

Defense of My Townhall Presentation

Recently, I was invited to speak as part of a Parents United Canada townhall in Langley, BC, on the literature and studies associated with youth and same-sex attraction and gender identity. My presentation was recorded and a video interspersing my talk with my presentation slides was subsequently distributed on [social media](#), with my full approval.

I am of the opinion that many of the narratives that currently dominate thinking around sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) are harmful to children and adolescents and are either not supported by the literature (especially in the realm of gender identity), or that there are alternative explanations of this literature (especially in the realm of same-sex attraction and behavior).

Although I do not have formal training in sex or gender research, I have read well over 300 peer-reviewed medical journal articles in the field and am familiar with the literature as a whole. When giving an overview of this literature to others, I have two choices, broadly-speaking. I can choose to cite from those articles and authors I know who would agree with my conclusions, thereby not only citing their studies, but also (at least generally) representing their conclusions. Or I can cite articles and studies that provide the data and basis for my own conclusions although the authors may differ from the conclusions I have drawn about the same data.

The first method opens a dissenting opinion, like mine, to accusations of bias and cherry-picking, the second to accusations of misrepresentation. As a general principle, I have deliberately opted to pursue the second method, as I believe there are inherent dangers in focusing too narrowly on those studies and authors with whom one is in agreement. I am a firm believer in the scientific method of enquiry which involves interaction with a variety of sources and honest consideration of all the data.

Recently, this approach has come back to bite me, although I am not the least apologetic in my method. Lisa Salazar, a local trans-activist, contacted four of the authors cited in my presentation and wrote in an [op-ed for the Vancouver Sun](#) on October 10th,

Four of the authors quoted by Dirks have responded to my letter. All have basically said the same thing; they were misrepresented.

Though Dirks may have presented some of their findings, he took them out of context; conveniently ignoring other facts and the authors' scholarly discussions and conclusions. The implication being their work would actually support initiatives for LGBTQ inclusion.

This raises the question of academic honesty and integrity; and, can the rest of the information in the presentation be trusted? (In a trial, a witness who is wilfully false in one material part of his or her testimony is usually not trusted in others.)

I intend to show that although I am well-aware (as I was prior to my presentation) that my conclusions differ from many of the authors who I cited, that this in no way constituted misrepresentation of their studies or data, and that not one actual example of misrepresentation has been given.

Social Factors for Gender Dysphoria in Girls

Tavistock & Portman, a gender identity clinic in the UK, was contacted about two quotes I cited in my presentation under the significant rise in gender dysphoria reported in children and adolescents, and

the skewing of the ratio towards girl. The first was that “the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) said 969 under-18s have been referred in the UK in 2015-16....this compares to just 94 in 2009-2010.” Their response was that “the numbers quoted are correct”. The second was part of a larger quote of which I was well aware:

“It could be argued that we live in a society where there is a disproportionate emphasis on physical appearance and huge pressure to attain an ideal body type. In this context it may be disproportionately young women who hate their bodies if they feel that cannot attain these ideals, and who wish to act on their bodies in some way, for example through restrictive dieting and body modification. However it would be speculative and simplistic – and from our point of view premature - to suggest that this is the main reason for the increase in referrals of natal females to our service. Gender dysphoria, body dysmorphia and eating disorders are each complex predicaments in their own right and should not be recklessly conflated.”

Concerning the fact that I did not keep quoting the “however, it would be speculative...”, they state “In terms of the quote attributed to our service, selective excerption changes the meaning intended by the original writer in the longer article.”

I don't believe this is the case. It is clear, it seems to me, that the meaning intended by the original writer is that social factors (emphasis on physical appearance, etc.) are *part* of the rise in GD referrals in girls which are vastly outpacing referrals among boys. My entire point was that *even* some gender clinics are willing to admit that social factors are *part* of this rise- a theory that is not remotely part of the discussion on gender dysphoria in North America. The fact that they don't attribute *all* of the rise to social factors or contagion is implicit in my statements. In the future I would be more than happy to clarify this, which does nothing to weaken my position. Indeed, in [another article](#), I specifically state about this very same quote, “They went on to caution, however, that it would be premature to argue that this is the *main* reason for the increase.” I wonder, would Lisa Salazar agree that social factors are responsible for *part* of the rise in gender dysphoria referrals in girls?

