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Review of Lawford-Smith (2024)

J. Michael Bailey, Ph.D., Northwestern University. E-mail: jm-bailey@northwestern.edu

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This analysis addresses a very important issue: to what extent should policies addressing “conversion therapy” for sexual orientation also be applied to “conversion therapy” for gender identity. The analysis is cogent if somewhat limited by the decision to focus on recent legislation in Australia. There is a trade-off there, such that this focus allows specificity but foregoes a deep analysis in places. That’s fine though.

Here are some suggestions:

The title is academic-cute, but the cuteness is lost on anyone who hasn’t read (part of) the article. Consider a more straightforward title, with a post-colon subtitle that tells what the paper is about.

I suppose the United Nations report reference is not meant to be deferential to the UN’s judgment in this case, but nevertheless, their position seems histrionic.

“It also matters, surely, whether conversion therapy works.” I congratulate the author on this correct but risky statement. I think it’s correct even regarding sexual orientation. (Don’t get me wrong, I have no goal of conversion therapy for sexual orientation therapy, but surely the fact that it doesn’t seem to work well is a big strike against it that we don’t know for gender identity “conversion therapy.”)

“if gender identity is innate and immutable then we’re likely to believe that people with cross-sex gender identities are ‘more like’ those of their identity category than those of their sex category, and so make exceptions of them when we generalize about their sex category.” Although this may well be true, it doesn’t really follow logically. I would agree with the author that people seem to make this leap though.

“For all these reasons and more, it matters whether sexual orientation and gender identity in fact are alike, and what can be said of one can be generalized to the other.” I would say instead: “it matters how sexual orientation are alike and how they are different.”

In my opinion, there are too many acronyms/abbreviations. I think 1 or max 2 of these per article;

otherwise, there's too much cognitive load. Just write out the words ("sexual orientation change efforts" for example).

The term "meta-study" is odd for social science, which is the broad discipline where this paper will be published. I think "review" is better.

"The literature they surveyed establishes this claim for sexual orientation, but not for gender identity." A better word than "establishes" would be "supports." Also, the following article purports to show an exaggeration of harmful effects of sexual orientation conversion therapy: Sullins, D. P. (2022). Sexual orientation change efforts do not increase suicide: Correcting a false research narrative. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 51(7), 3377-3393.