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# **Why Do We Need to Research Relationships Between LGBTQ+ BDSM Practitioners and Police?**

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## **Abstract**

This paper argues that research is needed on how LGBTIQ+ people who practice consensual bondage, discipline, dominance, and submission (BDSM) have interactions with police. This focus has emerged out of our collective research interests: a critical psychological focus on documenting the lived experiences of people engaged in BDSM; and a critical, queer criminological focus on documenting interactions between LGBTQ+ people and police. Each of these research areas have highlighted unique challenges that especially exacerbate the vulnerability of those engaged, yet interestingly the nexus between these vulnerabilities has yet to be examined. We have found specific areas of research that show challenging experiences and attitudes between police and LGBTIQ+ people, and police and kinksters. This work highlights a complex set of vulnerabilities that point to the need for research documenting policing experiences with LGBTQ+ BDSM practitioners. We purport that these complex vulnerabilities for LGBTQ+ people may intersect when they practice consensual BDSM. For instance, the legal ambiguity of activities classed under the umbrella of BDSM, along with preconceptions that all kink is abusive, could influence the way that LGBTQ+ practitioners of consensual BDSM might be treated by police. Importantly, however, to date we have only fragments of research evidence to inform our understanding of what may emerge in the context of LGBTQ+ BDSM-police interactions.

**Key words:** LGBTQ+, BDSM, kink, police