

Living in an Open/Monogamous Relationship in the Homosexual Community: Between conscious choice and unconscious desires

By: Gil Lev, MA, the Graduate School of Creative Art Therapies, University of Haifa.

Supervised by: Prof. Emanuel Berman, Dr. Dana Amir, University of Haifa.

This study examines the differences between same-sex male couples who choose to be in either open or monogamous relationships. It utilizes the attachment theory in order to shed light on the complexity of issues that comprise the above choice. The present study is qualitative in nature and it is based upon the phenomenological approach. The aim of the present study is to test some premises such as: "How do they perceive an open or monogamous relationship?"; "what are the interviewees' attachment patterns and how are they reflected in their romantic relationships?"

The present study is based on 4 same-sex couples in homosexual relationships. The data in the study was collected by the means of an in-depth, half-structured interview. The interviews yielded four main themes. The **first theme** deals with the interviewees' perception of their romantic relationship versus their general perception of romantic relationships. The **second theme** deals with the interviewees' perception of open versus monogamous relationships. The **third theme** deals with the dialogue each interviewee has with his partner, as well as with the interviewee. The **fourth theme** deals with the link between attachment styles and relationship type (open/monogamous).

The study's main innovation is that it offers an integrative view of the various themes arising from the collected data. The themes divide into two categories: conscious content which seems to explain interviewees' perceptions and cognitions regarding monogamous versus open relationships. As opposed to the explicit desires, the unconscious content reflects the needs and anxieties surrounding both relationship types.

Keywords: Homosexuality, open relationship, monogamy, attachment.

Corresponding author: Gil Lev, Email: gilev2003@gmail.com