LGBT in San Francisco

Part of my presentation was a short critique of the stigma-victimization theory, which posits that almost all, if not all, of the higher risks in mental and physical health experienced by LGBT persons is due to overt or subtle victimization. My first slide on this stated that studies do show reductions in the range of 20-30% to risks with stigma reduction, but that these may be temporary reprieves. I believe this is the case because of the fact that the Netherlands and San Francisco, two very progressive locales, have not seen any significant reduction in associated risks over the decades. I cite a [newspaper article](#) from June 14, 2013, stating that

(2013) A [recent health survey](#) of over 3000 adolescents in San Francisco schools in 2013 found that suicide attempt rates for LGBT middle school students was 33 percent compared to 6 percent for heterosexual students. For LGBT high school students the rate was 17 percent compared to 8 percent for heterosexual students. Anayvette Martinez, director of a San Francisco LGBT outreach program said, “We were shocked and mortified by the data. This is San Francisco, everyone expects better.”

This was Anayvette Martinez' response to Lisa Salazar's request: “Whoa, that was real data and a quote by me but completely misused without context! This was data that showed that clearly things weren't

getting better for LGBTQI youth and that schools specifically in SF needed to do better. Feel free to use anything I just said. Agh disgusting.”

It’s hard to understand how my extended summary of the article and specific quote don’t properly convey the context. My precise point was that things weren’t getting better, and that they felt San Francisco needed to do better. I cited this study *specifically because* they were surprised by the data and that in spite of it, they keep holding to a strong version of the stigma-risk theory. My differences with Martinez are not about the context at all- we are in complete agreement. They are about what will ultimately work to relieve the high degrees of suicidality. This is an issue of applications and conclusions, not at all an issue of misrepresentation or context. It will be a sad day in the world of education or academia when any disagreement with an author’s conclusions results in accusations of misrepresentation. This is precisely what has happened here.

Sexual Fluidity in Adolescents

The clearest example of this has been in my email correspondence with Dr. Ritch Savin-Williams, (and attempted correspondence with Dr. Lisa Diamond). This correspondence stems from my slide in the presentation in which I state that in schools the normalization and celebration of same-sex identity and behavior is due to the supposed immutability of same-sex orientation. I dedicate four slides to this topic, one to the findings of Savin-Williams (& Ream) in 2007, two to the findings of Lisa Diamond and in particular her [Cornell University lecture](#) in 2013 (which I highly recommend), and a fourth as a warning for those who would characterize same-sex attraction as merely a choice, which I do not believe is true or fair, generally speaking.

On the slide dedicated to [Savin-Williams \(2007\)](#), I state that “in a large, longitudinal, population based US study, found that 83% of same-sex behaved adolescents became exclusively heterosexually behaved in 6 years.” I then quote Savin-Williams; “The instability of same-sex romantic attraction and behavior (plus sexual identity in previous investigations) presents a dilemma for sex researchers who portray nonheterosexuality *as a stable trait of individuals*” (emphasis mine)

Later on in the presentation I apply this finding about the significant movement towards opposite-sex (heterosexual) behavior by those previously same-sex or both-sex (homosexually) behaved to the fact that homosexual adolescents are in a risk group with multiple times higher risks (suicidality, alcohol and drug use, early sexual onset, multiple partners, pregnancy etc.) and conclude that it is a good thing for these adolescents to no longer be in this group that clearly did not represent a settled orientation and had heightened risks. I still believe that this conclusion is warranted by the data and that school policies need to take these factors into consideration.

Lisa Salazar was kind enough to send me the full comment by Dr. Savin-Williams. It is reproduced, along with the exact email exchange at the end of this article, but it is too lengthy to include completely here.

I listened to Mr. Dirk (sic) and he as have many others of his persuasion horribly distorts my research by ignoring what they don’t like. My points were totally different than what he says. Either he doesn’t understand research or has purposefully (for his agenda) maligned my findings, ignoring what I really said. He also totally distorts what Lisa Diamond says. I abhor any kind of conversion therapy as evil and immoral and, if anything, allowing youth to discover and express their true sexual and romantic selves.

My open letter to him and Dr. Lisa Diamond in response is reproduced in the Appendix below. For clarity here, I will mention that not once in my entire presentation did I mention therapy, conversion of otherwise, and it is exceedingly strange, and perhaps telling, that Savin-Williams jumps to these conclusions.

