talking about sexual acts that should be

\textsuperscript{127} Fredriksson (2006)
\textsuperscript{128} Tillberg (2006)
\textsuperscript{129} Fredriksson (2006)
\textsuperscript{130} Tillberg (2006)
legalised, or [whether you are] talking about improving the situation for people living in same-sex relations or [whether you are] talking about improving the situation for people who have sexual acts with other people of their own sex.”131 The nature of the LGBT perspective, as being linked to and dependent on how sexuality, same-sex sexuality and sexual identities are differently constructed in different cultural contexts, can obviously lead to nothing being said or done at all, because many development practitioners’ “eagerness to be adapted to the culture and relativistic and everything, that [they] must understand the context [they] are in,” makes them “experience [LGBT] as very trying.”132

Yet, in spite of these difficulties – or, maybe, just because of them – the informants stress the importance of working with LGBT together with individuals, organisations and networks in the local context. Swedish development practitioners must have “some kind of adjustment in the way [they] put forward [LGBT] issues.”133 They should “listen to the LGBT activists [in each] country and ask them of adequate methods,”134 because “it is easy to do something where there are communities saying, ‘this is our situation and this is what we need’.135 As one informant puts it, “Sweden cannot exercise LGBT policies in Sierra Leone, they must do it themselves but we can support them.”136 The rationale for addressing LGBT issues, then, “[will not be] a question of telling them what to do,”137 but rather “a moral imperative,”138 grounded on the principle that “LGBT persons have the same rights as other people; and that’s it.”139

A queer approach as to how sexualities are unstable and contextual can help development practitioners when it comes to finding and working together with LGBT groups in various cultures. The issue of what these people call themselves or how they identify themselves in relation to a Western understanding of the term LGBT, becomes less important. What counts is that these people are being discriminated against because of sexual desires and practices. A deconstructionist approach means that you focus on the processes that create sexual categories and identities, and oppress some of them, rather than what possibly is essential with these categories. This approach opens up possibilities to find and identify those people and groups in other cultures that we would label LGBT persons and to focus on what measures need to be

131 Tillberg (2006)
132 Sunnergren (2006)
133 Ibid.
134 Söderbergh (2006)
135 Tillberg (2006)
137 Ibid.
138 Sunnergren (2006)
139 Söderbergh (2006)
taken in their specific contexts, in order to support their rights and include them in development practices. This would be to build on GAD:s questioning of gender categories, but to go one step further and, also, question and deconstruct categories of sexuality. This aspect of Jolly’s theory of queering development, opens up the possibility to include all those people whose sexualities and sexual identities become constructed and manifested in various different ways in different cultural contexts. According to queer theory the two sexual identities, heterosexual and homosexual identity, are not products of nature, and they are meaningless outside of those systems where they are prevalent (in this case modern North American and European culture).\textsuperscript{140} As a consequence, development practitioners wanting to address LGBT with a point of departure in the two categories “homosexual” and “heterosexual,” will have difficulties in those cultural contexts where these two categories have no meaning or where they are regarded as just Western imports. Sexual identities are not discovered, they are created as possibilities within and products of a specific discourse and context. This mind-set could help development practitioners addressing LGBT in different cultural contexts.

Queer theory’s idea of sexual identities being products of societies, of relations between individuals, groups and institutions, rather than products of the individual’s body, opens up possibilities for development practitioners to address LGBT and work together with LGBT persons in all the various cultural contexts in which these people are being discriminated against, marginalised or, simply, not included in the development discourse and its practices. One informant wants to see a dialogue where you can discuss “the right to organise regardless of whom you are […] without discussing issues of [sexual] identity.”\textsuperscript{141} This dialogue as part of a successful mainstreaming of LGBT in Swedish development cooperation requires a mind-set among development practitioners and policy makers that allows them to question norms about sexuality and sexual identity, and to see beyond the constraints these norms set up. Thus, making Swedish development workers more queer would be a first step towards, what Jolly calls, queering of development and towards an LGBT perspective in Swedish development cooperation.

\textsuperscript{140} Kulick (1996) p 18
\textsuperscript{141} Hansén (2006).
7. CONCLUSION

Firstly, this study shows that, according to people working with development, human rights and LGBT, at Sida or in NGO’s, in Sweden, the silence and lack of policies and strategies on LGBT in Swedish development cooperation can be explained by a combination of various factors. There is a lack of knowledge of LGBT among people working with development cooperation in Sweden, which partly has to do with the fact that LGBT is a new issue in Sweden and has not yet reached development cooperation. Also, LGBT persons are invisible, both in Sweden and in partnership countries, which makes it even more difficult to become aware of the issue. There is a fear, among development policy makers and practitioners of addressing LGBT, since it is considered to be a delicate and sensitive issue. To some extent, even though not explicit among Swedish development practitioners, there are different views on whether human rights are the same for LGBT persons as for others, which is expressed in words or in actions. Furthermore, there are prejudices about LGBT persons, and, if not in Sweden at least in partnership countries, there is homophobia. There is a prevalent opinion or idea among development practitioners that LGBT does not concern them or that they are already too busy with other things, which turns LGBT into just another extra thing to add to the list. There is also the problem of addressing LGBT in other cultural contexts, because the meaning of words and concepts regarding sexuality and same-sex sexuality differ. Finally, Sida’s working methods and policies for adopting strategies and perspectives is part of the explanation.

