

**‘They should do what they want, it’s just not my thing’: Sexual Decision-Making in Heterosexual and Same-Sex Marriages in Ontario**

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One of the most important norms that has traditionally shaped marital commitment is the expectation of monogamy (Strong et al., 2008). This paper seeks to fill a missing aspect in existing literature by looking qualitatively at both heterosexual and same-sex married couples and how these couples understand and practice monogamy norms. Using qualitative data from both heterosexual and same-sex marriages, this paper will address whether heteronormative meanings about marriage that posit sexual exclusivity practices as central to marriage are being challenged. I will demonstrate that both sexual identity and gender shape whether individuals adhere to the ideal of monogamy in their relationships. Specifically, heterosexual males and females speak to an expanding open-mindedness of marriages that are not monogamous, but not necessarily a loosening up of the meaning-constitutive tradition around their own marriage. Same-sex married men and women, on the other hand, are different in matters of sexual intimacy. Whereas same-sex women are more likely to ‘choose’ monogamy despite openness to non-monogamy for others, same-sex married males are more likely to speak to a decoupling of sexual exclusivity and marriage at the level of meanings. Thus, same-sex married males strengthen the idea that marriages do not necessarily have to be monogamous and do not uniformly adopt traditional norms of marriage.