Dr. Savin-Williams did, thankfully, respond to my letter. He asks me about where in his manuscript I cite that he found “that over 80% of same-sex sexually-behaved teens will be exclusively heterosexually behaved within six years.” In all of my return correspondence I made clear that it was not a quote, as I believe was also clear in my initial presentation, but that I drew it from Table 3 in his study. He also, interestingly as it turns out, adds a second study to the mix, [one done in 2014 with Joyner](#) in which he argues that the change in attraction between the longitudinal waves in the Add Health study was on account of “straight adolescent jokesters who were having ‘fun’ pretending to be gay.”

My response was to ask two questions for clarification (quoted below verbatim);

1. Please clarify for me- did you indeed find that over 80% from Waves 1 to 3 of same-sex and both-sex adolescents moved to opposite-sex behavior? What was the precise aggregate number?
2. Secondly, does your later study, which I just finished reading relatively quickly, cause you to doubt the results of what you found in 2007? In the 2007 study, sexual behavior was assessed, not just attraction, correct (the "sexual intercourse" card)? Can you please clarify for me the connection between the two studies?

Instability Out of Context?

Dr. Savin-Williams did answer this email, but interestingly did not answer either of these questions. He did, however, clarify what he saw as the problem with my citation of his study. He says

You select one sentence from one study without acknowledging the full meaning of the finding (read the rest of the paragraph and the next). More importantly, if you are going to use my work then you should “know” my work—which is why I sent the second article to you, which effectively explains the finding: it’s not about gay kids becoming straight over time (which I’ve never claimed or found) but straight kids (for the reasons I cite; see especially the kinds of youth who did not “stay gay” over time; not a pretty picture) pretending to be gay.

It seems that these two elements constitute, for him, my misrepresentation of his study. Firstly, he suggests that I have taken the quote out of context. Here is the original quote in its context from the study:

The instability of same-sex romantic attraction and behavior (plus sexual identity in previous investigations) presents a dilemma for sex researchers who portray nonheterosexuality as a stable trait of individuals. This is problematic not only in the Add Health data—which have been used to define “gay youth” in a large number of investigations (e.g., Russell & Joyner, 2001)—but also, as indicated in the literature reviewed in this article, for adults. That is, sexual orientation instability may not be simply a “developmental” issue (adolescents as experimenters) but a conceptual or measurement problem. Subjects might not understand what constitutes “romantic attraction”—is it romantic attraction to a specific male or female or to males or females in general? Engaging in same-sex behavior depends on the time frame that counts (“ever” or “last year”), opportunities to find desired sexual partners, pressures to fit in

and act heterosexually, and understandings about what constitutes sex. Whether one identifies as gay might well be contingent on perceived stereotypes of gays (“I’m not one of those!”) or political inclinations (lower for traditionalists).

Here is my response to this particular issue in my subsequent email:

Concerning the context of said quote, I understand that you believe that sexual orientation instability may be more than a development issue, but you do not discount it (at least here in the 2007 study you don't). You do mention a number of questions, without answers, here, and simply end up calling for a multi-perspectival approach in gauging sexual orientation.

I don't think any of what follows the quote I used discounts the quote or how I used it. My point is simply that same-sex attraction and behaviors are not remotely stable or immutable in adolescence (or in the case of Dr. Lisa Diamond's work- adults, albeit to a lesser degree probably).

The quote I used in the presentation is representative of other quotes in the study, such as earlier, when he states

Although Laumann et al. (1994) expressed doubt about the extent to which nonheterosexual sexual categories, behaviors, and attractions remained stable over time, most investigators presume the stability of sexual orientation and thus assess it at one point in time. This might be a particularly problematic tactic with adolescent and young adult populations, a time in which individuals experiment with their sexuality, deceive themselves or others about their unconventional sexuality because of the stigma attached to nonheterosexuality, or lack the prerequisite experience to know the long-term directionality of their sexuality. Yet, researchers readily acknowledge the existence of such sexual groups (“gay youth”) with little evidence that these individuals will be in the same group a month, a year, or a decade henceforth.

I don't believe that my quote was the least bit out of context. My conclusions may emphasize development factors perhaps more than he does (which he does not discount), nevertheless, my point was, and is, that adolescent sexual orientation is not remotely immutable, and I stand by the fact that his study emphatically demonstrates this.

