



IS HETERONORMALCY THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEND BDSM PRACTICES IN NEOLIBERAL AUSTRALIA?

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BDSM is often viewed from the outside as a realm of sexual deviancy, violence, and abuse. Narratives surrounding BDSM practices – both social and academic – are often polarising: either labelling kinksters 'perverted' or 'deviant' or stressing their 'just like you' factor. This paper seeks to explore whether neoliberalist attitudes in Australia are creating a social and academic environment where the only acceptance to be had for BDSM practitioners is through their assimilation as 'good citizens' of a particular class, relationship status, and consumer-citizen position. Drawing on the writings of academics and commentators such as Weiss, Foucault, Duggan, and Berlant, the paper will examine the intersections between sociological discourse(s) in relation to BDSM, neoliberalism, and sexual citizenship in an attempt to unpack whether it is possible for these conservative discourses to ever fully align with the queer, lived, and distinctly non-conservative reality that is BDSM. It is the author's hope that the paper will be of benefit to expanding the sociological understanding of the BDSM community and their practices in neoliberalist Australia.