From a queer perspective the situation can be partly understood as a result of a prevalent heteronormative culture in Swedish development cooperation. This culture, whether it is explicit or implicit, makes all those who do not fit in the norm of heterosexuality invisible and marginalised. This marginalisation affects both those Swedish development practitioners who belong to the group of LGBT persons, as well as those people in the partnership countries who belong to this group. LGBT persons in developing countries also belong to those groups, namely the poor and marginalised, whose interests and well-being Swedish development cooperation is said to have as its main focus. As a consequence, LGBT persons, LGBT issues and LGBT perspectives remain, on the whole, ignored and neglected. In a heteronormative cultural setting, homosexuals – or LGBT persons – fulfil a function of being the constructed “other” required for the construction of normal heterosexuality. As a consequence, according to queer theory, heterosexuality can be defined and manifested as something that is not homosexual, or not like the “other.” This mind-set explains the recurrent explanations to why LGBT issues are not being addressed. Development practitioners and policy makers in
general, except for a few, who probably are LGBT persons themselves or have experience of LGBT persons, tend to regard LGBT as a special interest concerning only a small and marginalised group with low status. Since the construction of homosexuality and heterosexuality as each other’s oppositions also serve to maintain certain networks of power, there is a risk involved in addressing LGBT issues. Even though it may not always be explicit or conscious within the organisation, being linked to LGBT might threaten your position within the hierarchy. This fact points at the importance of an open-minded, tolerant and challenging leadership within Swedish development cooperation that aims at converting LGBT, from being a non-issue, into an issue and a perspective within the organisation. However, the results from this study show that, even if heteronormative power structures can partly explain the situation, they are not the only reasons to a lack of LGBT policies and practices in Swedish development cooperation. Other factors, such as the situation in partnership countries with other ways of understanding sexuality and, sometimes, homophobia can make it difficult to address LGBT even with the intention to do so. Other factors, such as lack of time for addressing new issues and the way Sida organises its development cooperation, may also be part of the explanation to why LGBT has not yet been addressed.

Secondly, this study shows that, according to people working with development, human rights and LGBT, at Sida or in NGO’s, in Sweden, an introduction and an implementation of an LGBT perspective in Swedish development cooperation can be done by means of different methods. Staff at Sida and at MFA need to be educated and informed about LGBT. LGBT needs to be mainstreamed into policies and practices. Mainstreaming, however, is a concept that can mean different things depending on who uses it. The most important way of introducing LGBT into development cooperation, though, must be through working with local LGBT organisations in a local context. Furthermore, using the political dialogue to put pressure on those countries who do not respect the rights of LGBT persons is another tool that can be used when having an LGBT perspective in development cooperation.

A queer approach to these strategies suggests that a process of questioning and deconstruction of established sexual categories opens up for a better understanding of how LGBT can be addressed. By seeing sexuality and sexual identity as something that is contextual, fluent and sometimes evasive, development workers are better equipped to address all aspects of sexuality, human rights and development. An open mind and a queer approach towards these issues put focus on sexuality and identity as such, rather than on homosexuality and homosexual identity as something odd, difficult, deviant and problematic to deal with.
queer approach towards these issues also allows development workers to regard sexuality and sexual identity in all their different forms as something that concerns every one, regardless of how they define themselves. With this approach, LGBT – and, for that matter, sexuality and sexual identity in general – can become truly mainstreamed in all aspects of development cooperation, rather than being a special interest that only concerns some unknown few. Queering development can be seen as a process through which a queer approach can be used to regard sexuality and its cultural expressions in a new and different way. Introducing an LGBT perspective into Swedish development cooperation requires a queering of the whole development policy and its practices. This process must start with a queering of the mind-set of those people who work with development cooperation in Sweden at all levels.

8. FINAL REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study suggests that the adoption of a queer mind-set among practitioners and policy makers can be one way of making mainstreaming of LGBT into Swedish development cooperation feasible. This will allow them to see beyond the heteronormative culture and deconstruct those networks of power that make LGBT persons invisible.

However, development cooperation comprises a wide range of activities and structures, in theory and in practice, at different levels and in different contexts. Therefore, there is a wide field in which further research on the link between development, development cooperation and LGBT issues can be carried out. One such field is the actual link between development and the inclusion of LGBT persons. How can this be done in a context? What are the actual effects on development when LGBT persons are included? How do LGBT persons themselves perceive their role in development? One important tool that is often mentioned for mainstreaming LGBT is the dialogue. Nevertheless, there seems to be very little theoretical framework behind this dialogue, let alone discussions and guidelines for how a dialogue can be carried out. Here, the development practitioner seems to be left to use his or her own personal skills and experiences. Research on how a fruitful dialogue can be achieved around these – to some, delicate – issues, could therefore be useful. Furthermore, adopting a queer mind-set among people in an organisation requires some kind of strategy from the leadership. This fact opens up a field of research questions about how an organisation changes its culture and the importance and the role of leaders in such a process. For instance, it would be of interest too study the mechanisms when new perspectives, such as the gender perspective, were introduced in Sida’s policies and practices. This aspect raises questions about power
structures in an organisation, such as Sida, and how these power structures influence both the culture and the perspectives of people in the organisation, as well as its focus on development cooperation in practice. There is most probably a lot to learn from these previous processes, now that an LGBT perspective is supposed to be adopted in Swedish development cooperation. Finally, as has been discussed earlier, further explanations as to why LGBT is absent might also be found somewhere else, outside of the context in which this study has been taken place.

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