Entire Body of Work

The second issue is that he states that “if you are going to use my work then you should ‘know’ my work” and thus the second study he sent me which he believes explains the findings of the first. I have two significant concerns with this, especially in light of the fact that his comments have led to my reputation being publicly slandered. The first is that it is not remotely fair to expect every person that cites any one of a researcher's studies to have read all or most of their research, or to have to represent an entire body of work in citing a single study. Is it helpful for me to know now that he largely repudiates his earlier findings? Yes. But to use this as a basis for saying that I horribly distorted his research is outrageous. Note that he didn't suggest to Lisa Salazar that “I have come to believe that my 2007 findings are no longer credible because...”

Secondly, however, a significant group of researchers believe that Savin-Williams and Joyner are wrong in thinking that jokesters sabotaged the findings of the study (see [Unjustified Doubt, Li et al., 2014](#)). [Katz-Wise \(2015\)](#) states one of the same concerns I mention in one of my emails to Dr. Savin-Williams,

“In fact, we think that Savin-Williams and Joyner’s (2014a, b) approach to identifying “dubious” sexual minority youth is inherently flawed. Romantic attraction and sexual orientation identity are two distinct dimensions of sexual orientation that may not be concordant, even at a single time point”. This is how I put it to Savin-Williams:

You mention developmental change (that same-sex attraction could go away) but you don't discuss these at all as specifically possible changes to attraction, but move quickly to attacking the argument along the lines of identity- of "coming out". For someone who so clearly argued in 2007 that orientation should be measured by multiple categories (attraction, behavior, identity) for consistency or specificity this is a glaring and ironic problem in your argumentation. You say yourself in 2007, "Among the 14% of Dutch adult males who reported ever having physical attraction to other males, about half noted that these feelings disappeared later in life (Sandfort, 1997)" Why, it seems, are you unwilling to consider that what you found (similar to Sandfort) was that same-sex attractions go away for many?

The most comprehensive rebuttal comes from [Fish & Russell, 2017](#), who perform an empirical analysis of the Add Health data and summarize, contra Savin-Williams, “we found little evidence of inaccurate responders or mischief among same-sex attracted youth”. Thus, the *very reason* for which Savin-Williams accuses me of gross distortion and misrepresentation is upheld by many of his peers, and indeed by the only empirical analysis, I believe, of the same data. To summarize, he accuses me of misrepresentation because I side with Fish, Russell, Li and Katz-Wise on the reliability of his initial findings!

My final email to Dr. Savin-Williams reiterated three questions that he repeatedly refused to answer. At this point it is hard not to believe that he is doing so because he has something to hide. I am open to correction on this, and indeed, I hope it is not true.

- What is the aggregate percentage of adolescents who moved from SS and BS behavior to exclusively OS behavior?
- Why in the later study have you focused exclusively on attraction when (to my understanding) the original study focused on both attraction and behavior?
- Didn't non-heterosexual attraction and behavior track pretty closely in the original study?

Others are Replicating What Savin-Williams Disavows

I want to add something further that is not in my email correspondence with Dr. Savin-Williams. It is that very recently other authors are replicating his ground-breaking work which he now curiously disavows, I think, for political reasons. Dr. Lisa Diamond was among the first to study and demonstrate significant sexual fluidity among non-heterosexuals, especially among women. However, recently, this finding has been replicated among men as well, and especially in adolescents and young adults.

A few quotes will suffice to show, broadly, that same-sex attraction and identity are very fluid.

[Katz-Wise \(2014\)](#)

Sexual fluidity in attractions was reported by 64% of women and 52% of men, with 49% of those women and 36% of those men reporting sexual fluidity in sexual identity based on experiencing changes in attractions, with no significant gender differences.

...

Furthermore, 23% of women and 22% of men experienced more than one change in attractions.

[Ott \(2011\)](#)

In addition, we found that, of those who described themselves as “unsure” of their orientation identity at any point, 66% identified as completely heterosexual at other reports and never went on to describe themselves as a sexual minority.

...

On the other hand, in our cohort, we did not find evidence of gender differences when the sample was restricted to those who endorsed a minority sexual orientation identity, suggesting that perhaps characterizations in the literature (Baumeister, [2000](#); Diamond, [2007](#); Peplau, [2001](#)) of sexual orientation in females as more mobile or fluid than that in males may not apply to orientation identity among sexual minorities during adolescence and emerging adulthood and therefore need further refinement.

[Lisa-Diamond, 2017](#) (non-representative sample)

Furthermore, the majority of the nonheterosexual respondents had undergone multiple changes in sexual identity: 82 % of the lesbian/bisexual women and 78 % of the gay/bisexual men reported having switched their sexual identity label at least once after having first adopted a nonheterosexual identity, and 45 % of women and 34 % of men reported two or more identity changes.

Conclusion

Lisa Salazar and Dr. Ritch-Savin Williams have maligned and slandered my reputation, and I do not say that, or take that, lightly. I do not doubt that Savin-Williams doesn't agree with, or like, the conclusions I draw based on his study, or other literature that has shown the same things, of which there is now a considerable body. This, however, is a far cry from horrible distortion or misrepresentation.

In almost every talk I do on the sexual orientation or gender identity literature, I encourage listeners to not believe me and to go and do their own research. Having reviewed the relevant literature even more thoroughly the last few days, I believe even more strongly that the data I have used to support my conclusions are good data.

Adolescents *are* moving in significant percentages from non-heterosexual behaviors and attractions to heterosexual ones. Savin-Williams seems to be one of the few researchers that doubts this, even though it was his finding at first, ironic as that is. These particular adolescents are changing categories from one that is attended by significantly higher risks to one that is not. Given that their non-heterosexuality is not a set, or life-long orientation for these particular adolescents, this move is positive. I cannot fathom a cogent argument that would refute this conclusion.

My interaction with Dr. Savin-Williams well represents what is going on in the other comments and responses. Accusations of misrepresentation and taking things out of context amount to nothing more than me drawing different conclusions than the authors. While on one hand, it is almost always the case that one opens oneself to accusation and ridicule in positing a different narrative than the prevailing one in the mass media, it is not the less discouraging that we have arrived at this place; a place where disagreement is seen as hatred, and argument is taken as personal offense and misrepresentation. I love trans and detrans people. I love gays, lesbians, and straights. I find myself at odds with the prevailing narratives around SOGI in schools and I will continue to use all the data, not merely those I agree with, to prove my points. This is, simply, good science. Disagreement is welcome. Slander is not.

Appendix- Record of Correspondence

In chronological order

Note: I am making these emails public out of necessity to protect my reputation as a researcher. I have added a few hand-written notes.

Dr.Savin-Williams to Lisa Salazar:

Dear Lisa,

I'm now in your fair and progressive country! It's where my in-laws live.

I listened to Mr. Dirk and he as have many others of his persuasion horribly distorts my research by ignoring what they don't like. My points were totally different than what he says. Either he doesn't understand research or has purposefully (for his agenda) maligned my findings, ignoring what I really said. He also totally distorts what Lisa Diamond says.

I abhor any kind of conversion therapy as evil and immoral and, if anything, allowing youth to discover and express their true sexual and romantic selves. If so, then there would be far more same-sex attracted youth out and Mr. Dirk would have to return to his dark cave.

Ritch.

not very charitable
Dr.:

My open letter to Dr. Savin-Williams and Dr. Lisa Diamond:

Dr. Ritch Savin-Williams and Dr. Lisa Diamond,

I count it a privilege to be in contact with you as I hold you both in high esteem as researchers. I regularly read peer-reviewed studies in the fields of sex and gender and I am all too aware that not all researchers are unbiased. I have come to appreciate you both on account of your commitment to academic inquiry and the ground-breaking results of your studies. For example, Dr. Savin-Williams, when I stumbled on your *Prevalence and Stability* (with Ream, 2007) three years ago, I was floored by what I found-- that over 80% of same-sex sexually-behaved teens will be exclusively heterosexually behaved within six years. It has been interesting to state these findings to educators and school board members, almost invariably met with an "I don't believe you", and to later see them accept the truth after reading your study that I put in their hands. I don't know if you are aware, but most educators, politicians and advocates are still operating under an "immutability" paradigm picked up from mainstream media a decade or two ago when Hamer and Bailey's first studies on genetic links were published.

Dr. Diamond, your work on sexual fluidity has also met with resistance in my experience. I have many allies among lesbian feminists who share my concerns for how the current transgender movement undermines women's rights. In spite of our being allies, I have at times attempted to correct misconceptions some of them have about the immutability of same-sex attraction. I have cited your studies and the answer I have received from some is that they disavow your work altogether - a strange thing, it seems to me, based on the breadth and replication of your findings about the fluidity of attractions, behavior and even identity. These are among my allies, and you, I suspect, are not. Nevertheless, my appreciation for your work grows whenever I face this kind of opposition to your work, as it means that you have let your results dictate your position, and not presuppositions, as some of my lesbian allies seem to cling to.

While I would rather wish to have initiated contact due to some other reason, it recently came to my attention that a talk I gave at a parental rights forum led to you being contacted about my citation of data and quotes by yourselves, and your anger at my presentation.

My hope is, firstly, to open up a line of communication, as I believe communication is key to addressing disagreement, to further academic inquiry, and to work out how results of that inquiry ought to be applied in society.

Secondly, however, I want to hear your concerns about the use of your studies and data, and to make certain that am not misrepresenting your results. I try my utmost to represent study findings fairly because I know that my credibility stands with my truthful representation. By this I don't mean necessarily that you will agree with the implications I draw. But I have two options when it comes to citing studies and statistics, to do so from those who agree with my conclusions, or to do so from those who do not. The first opens me up to accusations of using biased sources, the second opens me up to possible accusations of misrepresentation. I deliberately choose the second, and partly because I want to be able to think through conclusions and implications myself.

I want to start with your thoughts Dr. Diamond. You stated that "he conveniently leaves out the rest of my point which is that we MUST aggressively advocate for civil rights protections for

queer and trans folk on the basis of sexual and gender autonomy and freedom". I want to assure you that this is probably the only talk (of many) in which I have cited you without playing the entire last 5 minutes of your Cornell talk. I only didn't do so this time because of time constraints. The reason I love to play the entire thing is because I actually think your case for gay-marriage rights (not the topic of my presentation) is not strengthened, but indeed weakened by what you say, at least in that particular talk.

This is the full transcript from that portion of your Cornell talk:

All I could do was submit an affidavit saying that I basically disagree with the conclusions being drawn from my work, but I couldn't disagree with what they were saying about my work. Like everything they were saying about my work was actually true. Are we a diverse group? Yah! Does it change? Yah! Oh my God, we're screwed, right? Now, luckily I remember listening to argumentation. It didn't seem...the whole thing about criteria for equal protection status, it didn't really come up. The only time it really came up, Scalia asked one question about whether gay people were too powerful to qualify to need equal protection status, but the issue of the diversity of the group never came up. Thank God. And as far as I can tell, it hasn't come up in the dissenting opinions. So, we dodged a bullet.

However, I feel like that was a really important bullet to dodge because it suggests to me that we can make strong claims for civil rights protection that don't rely on the immutability and distinctiveness and uniqueness of these groups. We can make claims for civil rights protections based on the fact that... of just, you know, we are...we are equal people and people's, you know, equal rights' protection. I feel that as a community, the queers have to stop saying, "Please help us. We were born this way and we can't change" as an argument for legal standing. I don't think we need that argument and that argument is going to bite us in the ass. Because now we know that there is enough data out there that the other side is aware as much as we are aware of it. And it's time for us to make better arguments for why we need equal rights and privileges.

One of the reasons I like showing this clip is because you don't really make a legal argument at all, you simply mention equal rights. You do this mere seconds after stating that mere equal rights is not enough of a basis under the law (eg. disabled people). I seriously doubt that if I had showed this entire clip at the talk that it would have weakened my overall point. Thus, I do not believe it accurate to say that I "conveniently" left anything out. It seems to me that our fundamental disagreement is not on the basis of the science at all, but what we do with it.

Dr. Savin-Williams, the statements which I saw (only through a Facebook post) from you went rather further. You state that I horribly distort your research by ignoring what I don't like. And yet, at least in the part that I saw, you don't offer any proof as to what I distorted. Please understand that when you say something like this that you are slandering my reputation. I am open to hearing how you think I have distorted or mis-represented your research, but the only thing mentioned in what I saw was something about conversion therapy. This is very interesting as I didn't mention anything at all about therapy, conversion or otherwise, in my talk.

To reiterate the point made in citing your research, an enormous majority of same-sex behaved adolescent students will become exclusively heterosexually behaved within a relatively short period of time. In moving from one category to another, they are moving from an extremely high-risk category to a normative-risk category. Given that they will make this move, it is a good and healthy shift, for their inclusion in the same-sex category clearly does not represent a life-long behaviour or identity for them and they are escaping significant, elevated, and various health and psychological risks.

Going beyond my given talk, this has enormous implications for parental rights. New curriculum and policies are entering our province whereby teachers will not be allowed to mention the sexual behavior, identity, or struggles of students to their parents. I believe that if either one of the following is true,

1. that homosexual behaviour or identity is attended by increased health and psychological risks,
2. that homosexual behaviour or identity is merely an experimental, temporary stage for many

that parents should be fully informed and involved in the sexual lives and decisions of their children. What is the case, however, is that *both* are true, and this renders incoming policies not only illogical, but immoral. I cannot fathom a coherent argument that would refute this.

Please feel free to share your thoughts with me. In fact, I would be willing, on my own dime, to catch a plane to Utah or New York if it meant being able to sit down with you over dinner (my treat) and discuss sex and gender research. I think it could be fun, and I respect you both immensely as researchers.

Paul Dirks
Lead Researcher for Parents Unite Canada

Email Correspondence from Dr. Savin-Williams Oct. 3/2017

S-W #1

Dear Mr. Dirks,

I respect your right to have a counter perspective, but I do not respect your right to mis-represent my research findings or to falsely use my research to support your views.

We will be able to better communicate if you are able to show me where in the manuscript you cite (Prevalence & Stability with Ream) that I found "that over 80% of same-sex sexually-behaved teens will be exclusively heterosexually behaved within six years."

I'm wondering if you are mixing up studies. In another publication (2014 with Joyner) I found this 80% change in the Add Health study but these were not sexual-minority youth who changed but straight adolescent jokesters who were having "fun" pretending to be gay to, I believe, screw the researchers. There is no evidence that these straight youths were ever gay. This obviously does not support your point of view or public statements.

I've attached both documents in case you don't have access to them.

What I am "uncertain" about is your motive for mis-representing my research? Are you attempting to give parents "hope" that their gay child won't be gay forever? The likelihood of that happening is next to nil, based on scores of research studies over scores of years. What you can do, and I hope that you are, is helping parents to love and support their child regardless of his/her sexuality.

Also, to be upfront, I minored in religious studies in college, have a graduate degree from Divinity School, have been a youth minister for many years, written Sunday School curriculum, and was known as "Preacher" in my high school in rural Missouri. I say this to reassure you that I take religion serious and am knowledgeable about religion.

Thanks for your willingness to communicate and to reach out. I do hope your efforts and intent are sincere. After all, a major motive throughout my adolescent and young adult years was simply to ask myself: What would Jesus do? That was huge in my life and has helped drive my research/teaching/outreach today—to help youths to love themselves and for others to do so as well. I hope that you too have this motive and that you are open to better understanding that message.

Ritch.

Email Correspondence to Dr. Savin-Williams Oct. 4/2017

PD #1

Dr. Savin Williams, thanks for your prompt reply. My first thought in receiving it was, "I can't believe I'm talking to Dr. Savin-Williams- incredible." My second was, "ok, but this is serious, he still thinks I am mis-representing his work- we need to figure this out."

So, I am hopeful that with some patience we can indeed figure this out.

Firstly, I never quoted you saying "over 80%". If I state something is a quote, I quote verbatim. I feel, in fact, that I am exceedingly cautious in this regard, specifically on account of situations like this, when I know that my application and conclusions will not be shared by all. That was my own statement about the results of your study based on Table 3 (2007). So, please clarify for me- did you indeed find that over 80% from Waves 1 to 3 of same-sex and both-sex adolescents moved to opposite-sex behavior? What was the precise aggregate number? *1st time*

Secondly, does your later study, which I just finished reading relatively quickly, cause you to doubt the results of what you found in 2007? In the 2007 study, sexual behavior was assessed, not just attraction, correct (the "sexual intercourse" card)? Can you please clarify for me the connection between the two studies?

Thanks,
Paul

Email Correspondence from Dr. Savin-Williams Oct. 5/2017

S-W #2

You should listen to your talk and slide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AefpuKmMs-Y>

You said that I "found" 83%...

Now, here is the real problem with your approach: You select one sentence from one study without acknowledging the full meaning of the finding (read the rest of the paragraph and the next). More importantly, if you are going to use my work then you should "know" my work—which is why I sent the second article to you, which effectively explains the finding: it's not about gay kids becoming straight over time (which I've never claimed or found) but straight kids (for the reasons I cite; see especially the kinds of youth who did not "stay gay" over time; not a pretty picture) pretending to be gay.

Ritch

*→ These are identity markers
He found attraction + behaviour
bizarre confounding of categories*

Email Correspondence to Dr. Savin-Williams Oct. 7/2017

PD #2

Dr. Savin-Williams,

Firstly, I reported your findings in Table 3 of Savin-Williams & Ream (2007). I am open to correction if you did not find that 83% of same-sex behaved adolescents became exclusively opposite-sex behaved from Wave 1 to 3. This was not a quote, as you can see in my slide. *2nd time*

As you note, the quote I used was taken from the last section of your study. The quote summarizes your general finding of the instabilities of same-sex attraction and behavior you discovered. I could have quoted from any number of places in the study- but this was a good summary statement.

Concerning the context of said quote, I understand that you believe that sexual orientation instability may be more than a development issue, but you do not discount it (at least here in the 2007 study you don't). You do mention a number of questions, without answers, here, and simply end up calling for a multi-perspectival approach in gauging sexual orientation.

I don't think any of what follows the quote I used discounts the quote or how I used it. My point is simply that same-sex attraction and behaviors are not remotely stable or immutable in adolescence (or in the case of Dr. Lisa Diamond's work- adults, albeit to a lesser degree probably). She says herself that people need to stop using the "born this way" idiom because it's not true. This "born this way"/immutability viewpoint is the prevalent one in the world I live in, it isn't true, and basing policies, whatever they may be, on discounted theories is bound to be bad policy.

Your 2014 Dubious Add Health article calls into question your previous findings for yourself, but I need clarification on something that is missing; why do you focus so singularly on the attraction measure, and not at all on the sexual behavior measure, which was clearly part of the study mentioned in 2007, and I assume the Add Health data generally.

I have not yet read some of the answers given by Li & Pollitt 2015, or Katz-Wise & Calzo 2014, and I will, but here are my initial thoughts on your Dubious Add Health discussion. Firstly, as previously mentioned, why the omission on sexual behavior? It is entirely possible that I am overlooking something here, but I would love to know what it is.

Secondly, your discussion of the first possibility exhibits some serious confounding problems, at least to me. You mention developmental change (that same-sex attraction could go away) but you don't discuss these at all as specifically possible changes to attraction, but move quickly to attacking the argument along the lines of identity- of "coming out". For someone who so clearly argued in 2007 that orientation should be measured by multiple categories (attraction, behavior, identity) for consistency or specificity this is a glaring and ironic problem in your argumentation. You say yourself in 2007, "Among the 14% of Dutch adult males who reported ever having physical attraction to other males, about half noted that these feelings disappeared later in life (Sandfort, 1997)" Why, it seems, are you unwilling to consider that what you found (similar to Sandfort) was that same-sex attractions go away for many? Moreover, my interpretation of your tables in 2007 leads me to believe that attraction and behavior change tracked pretty closely.

I don't completely discount either the second or third options you present, I would want to read some of the rebuttals in the literature first, but it seems unlikely to me that this would explain how my quote from you in 2007 would be undermined. And even if it would, wouldn't your response to me be something along the lines of, "I no longer believe the robustness of the findings from my 2007 study", not "you misrepresented my 2007 study?"

Thanks again for your interaction,

Paul Dirks

Email Correspondence from Dr. Savin-Williams Oct. 10/2017

Rebuttals
very strong

2nd
time

S-W #3

Actually, I don't think you're looking for clarification. I believe you're looking for confirmation of what you already believe.

Throughout my professional career my research has been mis-represented and distorted—sometimes by other scientists but mostly by religious zealots.

I seek scientific truth and you're looking for religious truth—they don't always coincide.

We should probably end this conversation as it appears to be productive for neither of us.

My religious truth is simple: love god's creations, seek understanding, and celebrate. Insofar as you agree, we're on the same page.

Ritch.

He keeps coming back to religion! I don't mention it once.

Email Correspondence to Dr. Savin-Williams Oct. 10/2017

PD #3

Dr. Savin-Williams,

I can point to my very specific questions as proof that I am looking for clarification. I have asked a number of questions that it seems you refuse to answer, which is strange to me. Here they are again.

- What is the aggregate percentage of adolescents who moved from SS and BS behavior to exclusively OS behavior?
- Why in the later study have you focused exclusively on attraction when (to my understanding) the original study focused on both attraction and behavior?
- Didn't non-heterosexual attraction and behavior track pretty closely in the original study?

To these I add:

- Do you disagree with Sandfort's findings that SSA disappeared later in life for half his sample (I believe of dutch men if I remember correctly). If so, on what basis?
- Do you disagree with Dr. Lisa Diamond that gays need to stop saying "we were born this way" because the data is now clear that this isn't the case?

Thank you,
Paul Dirks

3rd time asking this
3rd time asking this